

# CALNE COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) relates to the proposed modified Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 2023-2038 Pre Submission Consultation Draft February 2024, hereafter referred to as the NP, submitted to Wiltshire Council in February 2024. This HRA has been undertaken to inform a Regulation 14 consultation response from Wiltshire Council to the NP. The Calne Community NP was made in February 2018 and the proposed modified NP is being screened under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019<sup>1</sup>, hereafter referred to as the Habitats Regulations, due to proposed amendments to several policies, the deletion of policies, the inclusion of new policies and the requirement for the qualifying body to consult the local planning authority on the proposed modifications to the NP.
- 1.2. The HRA has been carried out to comply with Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, hereafter referred to as the Habitats Regulations. Under these Regulations, a competent authority must consider whether a relevant plan is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites (formally also referred to as Natura 2000 sites and now known as the national site network<sup>2</sup>) before deciding to give any consent, permission or other authorisation. If the screening exercise demonstrates significant effects are likely, whether or not these are addressed through mitigation measures<sup>3</sup>, the competent authority must undertake an appropriate assessment to examine the effects of the plan on the conservation objectives of the European sites in question, consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to its representations. Both the screening and any subsequent AA must consider the impacts of the plan alone and in combination with other plans or projects.
- 1.3. It is usually the case that a plan of this nature does not go into the detailed aspects of development proposals and therefore the full effects of potential development cannot be accurately assessed at the plan making stage. Those details will typically be identified through a planning application which would be subject to further, more detailed HRA. The principle that a HRA need only consider the effects of a proposal or policy in as much detail as is specified by the plan was explained by Advocate General Kokott in a judgement brought against the UK government in 2005:  
  
*“Many details are regularly not settled until the time of the final permission. It would also hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure.”*<sup>4</sup>
- 1.4. Where appropriate assessment is undertaken, the competent authority may go on to authorise the plan or project provided that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any European sites. Where an **adverse**

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<sup>1</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 were amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species do not change [Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614447/Changes_to_the_Habitats_Regulations_2017_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Due to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) being amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C 323/17 “People Over Wind”/P. Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta

<sup>4</sup> Commission of the European Communities v UK and NI, opinion of Advocate General KoKott, 9 June 2005, Case C-6/04

**effect on the integrity (AEoI)** of any European sites cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan can only be authorised and proceed if there are **imperative reasons of over-riding public interest (IROPI)** and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.

- 1.5. Wiltshire Council has conducted the following HRA as competent authority for the Calne Community NP. Where risks to European sites are identified, changes are recommended to remove or reduce the risks, and these should be incorporated into the NP before it is made. Likewise, if the policies or planning context change after the HRA is completed, the HRA process must be repeated before the final plan is considered by a referendum and adopted.

## 2. Screening Methodology

- 2.1. Each element of the plan has been categorised against screening criteria developed by Natural England (NE) to provide a clear audit trail for the screening assessment.
- 2.2. The screening criteria used are as follows:
  - Category A1: The policy will not itself lead to development e.g. because it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development.
  - Category A2: The policy is intended to protect the natural environment.
  - Category A3: The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment.
  - Category A4: The policy would positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas.
  - Category A5: The policy would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European sites and associated sensitive areas.
  - Category B: No significant effect.
  - Category C: Likely significant effect alone; and
  - Category D: Likely significant effects in combination.
- 2.3. The effect of each policy has been considered both individually and in combination with other plans and projects (see Table 1 below). Where potential for likely significant effects have been identified, an appropriate assessment has been undertaken in subsequent sections.

