

**SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY**

**HABITAT REGULATIONS APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
STAGE 1: ADDITIONAL SCREENING TO CONSIDER
GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

A Report to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

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February 2013

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01 OF 02

01 SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
02 MIDDLEMARCH ENVIRONMENTAL LTD

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It should be noted that, whilst every effort is made to meet the client's brief,
no site investigation can ensure complete assessment
or prediction of the natural environment.*

Contract Number C113400

February 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council is currently in the process of developing its Local Development Framework, comprising a series of development plan documents that set out the long-term spatial vision for how the towns, villages and countryside within Solihull Borough will develop and change over the plan period to 2028. These documents provide a framework for how this vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth. In July 2012 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council published their Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document Preferred Options document, which outlines proposed provision of gypsy and traveller sites during the period 2012 to 2027. Consultation was undertaken with Natural England regarding this document, during which Natural England confirmed that it would be necessary to undertake a stand-alone screening exercise to determine potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites in accordance with Article 6 of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna. Middlemarch Environmental Ltd has previously undertaken a screening exercise for the wider Core Strategy in March 2012 (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062). This report, which was approved by Natural England, concluded that no significant effects were likely to occur at any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the implementation of the Core Strategy.

The additional screening exercise for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document Preferred Options follows the same format as the aforementioned Core Strategy screening report, and draws upon much of the same background data to inform conclusions about the likelihood of significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document Preferred Options proposes the creation of a total of 43 pitches during the period 2012 to 2027, to be spread over a total of four sites. Based on recent mean population statistics for the traveller community within Solihull Borough this will lead to an approximate population increase of 132.87 people over the plan period (although this is likely to be an overestimate as much of the need for additional pitches is understood to be from members of the gypsy and traveller community already resident in the borough). This increase is, however, offset by a revision to the proposed non-gypsy/traveller housing allocation within the Core Strategy since the original screening exercise was undertaken in 2012. The total proposed housing allocation during the plan period has been reduced by 144 dwellings which, based on recent population statistics for Solihull Borough, would reduce the projected population increase throughout the plan period by 342.72 people, easily offsetting the projected population increase arising from the increase in gypsy and traveller pitches.

As the total population increase throughout the plan period will therefore be less than anticipated at the time of the previous Core Strategy screening exercise in March 2012, there is no evidence to suggest that the conclusions reached during this exercise have altered. No adverse significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document Preferred Options, either independently or in combination with any other plans or strategies published to date.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	5
1.2 REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL SCREENING OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	5
2. SCOPE OF THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	7
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	7
2.2 SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL PITCH REQUIREMENTS AND PREFERRED OPTIONS.....	7
3. METHODOLOGY	9
4. RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITES	11
5. CANNOCK EXTENSION CANAL SAC	13
5.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	13
5.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC	13
5.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	14
6. CANNOCK CHASE SAC	15
6.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	15
6.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC	16
6.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	17
7. BREDON HILL SAC	18
7.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	18
7.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC	18
7.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	19
8. PEAK DISTRICT DALES SAC	20
8.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	20
8.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC	22
8.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	23
9. 'IN COMBINATION' EFFECTS	26
9.1 OTHER PLANS CONSIDERED IN IN COMBINATIONq.....	26
9.2 CHANGES TO CORE STRATEGY SINCE ORIGINAL SCREENING REPORT	26
10. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES	27
10.1 CANNOCK EXTENSION CANAL SAC	27
10.2 CANNOCK CHASE SAC	29
10.3 BREDON HILL SAC.....	34
10.4 PEAK DISTRICT DALES SAC.....	35
11. SCREENING MATRIX	40
12. CONCLUSIONS AND PRECAUTIONARY RECOMMENDATIONS	41
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	42

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (hereafter Solihull MBC) is currently in the process of developing its Local Development Framework (LDF), comprising a series of development plan documents that set out the long-term spatial vision for how the towns, villages and countryside within Solihull Borough will develop and change over the plan period to 2028. These documents provide a framework for how this vision will be delivered through a strategy for promoting, distributing and delivering sustainable development and growth.

In March 2012 Solihull MBC commissioned Middlemarch Environmental Ltd to undertake a screening exercise in order to determine whether a full Appropriate Assessment was required for the LDF Core Strategy under Article 6 of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC. This exercise was a follow-up to an initial screening exercise undertaken by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in 2008, which recommended further screening for selected Natura 2000 sites once the proposals of the Core Strategy had been finalised.

Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (hereafter ~~the~~ the Habitats Directive) state that an Appropriate Assessment is required for strategic land use plans that are considered likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. Natura 2000 sites are those sites designated under the Habitats Directive to ensure the protection of European important habitats, and include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Offshore Marine Sites (OMS) and Ramsar sites.

The competent authority can only agree to the strategic land use plan after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. Where adverse impacts are anticipated, a strategic land use plan may still be agreed provided that there are no alternative solutions and the plan is considered to be of overriding public interest. In such instances appropriate compensatory measures are required to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 site network is protected.

The Habitat Regulations screening exercise undertaken for the Core Strategy in March 2012 is detailed in Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062. This exercise identified that the implementation of the Core Strategy is unlikely to result in any significant adverse impacts on any Natura 2000 sites, and concluded that a full Appropriate Assessment would not be required. The report was submitted to and approved by Natural England in July 2012, and was subsequently published on the Solihull MBC website.

1.2 REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL SCREENING OF GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD

Following the completion and approval of the screening exercise for the Core Strategy, Solihull MBC published their Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) Preferred Options in July 2012.

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document was submitted to Natural England for comment in August 2012. A consultation response was received from Hayley Pankhurst (Lead Advisor, Land Use Operations) on 31st August 2012. This response highlighted that, although the overall screening

assessment of the Core Strategy indicated that a full Appropriate Assessment would not be required, the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD should be subject a screening assessment in its own right.

This report provides a Habitat Regulations screening assessment for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document in accordance with Article 6 of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC (see Section 1.1). The scope of this document is detailed in Chapter 2.

2. SCOPE OF THE GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document accords with both national and local planning policy, and outlines Solihull MBC's proposed strategy for meeting the following objective:

“To increase the number of authorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough in the most appropriate locations, to reduce the number of unauthorised development and encampments and enable Gypsies and Travellers to access the services and facilities to meet their needs, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community.”

This screening exercise is based on the version of the document that was submitted to Natural England for consultation, dated July 2012. It is understood that this is the latest iteration of the document, and that the proposals detailed within are up to date. Proposals of relevance to the current assessment are summarised in Section 2.2.

2.2 SUMMARY OF RESIDENTIAL PITCH REQUIREMENTS AND PREFERRED OPTIONS

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document is based upon an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment undertaken in early 2012 (Brown *et al*, 2012). This assessment highlights that a total of 38 permanent residential pitches are required in Solihull Borough in the period 2012-2027, comprising 26 pitches in the period 2012-2017, six pitches in the period 2017-2022, and a further six pitches in the period 2022-2027.

In order to meet the identified need of 38 new pitches in the period 2012-2027, Solihull MBC has undertaken an assessment of a variety of potential sites in order to allow preferred options for development to be identified. A total of 12 sites were assessed, consisting of both new parcels of land and existing unauthorised pitches. Of these 12 sites, a total of four were taken forward as the Council's preferred allocations. These were:

- Land off Old Damson Lane, Solihull
- The Warren, Bickenhill Lane, Marston Green
- The Haven, Catherine-de-Barnes Lane, Bickenhill
- The Uplands, Dickens Heath Road, Dickens Heath

It is anticipated that these four sites will enable the identified need to be exceeded, with a total of 43 pitches anticipated. The greatest number of pitches (23) will be located at Land off Old Damson Lane in Solihull, with fewer pitches at each of the three other sites.

The aforementioned Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2012 defines a pitch as being an area of land that is generally home to a single household. Demographics from this study indicate that the mean number of people per household in the gypsy/traveller community in Solihull Borough is 3.09, slightly higher

than for the non-gypsy/traveller community. This figure does, however, conceal a wide variation in household size in the area, with a range of 1-8 occupants recorded in the survey sample.

Based on a mean occupancy of 3.09 people per pitch, the proposed provision of 43 new pitches would result in a population increase of 132.87 people in the period 2012-2027. This figure is slightly skewed as it assumes that all new pitches will be colonised by members of the gypsy/traveller community that do not already reside within the borough at unauthorised sites, however it is considered adequate to form the basis of this screening exercise.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current assessment has been undertaken based on best practice guidance as detailed by the Impacts Assessment Unit at Oxford Brookes University (2001) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (2006), in addition to a review of previous strategic habitat assessment projects.

