
Monmouthshire County Council

Deposit Local Development Plan

**Habitats Regulations Assessment
(Appropriate Assessment)**

Addendum Report

February 2014



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**HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT
(APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT)**

ADDENDUM REPORT

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DEPOSIT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Deposit Local Development Plan**

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Addendum Report

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1.0 Introduction and Purpose of the Addendum Report

- 1.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) Report (October 2012) that accompanied the Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) on submission in December 2012 was prepared in accordance with Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). The HRA has been carried out in an iterative and ongoing way with the plan making process since 2009; it has also undertaken in accordance with good practice guidance.
- 1.2 The LDP has been examined by an independent Inspector to determine whether the plan is sound. Following the Examination sessions in May 2013, the Inspector's Preliminary Findings concluded that the Council must identify extensions to the existing strategic sites and identify other additional sites sufficient to provide an additional 900 dwellings. In response to this, the Council prepared an Amended and Additional Sites Consultation Report (July 2013) that set out the proposals for meeting the increased housing target, which went on public consultation from 10 July until the 21 August 2013.
- 1.3 In September 2013 an HRA Addendum Report was produced to ensure that the amended and additional sites were considered through the HRA process for the LDP. The HRA Addendum Report (Sept 2013) carried out a screening of the amended and additional sites and concluded that the majority of them were unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in-combination on European sites.
- 1.4 Additional hearing sessions for the LDP were held from 01 to 04 October. The Inspector's Final Report was published 30 January 2014 and concluded that subject to some further minor changes the LDP is 'sound'. To ensure that the requirements of the Habitats Directive and Regulations are met, it is necessary to consider the further changes proposed in the Inspector's Final Report.

2.0 Screening of the Schedule of Matters Arising Changes

- 2.1 The main changes set out in the Inspector's Final Report are as follows:
 - Restructuring of explanatory text to ensure that the strategy arising from the key issues, vision, objectives is coherently expressed;
 - Increase the amount of housing provided for the period from 2006-2011;
 - Address the identified shortage in housing provision through the allocation of additional sites and extensions to existing strategic sites where possible;
 - Establish measures to provide accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers in line with national policy;

- Clarify in site specific policies that highly vulnerable development will not take place in areas of high flood risk;
- Clarify that protected employment sites should normally be retained for employment development only;
- Include an updated infrastructure schedule for the strategic sites as an appendix to the LDP;
- Delete the housing allocation at Llandogo;
- Delete the Green Belt designation west of Chepstow and restore the green wedge designation.

2.2 The majority of the changes proposed (Appendix A of the Inspector's Final Report) relate to clarifications and minor changes in wording. These are not considered significant and will not have any impacts on European sites. However, there are some changes of significance to the HRA process and these are addressed below.

Increased Housing Provision

2.3 The Deposit LDP proposed the delivery of 4,000 dwellings, which was the level of provision considered and assessed through the HRA (AA) Report published in October 2012. Following the Examination sessions in May 2013, the Inspector's Preliminary Findings concluded that the Council must identify extensions to the existing strategic sites and identify other additional sites sufficient to provide an additional 900 dwellings. To address the increased provision, the Council prepared an Amended and Additional Sites Consultation Report (July 2013). The amended and additional sites and overall increase in provision was subject to HRA screening with the findings presented in an HRA Addendum Report (September 2013). The HRA Addendum Report concluded that the amended and additional sites do not significantly affect the findings of the HRA (AA) Report and will not result in significant effects on European sites.

2.4 A small further increase of 57 dwellings as proposed in the Inspector's Final Report is not considered likely to affect the findings of the HRA (AA) Report (Oct 2012). The mitigation proposed in the HRA (AA) Report and through LDP policies will ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

Site Allocations

2.5 The majority of the proposed amended and additional sites have already been considered through the HRA Addendum Report produced in September 2013. The Addendum Report concluded that there would not be significant effects on European sites, given the mitigation proposed in the HRA (AA) Report and through LDP policies.

2.6 One change that has not been previously considered through the HRA process is the proposed extension to the Wonastow Road Strategic Site. The Inspector's Final Report recommends that the site incorporates

land at Drewen Farm to accommodate an additional 80 dwellings. The Wonastow Road site was originally screened in Appendix 5 of the HRA (AA) Report (Oct 2012) as a 26.9 hectare site that would provide 400 dwellings. Given its distance from European sites, the screening concluded that there were no pathways for development to have direct impacts. However, it was considered that there was the potential for in-combination effects with other development proposed in the LDP. The next stage of the HRA process, the Appropriate Assessment, considered the potential in-combination effects of the LDP and proposed mitigation measures to address them, which have now been incorporated into the LDP.

- 2.7 The changes proposed by the Inspector would result in a larger site, increasing in size from 26.9 to 33.36 hectares, as well as an increased scale of development, from 400 to 450 dwellings. Given its distance of from European sites, it is considered that these changes would not result in any further or unidentified impacts than have already been considered through the HRA (AA) Report (Oct 2012). Given the mitigation proposed in the HRA (AA) Report (Oct 2012) and through LDP Policies, it is concluded that the increased provision and extension of the site Wonastow Road Site will not have significant effects on European sites.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Inspector's Final Report (30 January 2014) concluded that subject to some further minor changes the Monmouthshire LDP is 'sound'. These changes have been considered to determine if they are likely to have significant effects on European sites and therefore affect the findings of the HRA (AA) Report published in October 2012.
- 3.2 A screening of the key changes concluded that the LDP, as modified by the Inspector, will not have significant effects either alone or in-combination on European sites, given the mitigation proposed in the HRA (AA) Report (Oct 2012) and through LDP Policies.