## 3. Higher Level HRAs

### Wiltshire Core Strategy

- 3.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA (October 2009, February 2012<sup>5</sup>, March 2013<sup>6</sup>, February 2014<sup>7</sup> and April 2014<sup>8</sup>) identified general parameters to determine the likelihood of potential impacts on European sites. The following potential impact pathways and associated parameters were identified and assessed for the European sites stipulated below.
  - *Recreation – European sites within 5km of the plan area, or where the New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is within 13.8km (extended to 15km where HRA indicates this is necessary) of the plan area or where Salisbury Plain SPA/SAC is within 15km of the plan area (it*

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<sup>5</sup> Wiltshire Core Strategy Submission Draft – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, February 2012

<sup>6</sup> Wiltshire Core Strategy – Assessment under the Habitats Regulations, Wiltshire Council, March 2013

<sup>7</sup> Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

<sup>8</sup> Wiltshire Core Strategy Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, April 2014

*should be noted that the relevant parameter for the latter has since been revised on the basis of data obtained by means of visitor surveys and is now 6.4km):*

- Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA)
- River Avon SAC
- New Forest SAC / SPA
- Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC (added post adoption of Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS))
- North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC (added post adoption of WCS)
- *Hydrology / Hydrogeology - Sites that fall wholly or partly within the Wessex Water Resource Zone may be susceptible to impact:*
  - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
  - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
  - Pewsey Downs SAC
  - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
  - River Avon SAC
  - River Lambourn SAC
  - Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain SAC
- *Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition – European sites within 200m of a main road*
  - Porton Down SPA
  - Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA
  - Solent and Southampton Water SPA
  - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC
  - River Avon SAC
  - Rodborough Common SAC
  - Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC
- *Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance*
  - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC
  - Porton Down SPA
  - Chilmark Quarries SAC (added post adoption of WCS)
  - Mottisfont Bats SAC (added post adoption of WCS)

### **Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan**

- 3.2 Since the Core Strategy was adopted, the Council published a pre-submission draft of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (WHSAP) together with a HRA dated 21 June 2017. A schedule of proposed changes was considered by Cabinet supported by an Addendum to the HRA dated May 2018. A schedule of changes and an Addendum to the HRA incorporating minor factual changes were published in September 2018 for public consultation. Subsequently, the WHSAP (Council Version, February 2020) was adopted by Full

Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and this was accompanied by the final WHSAP Assessment under the Habitats Regulations (Wiltshire Council, February 2020).

- 3.3 The screening criteria for the adopted WHSAP and final HRA were modified for some European sites from those used for the Core Strategy subsequent to the acquisition of results from new surveys, and in light of advice from NE. This includes the zone of influence (Zol) around the Salisbury Plain SPA used to screen for likely significant effects as a result of recreational pressure being revised from 15km to 6.4km on the basis of data obtained by means of visitor surveys.
- 3.4 Furthermore, since the Core Strategy was adopted, NE has advised Wiltshire Council of its concerns regarding the growing number of visitors to the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC in recent years which has led to an increase in trampling. NE has advised that this is particularly evident at North Meadow (which is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR)) during April and May when visitors come to see the Snake's-head fritillaries in flower. NE considers that the increase in recreational pressure upon the SAC is primarily as a result of increases in the local population, and that major new housing developments within a short travel distance of North Meadow are likely to add to the existing visitor pressure and trampling effects. The North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028 (May 2023, strategy approved for use by Wiltshire Council in November 2023) sets out the mitigation strategy for the North Meadow component of the SAC with regards to new residential and tourism accommodation developments within the identified Zol. The Clattinger Farm component of the SAC is not subject to the strategy. The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy sets out two Zol, an Inner Zone of 0km - 4.2km and an Outer Zone of 4.2km – 9.4km. The Inner Zone represents the area within which 75% of local year round users (e.g. dog walkers) originate. The Outer Zone represents the area within which 75% of those people who visit to view the Snake's-head fritillaries during the main flowering season originate<sup>9</sup>. Mitigation will be achieved through financial contributions to Strategic Access Management Monitoring (SAMM), Infrastructure Mitigation Projects (IMP) and/or Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs). Developments of over 50 units within the Inner Zone will be expected to provide their own SANG unless a financial contribution to the IMP/SANG project system can be robustly justified. The strategy is an interim approach and will be reviewed within 5 years following further monitoring and surveys.
- 3.5 Impacts of development in Wiltshire on the New Forest SPA were considered in the HRA for the South Wiltshire Core Strategy (SWCS) adopted in 2012<sup>10</sup>. The assessment used data from the Tourism South East PROGRESS survey for 2004/05 and census data from 2001 for the former Salisbury District to examine patterns of visitors to the New Forest from across south Wiltshire. That HRA concluded that the development in south Wiltshire would increase visitor pressure by less than 1% and 89% of this would be through additional local day visits from within 8km of the National Park. The WCS addressed the New Forest's mitigation requirements through Core Policy 50, identifying that a New Forest Mitigation Strategy would be prepared to address recreational impacts. Since the WCS was adopted, the council has joined a partnership of local authorities seeking to develop a strategic approach to address the impacts of recreational pressure on the New Forest SPA. A Government grant through the Planning Delivery Fund enabled visitor surveys to be conducted across the New Forest in 2018/19. This work was recently published, and the Council is now part of a steering group working to agree a common approach to mitigation including the extent of the zone of influence and how to fairly reflect different visit rates within it. This evidence has informed the preparation of an Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy by Wiltshire Council.
- 3.6 The WCS adopted the 8km zone of influence, however, as discussed in the latest iteration of the council's strategy, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 this has been revised to 13.8km. Before this date, the mitigation scheme