Current best practice guidance identifies that the Appropriate Assessment process is broadly divisible into three distinct stages, with the need to complete each stage determined by the results of the previous stage. In summary, these stages are:

- **Stage 1: Evidence Gathering and Screening**

This stage is associated with collecting evidence regarding those parts of the Natura 2000 network that have the potential to be impacted by the strategic land-use plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. Where no significant effects are perceived, sites may be screened out of the need for further assessment during Stage 2.

- **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment of Significant Impacts**

Where it is considered a Natura 2000 site may experience significant effects from a project or strategic land-use plan, either alone or in combination, a detailed assessment of likelihood and severity of the perceived impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network is undertaken. This assessment is based on a detailed review of the project or plan in conjunction with the structure, function and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site. This stage may also include a preliminary assessment regarding the potential for the identified impacts to be mitigated.

- **Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions and Mitigation Measures**

Where impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network are perceived, this stage examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or strategic land-use plan in order to avoid these impacts. Where the potential for adverse impacts remains, and where it is deemed that a project or land-use plan should proceed for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), an investigation of appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures is undertaken.

This report focuses on Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process. Chapter 4 outlines which Natura 2000 sites are considered during this study based on the findings of previous assessment works.

Implicit in the Habitats Directive is the application of the **precautionary principle**, which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty whether there will be an impact or not (Oxford Brookes, 2001). The European Commission's Final Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle (European Commission, 2000a) states that the use of the precautionary principle presupposes:

- Identification of potentially negative effects resulting from a phenomenon, product or procedure;

- A scientific evaluation of the risks which because of the insufficiency of the data, their inconclusive or imprecise nature, makes it impossible to determine with sufficient certainty the risk in question (CEC, 2000).

According to best practice guidance, this means that the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating, with supporting evidence, that there will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. The publication *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2000b) provides explanatory guidance regarding this point, which is paraphrased below.

It is clear from the context and from the purpose of the directive that the 'integrity of the site' relates to the site's conservation objectives. For example, it is possible that a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a site only in a visual sense or only habitat types or species other than those listed in Annex I or Annex II. In such cases, the effects do not amount to an adverse effect for the purposes of Article 6(3), provided that the coherence of the network is not affected.

The expression 'integrity of the site' shows that focus is here on the specific site. Thus, it is not allowed to destroy a site or part of it on the basis that the conservation status of the habitat types and species it hosts will anyway remain favourable within the European territory of the Member State.

As regards the connotation or meaning of 'integrity', this can be considered as a quality or condition of being whole or complete. In a dynamic ecological context, it can also be considered as having the sense of resilience and ability to evolve in ways that are favourable to conservation. The 'integrity of the site' has been usefully defined as 'the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or levels of populations of the species for which it was classified' (IEEM, 2006)

The integrity of the site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives.

The Conservation Objectives for each of the Natura 2000 sites considered during this screening exercise have been provided by Natural England. They are detailed in a short report which defines the desired state of the site with regard to the features for which it has been designated. Natural England highlight that when these features are being managed in a way which maintains their nature conservation value, they are said to be in favourable condition

4. RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITES

As highlighted in Section 1.1, an initial screening exercise was undertaken for an early iteration of the Core Strategy by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in 2008. This assessment considered potential impacts on a total of 12 sites, comprising all Natura 2000 sites within a 50 km radius of Solihull Borough, in addition to the Peak District Dales SAC which forms part of the most visited National Park in the United Kingdom. No Natura 2000 sites fall with or adjacent to the Solihull MBC boundary. This screening process concluded:

- It is **unlikely** that core strategy policies will directly impact upon any sites.
- Possible impacts may arise as a result of growth and development policies that give rise to **recreational pressure**. Vehicular and aircraft emissions are likely to increase and thus affect local and regional **air quality**, potentially contributing to nitrogen and acid deposition issues at sites located downwind of the borough.
- Further screening is strongly recommended in line with the **precautionary principle** for those sites where impacts are unclear or uncertain.

Potential impacts on eight of the 12 Natura 2000 sites were screened out during this initial assessment. It was however recommended that further screening was undertaken once the Core Strategy was at a later stage of development, when more detail is available regarding proposed development policies and housing numbers.

The following sites were proposed for further screening:

- Cannock Extension Canal SAC;
- Cannock Chase SAC;
- Bredon Hill SAC; and,
- Peak District Dales SAC.

These four sites formed the basis of the subsequent further screening exercise undertaken for the Core Strategy by Middlemarch Environmental Ltd in 2012, which concluded that no significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites are likely and that further assessment was not necessary. It is proposed that these four sites will also form the basis of this additional screening exercise for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options. The qualifying criteria and relative distances of these sites from the Solihull MBC boundary are summarised in Table 4.1.

NATURA 2000 SITE	QUALIFYING CRITERIA	DISTANCE TO SOLIHULL MBC BOUNDARY
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	1 no. Annex II Species	19.1 km
Cannock Chase SAC	2 no. Annex I Habitat Types	28.3 km
Bredon Hill SAC	1 no. Annex II Species	35.2 km
Peak District Dales SAC	7 no. Annex I Habitat Types 3 no. Annex II Species	75 km

Table 4.1: Summary of SAC Qualifying Criteria and Distance from Solihull MBC Boundary

Chapters 5 to 8 provide more detail regarding the Qualifying Criteria and Vulnerability of each of the sites listed in Table 4.1, and also summarise the Conservation Objectives for each site. Chapter 9 summarises other plans considered in combination and highlights any changes in the overall Core Strategy since the previous screening exercise in early 2012. Chapter 10 provides a discussion about the likelihood of any adverse ecological impacts arising from the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options, and highlights the need for further assessment, if necessary.

5. CANNOCK EXTENSION CANAL SAC

5.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying site citation document, both of which are available at

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0012672>.

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Staffordshire; Walsall
Centroid:	SK 020 058
Latitude:	52 38 59 N
Longitude:	01 58 14 W
SAC EU Code:	UK0012672
Status:	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Cannock Extension Canal extends for a distance of 2.9 km, and runs from Pelsall Junction on the Wyrley and Essington Canal to Norton Canes Docks. The SAC is dominated by standing water habitat, but also includes areas of mesophilic grassland, broadleaved woodland and the built environment.

5.1.1 Qualifying Habitats

The site does not support any Annex I habitat types. Annex 1 habitats are neither a primary reason for selection or present as qualifying criteria.

5.1.2 Qualifying Species

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports a species of importance listed on Annex II of the Directive. This species is floating water plantain *Luronium natans*, for which Cannock Extension Canal SAC is identified in the site citation as being one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.

The JNCC site description states that *Cannock Extension Canal in central England is an example of anthropogenic, lowland habitat supporting floating water-plantain **Luronium natans** at the eastern limit of the plant's natural distribution in England. A very large population of the species occurs in the Canal, which has a diverse aquatic flora and rich dragonfly fauna, indicative of good water quality. The low volume of boat traffic on this terminal branch of the Wyrley and Essington Canal has allowed open-water plants, including floating water-plantain, to flourish, while depressing the growth of emergents.*

5.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC

The issues to which the SAC is vulnerable are highlighted in Table 5.1. This information has been collated from sources including JNCC, Natural England and the original Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report.

ISSUE	DETAIL	SOURCE OF DATA
Lack of Recreational Use	If the canal is not used, the abundant growth of other aquatic macrophytes may shade-out the <i>Luronium natans</i> unless routinely controlled by cutting.	JNCC SAC Citation
Increased Recreational Use	An increase in recreational activity would be to the detriment of <i>Luronium natans</i> .	JNCC SAC Citation
	Any recreational pressure would most likely be canal based in order to have an impact (e.g. increased number of boats and passage along/within the SAC).	Natural England Consultation Response
Loss of Water Quality	An increase in recreational activity would be to the detriment of <i>Luronium natans</i> . Existing discharges of surface water run-off, principally from roads, cause some reduction in water quality.	JNCC SAC Citation
	Air pollution may contribute to a decline in water quality through acid and nitrogen deposition.	2008 WWT Screening Report

Table 5.1: Summary of Vulnerability of Cannock Extension Canal SAC

It is clear from the JNCC SAC citation that the balance of recreational use of the site is considered to be the key issue regarding the favourable conservation status of the *Luronium natans* population for which the site is designated.

5.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Conservation Objectives for the Cannock Extension Canal SAC were provided by Adam Dempsey (Land Management Lead Advisor for Staffordshire) at Natural England on 8th March 2012. It is noted that at the time of compilation of this report these objectives are in draft form, and that the final conservation objectives will be issued in the coming weeks. It is not anticipated that these objectives will alter significantly between the draft and final versions. The site is designated as both a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a SAC; however the reasons for designation are the same.

The Conservation Objectives for the Cannock Extension Canal SAC are summarised in Table 5.2.

FEATURE	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE
Floating Water Plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>	To maintain the designated habitats in favourable condition to support the species features of national / international importance.

Table 5.2: Relevant Conservation Objectives – Cannock Extension Canal SAC

6. CANNOCK CHASE SAC

6.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying site citation document, both of which are available at

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030107>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Staffordshire
Centroid:	SJ 982 188
Latitude:	52 45 59 N
Longitude:	02 01 36 W
SAC EU Code:	UK0030107
Status:	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha):	1236.93

The Cannock Chase SAC is an extensive area of lowland heath habitat. Other habitats present with the SAC include standing and running water, coniferous woodland, non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (e.g. orchards) and the built environment.

6.1.1 Qualifying Habitats

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports two habitats of European importance listed on Annex I of the Directive. European Dry Heaths are listed as a primary reason for selection, and Northern Atlantic Wet Heaths with *Erica tetralix* are listed as a qualifying feature but are not a primary reason for site selection.

The JNCC site description states that the area of lowland heathland at Cannock Chase is the most extensive in the Midlands, although there have been losses due to fragmentation and scrub/woodland encroachment. The character of the vegetation is intermediate between the upland or northern heaths of England and Wales and those of southern counties. Dry heathland communities belong to NVC types H8 Calluna vulgaris – Ulex gallii and H9 Calluna vulgaris – Deschampsia flexuosa heaths. Within the heathland, species of northern latitudes occur, such as cowberry Vaccinium vitis-idaea and crowberry Empetrum nigrum. Cannock Chase has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry Vaccinium intermedium, a plant of restricted occurrence. There are important populations of butterflies and beetles, as well as European nightjar Caprimulgus europaeus and five species of bats.

The quality and importance of the qualifying habitats, as detailed in the site citation, are summarised in Table 6.1.

QUALIFYING HABITAT	SITE COVERAGE (%)	QUALITY AND IMPORTANCE
European Dry Heaths	75%	Cannock Chase is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.
North Atlantic Wet Heaths with <i>Erica Tetralix</i>	1.3%	Cannock Chase is considered to support a significant presence.

Table 6.1: Quality and Importance of Qualifying Habitats for Cannock Chase SAC

6.1.2 Qualifying Species

The JNCC site description for the Cannock Chase SAC does not identify any Annex II species that are either a primary reason for a selection or are present as a qualifying criterion. The SAC citation does, however, indicate the presence of Annex II species within the site. These are:

- White-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, identified as being present; and,
- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, identified as being present with a population size of between 11 and 50 animals.

6.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC

The issues to which the SAC is vulnerable are highlighted in Table 6.2. This information has been collated from sources including JNCC, Natural England and the 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report.

ISSUE	DETAIL	SOURCE OF DATA
Recreational Pressure	Much of the SAC falls within the well-used country park, therefore visitor pressure is a key issue. Activities including dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering can all cause disturbance and result in erosion, new track creation and vegetation damage.	JNCC SAC Citation
Bracken	Bracken invasion is significant, but is being controlled. Birch and pine scrub, much of the latter from surrounding commercial plantations, is continually invading the site and has to be controlled. High visitor usage and the fact that a significant proportion of the site is Common Land, requiring Secretary of State approval before fencing can take place, means that the reintroduction of sustainable management in the form of livestock grazing has many problems.	JNCC SAC Citation
Hydrology	Cannock Chase overlies coal measures which have been deep-mined. Mining fissures continue to appear across the site even though mining has ceased and this is thought to detrimentally affect site hydrology. Furthermore the underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer with water abstracted for public and industrial uses and the effects of this on the wetland features of the Chase are not fully understood.	JNCC SAC Citation
Air Pollution*	NOx deposition is higher than the critical load, which is negatively impacting upon the heathland vegetation community.	2008 WWT Screening Report Air Pollution Information System (2012)

Table 5.2: Summary of Vulnerability of Cannock Chase SAC

*Air pollution is not considered to be a key vulnerability by JNCC.

6.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Conservation Objectives for the Cannock Chase SAC were provided by Adam Dempsey (Natural England Land Management Lead Advisor for Staffordshire) on 8th March 2012, and are summarised in Table 5.3. It should be noted that Cannock Chase SAC is composed of a number of individual SSSIs, and that Conservation Objectives are generally written for individual SSSIs as opposed to the SAC as a whole. As such, Table 6.3 only summarises those Objectives relevant to the SAC qualifying features and other Annex I Habitats and Annex II species known to occur.

FEATURE	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE
European Dry Heaths (Dwarf Shrub Heath)	To maintain the designated habitats in favourable condition.
North Atlantic Wet Heaths with <i>Erica Tetralix</i>	To maintain the designated habitats in favourable condition.

Table 6.3: Relevant Conservation Objectives – Cannock Chase SAC

7. BREDON HILL SAC

7.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying site citation document, both of which are available at

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0012587>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Worcestershire
Centroid:	SO 965 406
Latitude:	52 03 49 N
Longitude:	02 03 02 W
SAC EU Code:	UK0012587
Status:	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha):	359.86

Bredon Hill SAC is known to be an important site for fauna associated with decaying timber on ancient trees, including many Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce invertebrate species. The site is dominated by non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants, and also includes areas of dry grassland, heath and scrub.

7.1.1 Qualifying Habitats

The site does not support any Annex I habitat types. Annex 1 habitats are neither a primary reason for selection or present as qualifying criteria.

7.1.2 Qualifying Species

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports a species of importance listed on Annex II of the Directive. This species is the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*. The SAC citation states that this site is one of only three known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom, and that the species is known from 15 or fewer 10 km x 10 km grid squares within the United Kingdom.

The JNCC site description states that this species *was recorded at Bredon Hill in 1989, although there is a 1939 record from 'Tewkesbury', which may refer to Bredon Hill. It has been found in each of several years since. It is a very important site for fauna associated with decaying timber on ancient trees, including many Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce invertebrate species.*

7.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC

The issues to which the SAC is vulnerable are highlighted in Table 7.1. This information has been collated from sources including JNCC, Natural England and the original Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report.

ISSUE	DETAIL	SOURCE OF DATA
Lack of Replacement Deadwood	The key issue to which the violet click beetle is vulnerable is the lack of a replacement generation of trees for the current ancient trees over much of the site. Many of the younger generation of trees have been removed to increase stock grazing areas, meaning that the overall number of ancient trees suitable for this species is relatively small. Management agreements are being used to preserve existing tree stock and provide replacement planting.	JNCC SAC Citation
Air Pollution*	The site is at risk from an increase in NOx deposition as critical loading levels are already exceeded.	2008 WWT Screening Report Air Pollution Information System
Non-native / Invasive Species**	The young trees of desirable species are vulnerable to competition from invasive species.	2008 WWT Screening Report

Table 7.1: Summary of Vulnerability of Bredon Hill SAC

*Although air pollution was highlighted as a potential issue in the 2008 screening report, the consultation response received from Natural England highlighted the fact that neither the violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* nor its favoured habitat of decaying timber are especially sensitive to airborne pollutants. Air pollution was not listed as a key vulnerability by JNCC.

**Non-native/invasive species are not listed as a key vulnerability by JNCC.

7.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Conservation Objectives for the Bredon Hill SAC were provided by Mel Williams (Natural England) on 7th March 2012. The wider Bredon Hill site is designated as a SSSI; however the SAC designation does not cover this entire site. For the purpose of this assessment only those Conservation Objectives related to the SAC designation criteria are highlighted in Table 7.2. It should be noted that the names of the habitats are taken directly from the Natural England's Conservation Objectives report. They are broad habitat types, and as such are named differently to the specific habitats outlined in the SAC citation.

FEATURE	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE
Violet Click Beetle	To maintain the designated species in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to their population attributes.
Wood Pasture	To maintain the wood pasture in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.
Broadleaved Woodland	To maintain the broadleaved woodland in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.

Table 7.2: Relevant Conservation Objectives – Bredon Hill SAC

The Conservation Objectives report notes that it is very important that no attempt should be made to measure the population size of the violet click beetle directly, as methods currently available to find the species lead to destruction of its habitat.

8. PEAK DISTRICT DALES SAC

8.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying site citation document, both of which are available at

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0019859>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Derbyshire; Staffordshire
Centroid:	SK 142 550
Latitude:	53 05 29 N
Longitude:	01 47 16 W
SAC EU Code:	UK0019859
Status:	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha):	2326.33

The Peak District Dales SAC is a large site located within the wider Peak District National Park; the most visited National Park in the UK. It is made up of a variety of component SSSIs, and incorporates a wide range of habitat types including dry grassland, broadleaved woodland, mesophilic grassland, heath and scrub, marshland and bodies of standing water.

8.1.1 Qualifying Habitats

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports seven habitats of European importance listed on Annex I of the Directive. Two of these habitat types are listed as primary reasons for site selection. These are: semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*); and *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines.

The JNCC site description states that “*Peak District Dales is one of the most extensive surviving areas in England of CG2 Festuca ovina – Avenula pratensis grassland. Grasslands at this site range from hard-grazed short turf through to tall herb-rich vegetation, with transitions through to calcareous scrub and 9180 Tilio-Acerion forests – a diversity of structural types unparalleled in the UK. There is also a great physical diversity due to rock outcrops, cliffs, screes and a variety of slope gradients and aspects. In contrast to examples of Festuca – Avenula grassland on chalk to the south, these grasslands are less at risk from the threat of invasion by upright brome Bromopsis erecta and tor-grass Brachypodium pinnatum, which are at the edge of their range here and have limited vigour. The relatively cold oceanic nature of the climate means that there is enrichment with northern floristic elements, such as limestone bedstraw Galium sternerii and globeflower Trollius europaeus.*

With regard to the *Tilio-Acerion* forests, JNCC state “*Representing the north-central part of its UK range, this site in the English Midlands contains a large area of Tilio-Acerion, dominated by ash Fraxinus excelsior. Locally, sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus is abundant. The Dales provide good examples of woodland-scrub-*

grassland transitions, with associated rich invertebrate populations and plant communities. Among the uncommon plants present in the woods are mezereon *Daphne mezereum* and green hellebore *Helleborus viridis*, as well as whitebeams *Sorbus spp.* on the crags”.

The five remaining Annex 1 habitats within the SAC are all listed as qualifying criteria, but are not primary reasons for site selection. They are: European dry heaths; calaminarian grasslands of the *Violetalia caliminariae*; alkaline fens; calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (*Thlaspietea rotundifolii*); and calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation.

The quality and importance of the qualifying habitats, as detailed in the site citation, are summarised in Table 8.1.

QUALIFYING HABITAT	SITE COVERAGE (%)	QUALITY AND IMPORTANCE
Semi-natural Dry Grassland and Scrubland on Calcareous Substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>);	42.3 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.
<i>Tilio-Acerion</i> Forests of Slopes, Screes and Ravines	37.5 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.
European Dry Heaths	0.5 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to support a significant presence.
Calaminarian Grasslands of the <i>Violetalia caliminariae</i>	0.6 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to support a significant presence.
Alkaline Fens	0.1 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to support a significant presence.
Calcareous and Calcshist Screes of the Montane to Alpine Levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>);	1.2 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to support a significant presence. This habitat type is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.
Calcareous Rocky Slopes with Chasmophytic Vegetation	0.5 %	Peak District Dales SAC is considered to support a significant presence. This habitat type is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares.

Table 8.1: Quality and Importance of Qualifying Habitats for Peak District Dales SAC

8.1.2 Qualifying Species

The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) as it supports three species of importance listed on Annex II of the Directive. One of these species is listed as being a primary reason for site

selection: white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. The site citation identifies this species as being common within the SAC.

Two additional Annex II species that are listed as qualifying criteria but are not primary reasons for site selection are both fish species. These are bullhead *Cottus gobio* and brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*. Both species are described in the site citation as being present within the SAC.

The citation also references the presence of otter *Lutra lutra* within the SAC, although this is not identified as a qualifying species in the JNCC site description.

8.2 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC

The issues to which the SAC is vulnerable are highlighted in Table 7.2. This information has been collated from sources including JNCC, Natural England and the 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report.

ISSUE	DETAIL	SOURCE OF DATA
Inappropriate Grazing Management	The main threat to the limestone grasslands of the Peak District Dales is inappropriate grazing management. The ideal management for nature conservation purposes - light grazing throughout most of the year, with a break in grazing during the spring and early summer - tends to conflict with today's agricultural regimes. The result is either neglect and invasion by scrub, or overgrazing and the loss of the important vegetation communities. A number of the daleside grasslands are managed as part of a larger grazing unit with the richer improved plateau lands, with the result that any regulation of stocking levels in the dales becomes difficult. Some of the dalesides are now managed under Countryside Stewardship, which has brought about considerable improvements in their management. Similarly since 1996 English Nature's White Peak Wildlife Enhancement Scheme has been successful in attracting land managers and enhancing the conservation value of sites.	JNCC SAC Citation
Drainage	Proposed developments have the potential to interfere with drainage patterns within the site.	JNCC SAC Citation
Dust Arising from Nearby Quarrying	The impact of dust from quarrying needs to be assessed. Potential adverse effects arising from such proposals will be dealt with under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations.	JNCC SAC Citation
Impacts on Freshwater from Fishery Activities	There will be a need to work closely with game fishing interests to ensure that fishery management does not adversely affect the freshwater features of the cSAC. The same is true of shooting tenants, who may impact on the overall ecology of the woodland.	JNCC SAC Citation
Recreational Pressure*	Tourism to the site is likely to increase, which could have a significant impact on soil erosion and vegetation disturbance.	2008 WWT Screening Report

Table 8.2: Summary of Vulnerability of Peak District Dales SAC (continues)

ISSUE	DETAIL	SOURCE OF DATA
Impacts to Woodlands	<p>The woodlands within the SAC occupy very steeply-sloping dalesides, where access is always going to be problematic, and development pressures are therefore limited. Existing permission for limestone or mineral extraction is a potential threat to some of the woodlands on one part of the site.</p> <p>This will be addressed through the planning review procedures under the Habitats Regulations. Neglect has resulted in invasion by non-native species in some woods. This is now being addressed where possible through management under a Wildlife Enhancement Scheme. In some areas access by grazing livestock to some of the woodlands has resulted in a degraded ground flora, and limited regeneration of the shrub and canopy species.</p> <p>Once again, this is to be addressed, wherever practicable, through the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme.</p>	JNCC SAC Citation
Dominance and Regeneration of Sycamore	<p>The dominance of sycamore and its regeneration potential are a problem whilst it is considered a non-native part of the woodland. Removal of sycamore with the eventual aim of eradication would be a very long-term goal. Assessment of the status of sycamore (naturalised?) is needed to put in perspective eradication proposals. Some mature sycamore should be left as veterans. This will in part make up for the fact that there are few veteran trees in the woods. To have a natural and diverse age structure is therefore a long-term aspiration. In addition to grassland and woodland there are a range of scrub communities some of which are valuable for nature conservation. They are a key part of natural woodland and an open daleside. The scrub also illustrates how neglected grassland will revert to woodland whilst grazed woodland may not regenerate. The balance between woodland, grassland and scrub needs to be struck.</p>	JNCC SAC Citation
Air Pollution*	<p>The site lies downwind of Solihull Borough, therefore is likely to receive a greater volume of dispersed airborne pollutants from aircraft and vehicular emissions. The degree to which air pollution may affect this site was unclear at the time of the 2008 screening report.</p>	2008 WWT Screening Report

Table 8.2 (cont): Summary of Vulnerability of Peak District Dales SAC

**It is noted that neither recreational pressure or air pollution are considered to be a factor to which the site is vulnerable by JNCC.*

8.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

As detailed in Section 8.1, the Peak District National Park is composed of a wide range of individual SSSIs. Conservation Objectives are generally written for individual SSSI sites as opposed to SACs as a whole, therefore in order to give more manageable data the list of all component SSSI sites was filtered in the context of the findings of the 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report. A provisional list of over 60 SSSI sites was filtered to exclude those which do not fall within the SAC boundary, and those which are designated for purely geological reasons. This exercise identified the following 12 SSSI sites considered to be of relevance to the project brief:

- Ballidon Dale SSSI;

- Coombs Dale SSSI;
- Cressbrook Dale SSSI;
- Lathkill Dale SSSI;
- Long Dale and Gratton Dale SSSI;
- Long Dale, Hartington SSSI;
- Matlock Woods SSSI;
- Monks Dale SSSI;
- Rose End Meadow SSSI;
- The Wye Valley SSSI;
- Topley Pike and Deepdale SSSI; and,
- Via Gellia Woodlands SSSI

Table 8.3 summarises the broad Conservation Objectives for each of the habitat types occurring within the component SSSI sites. For the purpose of this assessment only those Conservation Objectives related to the SAC designation criteria (Annex I habitats and Annex II species) are highlighted. It should be noted that the names of the habitats are taken directly from the Natural England's Conservation Objectives reports. They are broad habitat types, and as such are named differently to the specific habitats outlined in the SAC citation.

At the time of writing it is not known whether the conservation objectives provided by Natural England are up-to-date, or have been superseded. Should any revised documents be provided, Table 8.3 will be updated.

FEATURE	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE	NAME OF COMPONENT SSSI											
		Ballidon Dale	Coombs Dale	Cressbrook Dale	Lathkill Dale	Long Dale & Gratton Dale	Long Dale, Hartington	Matlock Woods	Monks Dale	Rose End Meadow	The Wye Valley	Topley Pike and Deepdale	Via Gellia Woodlands
Calcareous Grassland (Lowland)	To maintain the lowland calcareous grassland habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calcareous Grassland (Upland)	To maintain the upland calcareous grassland habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	✓	x	(type not specified)	(type not specified)	x	✓	x	(type not specified)	x	(type not specified)	✓	x
Acid Grassland (Lowland)	To maintain the acid grassland at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew Woodland	To maintain the broad-leaved mixed and yew woodland habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	x	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
Inland Rock	To maintain the inland rock habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Dwarf Shrub Heath (Lowland)	To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	x	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x
Neutral Grassland (Lowland Meadow)	To maintain the neutral grassland habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Calaminarian Grassland (Lowland)	To maintain the calaminarian grassland habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	x	✓	x	x	✓		x	x	x	x	x	x
Fen, Marsh and Swamp	To maintain the fen, marsh and swamp habitat at the SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	x

Table 8.3: Summary of Conservation Objectives for Relevant Habitats Supported by Component SSSIs – Peak District Dales SAC

9. 'IN COMBINATION' EFFECTS

9.1 OTHER PLANS CONSIDERED 'IN COMBINATION'

The best practice methodology for the evidence gathering and screening stage of the Appropriate Assessment process states that the potential for a plan to impact upon any part of the Natura 2000 network should be considered *either alone, or in combination with other projects or plans*. As such it is necessary to consider the potential for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options policies to impact upon the Natura 2000 network both on their own merit and cumulatively with other local plans. The scoping response received from Natural England on 19th March 2012 confirmed that they welcome the recognition given to in-combination effects in the 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report. The impacts of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options are therefore considered in combination with the impacts of the overall Core Strategy, which was subject to screening in 2012 (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062). The conclusions of this previous screening exercise were based on consideration of a variety of other relevant plans and strategies, including several Habitat Regulations screening reports associated with LDFs for other relevant local authorities. For brevity, this information is not replicated in this report. Full details of the additional plans and strategies considered are provided in Chapter 9 of Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062.

9.2 CHANGES TO CORE STRATEGY SINCE ORIGINAL SCREENING REPORT

It is understood from consultation with Maurice Barlow (Principal Planning Officer, Solihull MBC) in July 2012 that, since the previous screening exercise for the Core Strategy was completed in March 2012 and approved, there have been a number of minor amendments to the proposed housing provision during the period covered by the LDF.

It is understood that the total estimated housing capacity (including completions 2006-2012) will be reduced has been reduced by 144 dwellings. This change has been endorsed by Solihull MBC and is within the Solihull Draft Local Plan submission document as submitted to the Secretary of State in September 2012. Based on a mean non-gypsy/traveller household size of 2.38 (see Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062), this reduction of 144 dwellings would reduce the projected population increase throughout the plan period by 342.72 people, easily offsetting the projected population rise arising from the increase in gypsy and traveller pitches.

Both of these population trends are taken into account when assessing the likelihood of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options adversely impacting upon Natura 2000 sites.

Discussion of the potential impacts of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document on Nature 2000 sites, both alone and in combination with the wider Core Strategy, is provided in Chapter 10.

10. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES

The potential impacts of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document on the Natura 2000 sites put forward for screening are discussed in Sections 10.1 to 10.4. These sections provide information regarding the key issues to which each of the Natura 2000 sites is considered to be vulnerable, much of which replicates relevant information originally provided in the further screening assessment for the Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062). For each of the areas of vulnerability a conclusion is made regarding the potential for adverse impact to occur as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options, both independently and in combination with the implementation of the wider Core Strategy.

Potential effects are summarised in Chapter 11.

10.1 CANNOCK EXTENSION CANAL SAC

Section 5.3 highlights that the favourable conservation status of the SAC is vulnerable to the following key issues:

- Lack of recreational use;
- Increased recreational use; and,
- Loss of water quality.

Cannock Extension Canal SAC, described by British Waterways as being a lesser used canal (British Waterways, No Date), is located 19.1 km from the Solihull MBC boundary, therefore no direct impacts upon the watercourse, e.g. direct loss of habitat, will occur.

10.1.1 Balance of Recreational Use

The favourable conservation status of the floating water plantain population for which Cannock Extension Canal is designated requires a certain level of recreational use or management of the watercourse in order to inhibit the growth of less desirable aquatic species. Uninhibited growth of these species may shade out the vulnerable plantain and result in the loss or depletion of the population. Conversely however, too much recreational use could harm the plantain population as a result of environmental impacts such as increased siltation or direct disturbance to the vegetation.

It is recognised from consultation with Natural England that any recreational pressure would need to be river-based, e.g. changes in the ambient level of boat passage along the canal, in order to have a significant effect on the designation criteria for the site. Increased recreational use of the canal for walking or cycling purposes is considered unlikely to have any impact upon the floating water plantain population as there is no obvious pathway between sources of potential effects and the key receptor.

It is considered that the predicated population increase as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is so small that it will have a negligible impact upon the balance of recreational use at this site when considered independently.

The screening exercise for the Solihull MBC Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) concluded that no significant effects are likely to arise as a result of increased recreational pressure from visitors emanating from the Solihull Borough region. As the increase in gypsy and traveller pitches under the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is more than offset by a reduction in proposed housing numbers within Solihull Borough over the period covered by the LDF, no adverse in-combination effects are predicted.

10.1.2 Water Quality

A further factor to which the favorable conservation status of the floating water plantain population is vulnerable is a decline in water quality. The JNCC SAC citation for the site identifies existing surface water run-off, principally from roads, as causing a reduction in water quality. The previous Solihull MBC screening report undertaken by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in 2008 also identified increased air pollution as having the potential to contribute to a decline in water quality as a result of acid and nitrogen deposition.

Reference to the Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment undertaken for the Black Country Core Strategy (UE Associates, 2010c) concurs that the key issue regarding the favourable conservation status of the SAC is the potential for a decrease in water quality as a result of increased traffic along the A5, M6 Toll and other roads in the vicinity arising as a result of the developments proposed in the Core Strategy. The screening report does however present the findings of further investigation into the source of pollutants affecting water quality at the site, and a consultation response from Natural England is quoted which states *it is now clear that any road drainage reaching the canal is only off a very short stretch of the B4154 and, as consequence, any increase in road traffic along this road resulting from the proposal of either your own authorities core strategy or that of The Black Country authorities. Indeed, it is now clear that the polluted water originates off Wyrley Common and matters are now in hand to resolve that issue. As a consequence, Natural England agrees that it is not necessary for you to proceed to the next stages of the HRA in terms of this particular issue.*

It is considered that the predicated population increase as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is so small that it will have a negligible impact on the quantity of traffic using the A5, M6 Toll etc. Considered independently, no adverse impacts are predicated as a result of the implementation of the document.

The screening exercise for the Solihull MBC Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) concluded that no significant effects are likely to arise as a result of increased recreational pressure from visitors emanating from the Solihull Borough region. As the increase in gypsy and traveller pitches under the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is more than offset by a reduction in proposed housing numbers within Solihull Borough over the period covered by the LDF, no adverse in-combination effects are predicted.

10.1.3 Other Factors

No significant effects arising from any other sources are perceived, either alone or in combination with other plans.

10.2 CANNOCK CHASE SAC

Section 6.3 highlights that the favourable conservation status of the SAC is vulnerable to the following key issues:

- Recreational pressure;
- Bracken and scrub invasion;
- Hydrological issues; and,
- Air pollution.

Cannock Chase SAC is located 28.3 km from the Solihull MBC boundary; therefore no direct impacts, e.g. loss of habitat to development, will occur.

10.2.1 Recreational Pressure

Much of the Cannock Chase SAC falls within the well used Cannock Chase Country Park, therefore the sensitive Annex II habitats that the site supports are vulnerable to disturbance resulting from visitor pressure. Disturbance can arise from activities such as dog walking, horse riding, cycling and orienteering, which can create informal footpaths and erode areas of sensitive vegetation.

The site has been subject to a comprehensive study by Footprint Ecology (2009) in order to assess the impacts of the Core Strategies of four neighbouring local authorities on the integrity of the site. This study concluded that the implementation of the proposed Core Strategies for Cannock Chase District, South Staffordshire District, Lichfield District and Stafford Borough could result in an increase of approximately 9% in visits to the SAC. It concludes that it will not be possible to avoid these effects if development is undertaken within 400 m of the SAC, or where single large developments are undertaken within easy travel distance of the SAC. The Footprint Ecology report expands upon a precedent set at the Thames Basin Heaths SPA/SAC, and uses the findings of a study into the number and spatial distribution of visits to the wider Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty undertaken in 2000 by Staffordshire University to calculate a theoretical zone of influence for adverse effects arising from recreational pressure. This study identified that approximately 75% of visitors to the SAC come from within 12 miles of the SAC boundary; therefore 12 miles (19.3 km) is used as the zone of influence. The report does, however, include a caveat that large developments (>100 dwellings) outside of this zone of influence may have the potential to contribute to recreational pressure.

In order to mitigate for recreational pressure effects arising from within the zone of influence, Footprint Ecology recommended that a Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy should be produced in order to ensure no net increase in recreational pressure and to aid the enhancement of the SAC. This document was compiled by Footprint Ecology in 2010. It provides avoidance and mitigation measures grouped into four key areas:

Habitat Management; Access Management and Visitor Infrastructure; Publicity, Education and Awareness Raising; and Alternative Sites. The content of each of these key areas is summarised below.

- **Habitat Management**

- Joint Working: Highlights the need for cross boundary co-operation to address issues with potential to impact on SAC designation criteria.
- Heathland Re-creation: Outlines strategy for re-creating heathland and extending current habitat extent by removing planted conifers and controlling scrub/bracken encroachment. This section also highlights the need to consider potential future recreational use before undertaking heathland creation to avoid attracting notable species that may then be disturbed, and states that heathland creation should not be carried out within 200 m of a road due to pollution issues.
- Grazing: Highlights that the most significant step towards ensuring long-term health and survival of dwarf shrub heath would be the reinstatement of livestock grazing, which would keep growth of desirable species vigorous and would hinder the establishment of undesirable grass species. Detail regarding a feasibility study into reinstating grazing is given.
- Fire: Details the need to prevent and control wildfires within the heathland habitat, and suggests locations for the installation of new fire breaks.

- **Access Management and Access Infrastructure**

- Parking: Highlights the need for auditing and reviewing current car parking facilities, and confirms that a draft parking strategy is in preparation. Current issues associated with car parking facilities are listed, and recommendations for remedial action are made.
- Dog Walking: This section highlights the lack of clear information for dog walkers at the site. Recommendations for the provision of more information for dog walkers are made.
- Cycling: The need for clear wardening is highlighted to ensure that cycling is only undertaken in designated cycling areas, and that areas of key environmental sensitivity are avoided.
- Horse Riding: As with cycling, the promotion of specific areas of the site is recommended to avoid damage to sensitive features.
- Other Activities: Other leisure activities should be focused away from key areas within the SAC, and monitoring and liaison with local groups is highlighted as being essential to minimise impacts to the SAC.
- Phytophthora Outbreak: A current issue of concern at Cannock Chase, and one which can be spread by recreational activity, is a plant disease which affects bilberry. Continued monitoring and maintenance of control measures are highlighted as being important.
- Public Transport: Future proposals to establish a bus route through Cannock Chase are highlighted, the advantages of which in combination with car parking proposals are highlighted in the strategy. A recommendation for the route to concentrate on drop points outside of the SAC is made.
- Staff: The need for adequate staff resources is highlighted, in order to provide face-to-face contact with visitors and undertake wardening of the site, without the need to deflect other

staff away from crucial habitat management tasks. The advantages of an increased staff presence are listed, and reference is made to a precedent set by the Dorset Urban Heaths Partnership.

- **Publicity, Education and Awareness Raising**

- The need for additional publicity material, signage etc. is highlighted in order to support other measures within the strategy and to raise awareness regarding the nature conservation importance of the SAC. Specific recommendations for publicity material are made.

- **Alternative Sites**

- The rationale behind provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace sites (SANGs) is outlined, and reference is made to precedents set at other sites, e.g. the Thames Basin Heaths. Recommended SANG provisions for each of the four local authorities that border or overlap the SAC are provided, in addition to criteria that SANGs should meet.

Providing that the proposals within the strategy are implemented they will allow the impacts of recreational pressure to be managed and will help to preserve the ongoing integrity of the SAC.

It is considered that the predicated population increase as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is so small that it will result in a minimal increase in the number of visitors to this Natura 2000 site. As such, adverse impacts as a result of increased recreational pressure are predicated to be negligible when considered independently.

The implementation of the policies within the Solihull MBC Core Strategy will undoubtedly result in an increase in visitor numbers to the SAC during the plan period, therefore there is considered to be some potential for in-combination effects to occur as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options. However, provided that the aforementioned Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy is implemented and maintained it is considered that the visitor carrying capacity of the SAC will be increased and the deleterious impact of recreational pressure will be lessened. As such, no significant effects are considered likely as a result of increased recreational pressure, either alone or in combination with other plans.

10.2.2 Bracken Invasion

The JNCC SAC citation for Cannock Chase highlights that bracken invasion is significant, but is being controlled. It also confirms that birch and pine scrub arising from surrounding commercial plantations is a key issue, and that management is hindered by the fact that much of the site is common land which requires Secretary of State approval before fencing can be installed. This means that management of scrub via livestock grazing is problematic.

Cannock Chase SAC will experience no significant increase in bracken or scrub invasion as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options. Further, the screening

exercise for the Solihull MBC Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) concluded that no significant effects are likely to arise as a result of increased bracken invasion, therefore in-combination effects are considered to be negligible.

10.2.3 Hydrological Issues

The Annex I habitats which are the main designation criteria for the SAC are at risk from hydrological changes, resulting from mining fissures which occur across the site. These fissures result from the presence of coal measures beneath the site which have formally been deep mined. The implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will have no impact upon this issue, either alone or in combination with the implementation of the wider Core Strategy.

A further known hydrological issue is that the underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer from which water is abstracted for public and industrial uses. Implementation of the developments proposed within the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will require no abstraction from the Sherwood Sandstone aquifer, therefore no potential significant hydrological effects are perceived.

10.2.4 Air Pollution

The 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report for the Solihull LDF Core Strategy identifies air pollution as being a potential significant effect that could arise from the implementation of the plan, as NO_x deposition is already higher than the critical load. This is understood to be negatively impacting upon the heathland communities within the site, although air pollution is not considered to be a significant vulnerability by JNCC.

Reference to the Air Pollution Information System (APIS, 2012) indicates that NO_x deposition at Cannock Chase SAC in 2005 was 20.58 kg N/ha/yr, only marginally above the maximum critical load threshold of 20.00 kg N/ha/yr. Projected NO_x deposition figures for 2020 indicate that deposition will drop to 16.66 kg N/ha/yr based on the EUP30 scenario¹, which is well below the maximum critical load threshold. 2005 figures for acidity were already below the critical load threshold and are projected to decrease further by 2020.

APIS also provides information regarding the sources of air pollutants that are affecting the SAC, and the percentages of total pollutants arising from each source. Comparative sources and percentages of NO_x pollution for 2005 and 2020 are summarised in Table 10.1.

¹ *The Updated Energy Projects 30 scenario is based on up to date projections of energy usage and emissions in the UK, published annually by the Department of Energy and Climate Change. This incorporates all firm environmental policy measures and is based on updated assumptions consistent with UK budget announcements*

NOx Deposition at Cannock Chase SAC					
NOx Deposition 2005			Predicted NOx Deposition 2020*		
Source of Pollution	% Contribution	Kg N/ha/yr	Source of Pollution	% Contribution	Kg N/ha/yr
Livestock production	40.1	7.84	Livestock production	51.3	8.12
Other sources (individually <5%)	24.2	4.73	Other sources (individually <5%)	20.4	3.23
Imported emissions (e.g. from Europe)	12.9	2.52	Ammonia from non-agricultural sources	12.4	1.96
Ammonia from non-agricultural sources	12.2	2.38	Imported emissions (e.g. from Europe)	9.7	1.54
Road transport (buses, cars, HGVs etc)	10.7	2.1	Ammonia emissions from fertiliser use	6.2	0.98
Total		20.58	Total		16.66
<i>*Based on EUP30 Scenario</i>					

Table 10.1: Comparative NOx Deposition Sources for Cannock Chase SAC

Table 10.1 shows that as well as the total level of NOx deposition at Cannock Chase SAC decreasing by 2020, the sources from which the deposition will arise will also change. Agriculture is the highest source of NOx currently, and this will also be the case in 2020; however NOx deposition from road transport will reduce to less than 5% of the total, compared to a 2005 figure of 10.7%. This is likely to be a result of the proliferation of cleaner cars and fuels, and the fact that many older cars will come to the end of their useful life by 2020. As such, although overall levels of road use are likely to increase, NOx deposition from road sources will drop.

It is considered that the predicated population increase as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is so small that it will have a negligible impact on air pollution at the Cannock Chase SAC. Considered independently, no adverse impacts are predicated as a result of the implementation of the document.

The screening exercise for the Solihull MBC Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) concluded that it will not make a significant contribution to the level of air pollution arising from agricultural sources, either alone or in combination with other plans. The predicted increase in population within the borough will likely lead to an increase in the number of private cars; however this will be alleviated to some extent by policies targeted towards improvements in sustainable public transport and national and local targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. As pollution arising from the road network is generally accepted to be concentrated within 200 m of a road (Department for Transport, 2011) it is considered that the majority of road-based air pollution will occur within Solihull Borough, as the likely increase in traffic within 200 m of the Cannock Chase SAC arising from within Solihull Borough is considered to be negligible. It is not considered that the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will result in a significant increase in air pollution, either alone or in combination with other plans.

10.2.5 Other Factors

No significant effects arising from any other sources are perceived, either alone or in combination with other plans. Providing the impacts of recreational pressure are managed in accordance with the Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy (Footprint Ecology, 2010), particularly with regard to access and infrastructure, no adverse impacts on any Annex II species are perceived.

10.3 BREDON HILL SAC

Section 7.3 highlights that the favourable conservation status of the SAC is vulnerable to the following key issues:

- Lack of replacement deadwood;
- Air pollution; and,
- Non-native/invasive species.

Bredon Hill SAC is located 35.2 km from the Solihull MBC boundary; therefore no direct impacts, e.g. loss of habitat to development, will occur.

10.3.1 Lack of Replacement Deadwood

The JNCC SAC citation for Bredon Hill identifies the key issue to which the violet click beetle is vulnerable is the lack of a replacement generation to replace the existing ancient trees that occur on site. This could result in a loss of habitat for the violet click beetle in the long-term.

The implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will have no impact upon the availability of deadwood habitat within the SAC, either independently or in combination with the wider SAC.

10.3.2 Air Pollution

The 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report highlights APIS figures that show that the Bredon Hill SAC is at risk from NO_x deposition as critical loading levels are already exceeded. It is noted, however, that neither the violet click beetle or its favoured deadwood habitat are considered to be at risk from NO_x deposition, a fact that is also highlighted in a consultation response received from Natural England. Air pollution is not considered to be a key vulnerability by JNCC.

As the sole purpose of an Appropriate Assessment is to assess potential impacts of Natura 2000 designation criteria (i.e. Annex I habitats and Annex II species), it is therefore concluded that the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will have no significant effect on the SAC as a result of air pollution, either independently or in combination.

It is further noted that the potential for significant effects on this SAC was also screened out at the initial stage of the Appropriate Assessment undertaken for the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy (now

superseded). This authority is located much closer to the SAC than Solihull Borough, adding weight to the argument that this site can be screened out.

10.3.3 Non-native / Invasive Species

The initial 2008 screening report highlights that young trees of desirable species are vulnerable to competition from invasive species, although this is not highlighted as a key vulnerability by JNCC. There are no identified pathways by which the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options policies could contribute to this impact, therefore no significant effects are perceived.

10.3.4 Other Factors

No significant effects arising from any other sources are perceived, either alone or in combination with other plans.

10.4 PEAK DISTRICT DALES SAC

Section 8.3 highlights that the favourable conservation status of the SAC is vulnerable to the following key issues:

- Inappropriate grazing management;
- Drainage;
- Dust arising from nearby quarrying;
- Impacts on freshwater from fishery activities;
- Recreational pressure;
- Impacts to woodlands; and,
- Dominance and regeneration of sycamore.

The Peak District Dales SAC is located 75 km from the Solihull MBC boundary; therefore no direct impacts, e.g. loss of habitat to development, will occur.

10.4.1 Inappropriate Grazing Management

The JNCC SAC citation for the Peak District Dales states that the main threat to the limestone grasslands of the dales is inappropriate grazing management, as the ideal management of the site tends to conflict with intensive modern agricultural regimes.

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will have no impact on agricultural practices within the SAC boundary, either alone or in combination with the wider Core Strategy.

10.4.2 Drainage

The JNCC SAC citation identifies that proposed developments have the potential to interfere with drainage patterns within the SAC boundary.

Due to the large distance between the SAC boundary and Solihull Borough, there are no pathways via which the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options could impact upon drainage within the site, either alone or in combination with the wider Core Strategy.

10.4.3 Dust Arising from Nearby Quarrying

The JNCC SAC citation identifies that the impact of dust arising from quarrying needs to be assessed in accordance with the Habitat Regulations.

Due to the large distance between the SAC boundary and Solihull Borough and the small-scale nature of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options, there are no pathways via which its implementation could influence dust distribution within the SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans.

10.4.4 Impacts on Freshwater from Fishery Activities

The JNCC SAC citation identifies the need to work closely with game fishing interests to ensure that fishery management does not adversely affect the freshwater features of the site. It is noted that all Annex II species listed on the SAC citation are aquatic species.

There are no identified pathways by which the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options could have a significant effect upon fishery management, either alone or in combination with other plans.

10.4.5 Recreational Pressure

The 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report for the Solihull MBC Core Strategy identifies recreational pressure as being a potential significant effect on the integrity of the SAC. Despite this conclusion, it is noted that recreational pressure is not noted to be an area of key vulnerability by JNCC. Issues to which the site is known to be vulnerable are generally associated with land use and inappropriate management.

It is considered that the predicted population increase as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is so small that it will have a negligible impact upon the balance of recreational use at this site when considered independently.

In assessing the likelihood of significant effects arising as a result of increased recreational pressure from the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options in combination with the overall Core Strategy, it is important to consider which of the component SSSIs that make up the SAC are publically accessible and which are located within private land. This information, based on a review of the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website, the Natural England website and subsequent consultation with Audra Hurst at Natural England (SSSI Lead Adviser . Peak District), is summarised in Table 10.2.

COMPONENT SSSI	IS SITE PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE?	NOTES
Ballidon Dale	Yes	Much of site is designated as CRoW* open access land.
Coombs Dale	Yes	Much of site is designated as CRoW open access land.
Cressbrook Dale	Yes	Much of the SSSI falls within the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve.
Lathkill Dale	Yes	Much of the site falls within the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve. Small areas outside of the NNR boundary are also designated as CRoW open access land.
Long Dale and Gratton Dale	Yes	A small part of the site falls within the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve. The remainder of the site is designated as CRoW open access land.
Long Dale, Hartington	Yes	The entire site is designated as CRoW open access land.
Matlock Woods	No	Matlock Woods does not fall within any National Nature Reserve, and it not CRoW open access land.
Monks Dale	Yes	Much of the site falls within National Nature Reserve.
Rose End Meadow	No	No part of this site is publically accessible.
The Wye Valley	Yes	Much of site is designated as CRoW* open access land.
Topley Pike and Deepdale	Yes	Much of site is designated as CRoW* open access land.
Via Gellia Woodlands	No	Matlock Woods does not fall within any National Nature Reserve, and it not CRoW open access land.
*CRoW . Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000		

Table 10.2: Summary of Which Component SSSIs are Publically Accessible – Peak District Dales SAC

Table 10.2 highlights that the majority of component SSSIs that make up the SAC are publically accessible. As such it is not possible to completely discount the potential for recreational pressure to occur within some of these sites. The extent to which this recreational pressure would result from the implementation of the Solihull LDF Core Strategy is, however, questionable.

The Peak District National Park covers an area of 143,800 hectares (EFTEC, 2010), of which the Peak District Dales SAC occupies only 2326.33 hectares (JNCC, No Date). Reference to a 2005 visitor survey for the Peak District National Park (Peak District National Park Authority, 2005) identified that 95% of all surveyed visitors to the park had a home postcode in England, and that the largest proportion of respondents came from postcodes that fall within the confines of the National Park (such as Sheffield, Stockport and Derby). The report concludes that the nearer the postcode to the National Park, the larger the proportion of day visitors. A slight skew towards the East Midlands is noted, with more visitors visiting the park from the south east than any other direction. Visitors from the West Midlands conurbation, which includes Solihull Borough, were found to represent between 1% and 5% of the total number of day visitors.

Given the large distance between Solihull Borough and the SAC boundary, the visitor trends identified in the 2005 survey and the fact that the SAC only occupies a very small proportion of the wider National Park, it is

therefore considered that the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options in combination with the overall Core Strategy will result in no significant adverse impacts on the Peak District Dales SAC as a result of recreational pressure. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that recreational pressure has not been identified as one of the key issues to which the site is vulnerable by JNCC.

The screening exercise undertaken for the overall Core Strategy in 2012 (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) included a review of the potential for the implementation of the Core Strategy to cause adverse recreational impacts when considered in combination with the implementation of LDFs for a variety of other local authorities. The screening report concluded that, as long as mitigation proposals and policy changes recommended for those authorities where Core Strategy policies could result in recreational pressure impacts are adhered to, no in-combination recreational pressure impacts arising from the Solihull LDF Core Strategy policies were perceived. It was further concluded that the Core Strategy policies targeted towards protection, enhancement and restoration of the natural environment within Solihull Borough (Policy 10), and towards enhancing green infrastructure and provision of open space, recreation and leisure facilities (Policies 18 and 20), would provide an appropriate concession towards offsetting recreational pressure at a SAC site located 75 km from the borough boundary, and which is not especially vulnerable to recreational pressure.

10.4.6 Impacts to Woodlands

The JNCC SAC citation identifies that the woodlands that fall within the SAC are at risk from a range of factors, including issues relating to mineral extraction, neglect leading to invasion by non-native species, and deleterious impacts on woodland ground flora arising from livestock grazing. The citation notes that measures are in place to address each of these effects.

There are no identified pathways by which the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options could contribute to any of the identified woodland impacts, either alone or in combination with other plans, therefore no significant effects to woodlands within the SAC are considered likely.

10.4.7 Dominance and Regeneration of Sycamore

The JNCC SAC citation identifies that the dominance of sycamore and its regeneration potential are problematic, as it is currently considered to be a non-native part of the woodland flora. It is noted that the presence of sycamore is impacting upon the desired balance between woodland, grassland and scrub habitats.

There are no identified pathways by which the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options could contribute to the issue of sycamore regeneration within the SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans, therefore no significant effects are considered likely.

10.4.8 Air Pollution

The 2008 Warwickshire Wildlife Trust screening report for the Core Strategy identifies that air pollution is a potential significant effect on the integrity of the SAC, as the site lies downwind of Solihull Borough. Air pollution is, however, not considered to be an area of key vulnerability by JNCC.

Considered independently, the proposed increase in pitch numbers as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options are considered to be so small that they will result in a negligible increase in air pollution at the Peak District Dales SAC.

The screening exercise for the Solihull MBC Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) concluded that significant effects on the Peak District Dales SAC as a result of air pollution are unlikely to occur. APIS data show that agricultural sources are responsible for a significantly higher proportion of NOx deposition at the SAC than other sources, and this is also predicted to be the case in 2020. No in-combination increase in agricultural pollutants at the site will occur as a result of the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options or the wider Solihull MBC Core Strategy. It is further noted that road transport was a relatively minor source of pollution in 2005, and that it is predicated to drop to less than 5% of the total by 2020. This is likely to be a result of the proliferation of cleaner cars and fuels, and the fact that many older cars will come to the end of their useful life by 2020. As such, although the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options and Core Strategy may contribute to an overall increase in levels of road use, NOx deposition from road sources will drop.

As the increase in gypsy and traveller pitches under the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is more than offset by a reduction in proposed housing numbers within Solihull Borough over the period covered by the LDF, no adverse in-combination air pollution effects are predicted.

10.4.4 Other Factors

No significant effects arising from any other sources are perceived, either alone or in combination with other plans.

11. SCREENING MATRIX

Table 11.1 provides a screening matrix summarising the findings of the further screening exercise.

Site	Factor Affecting Site Integrity	Potential Effects Arising From Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options	Potential Effects in Combination with Other Plans	Significance of Effects
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Balance of Recreational Use	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Loss of Water Quality	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
Cannock Chase SAC	Recreational Pressure	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Bracken Invasion	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Hydrological Issues	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
Cannock Chase SAC	Air Pollution	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
Bredon Hill SAC	Lack of Replacement Deadwood	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Air Pollution	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Non-native / Invasive Species	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
Peak District Dales SAC	Inappropriate Grazing Management	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Drainage	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
Peak District Dales SAC	Dust Arising from Nearby Quarrying	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Impacts on Freshwater from Fishery Activities	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Recreational Pressure	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Impacts to Woodlands	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Dominance and Regeneration of Sycamore	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
	Air Pollution	None anticipated.	None anticipated.	NLSE
Key: NLSE – No Likely Significant Effect PSE – Possible Significant Effect LSE – Likely Significant Effect				

Table 11.1: Assessment of Individual and In Combination Effects of Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options on Natura 2000 Sites

12. CONCLUSIONS AND PRECAUTIONARY RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with best practice guidance, screening has been undertaken to assess whether the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options is likely to result in significant effects on the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Cannock Extension Canal SAC
- Cannock Chase SAC
- Bredon Hill SAC
- Peak District Dales SAC

Impacts on all other relevant Natura 2000 sites were screened out during a previous screening exercise for the overall Solihull MBC Core Strategy undertaken by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in 2008. A further screening exercise for the overall Core Strategy was undertaken in 2012 (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) during which the potential for significant effects on all Natura 2000 sites, including those listed above, was screened out. No recommendations for further Appropriate Assessment were made.

The requirement for separate screening for the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options document was identified in consultation between Solihull MBC and Natural England in late 2012. Based on a review of the available evidence base it is concluded that none of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD policies will result in a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network, either alone or in combination with other local plans. It is not considered that any of the above sites should be subject to further stages of Appropriate Assessment. The key factor leading to this conclusion is that the implementation of the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options will, based on mean population statistics for the gypsy/traveller community in Solihull Borough, lead to a very small population increase over the plan period. In addition, a reduction in proposed housing allocations in the Core Strategy during the plan period will more than offset the population increase arising from the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options.

In accordance with the precautionary principle, which is a key tenet underpinning the Appropriate Assessment process, it is considered appropriate to make recommendations for further works that may be required, depending on the nature and scale of individual developments undertaken in accordance with Core Strategy policies. No specific recommendations regarding the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options are made, however the precautionary recommendations made in the screening report for the wider Core Strategy (Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Report RT-MME-111062) are considered to be applicable, and should be adhered to.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

**SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY**

**HABITAT REGULATIONS APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
STAGE 1: ADDITIONAL SCREENING TO CONSIDER
GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITE ALLOCATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

A Report to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

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Checked by:

David Smith
Ecology and Landscapes Director

Approved by:

Dr Philip Fermor
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