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<sup>9</sup> North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy 2023 – 2028. Cotswold District Council, Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council in partnership with Natural England. May 2023

<sup>10</sup> South Wiltshire Proposed Submission Core Strategy HRA Report, Appendix 13. NPA for Wiltshire Council, July 2009

only applied to permitted dwellings lying within 8km of the New Forest designated sites whereas thereafter the scheme has been extended to apply to new residential and tourism development within 13.8km of any of the New Forest designated sites and may be extended to include applications within 15km, where demonstrated to be necessary through a bespoke appropriate assessment.

- 3.7 Since the WCS was adopted and on the advice of NE, any plan or project that will lead to development within the catchment of the River Avon SAC must be phosphorus neutral and be subject to appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effect on the SAC alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in order to be authorised.

### **Emerging Evidence and Advice from Natural England Subsequent to Adoption of WHSAP**

- 3.8 Similarly, it came to light in spring 2020 that any plan or project that will lead to development within the catchment of the River Test must be nitrogen neutral as the Test drains into the Solent and this region is protected by a number of European and international designations including the Solent Maritime SAC, Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site. In 2018 and 2019 NE undertook a number of condition assessments of the features of these designated sites around the Solent. These assessments identified that high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus are entering this water environment and that there is sound evidence that nitrogen in particular is causing eutrophication at the aforementioned designated sites and that the resulting excessive growth of green algae and plants, which reduces oxygen and light levels, is leading to negative effects on the special features for which the European sites are designated. These nutrient inputs currently mostly come either from agricultural sources or from wastewater from existing housing and other development. These findings were published by NE in June 2020 in *Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region*. This advice also stipulates that:

*“There is uncertainty as to whether new growth will further deteriorate designated sites. This issue has been subject to detailed work commissioned by local planning authorities (LPAs) in association with Natural England, Environment Agency and water companies. This strategic work, which updates early studies, is ongoing. Until this work is complete, the uncertainty remains and the potential for future housing developments across the Solent region to exacerbate these impacts creates a risk to their potential future conservation status.*

*One way to address this uncertainty is for new development to achieve nutrient neutrality. Nutrient neutrality is a means of ensuring that development does not add to existing nutrient burdens and this provides certainty that the whole of the scheme is deliverable in line with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).*

*This report sets out a practical methodology to calculating how nutrient neutrality can be achieved. This methodology is based on best available scientific knowledge, and will be subject to revision as further evidence is obtained. It is our advice to local planning authorities to take a precautionary approach in line with existing legislation and case-law when addressing uncertainty and calculating nutrient budgets.”*

- 3.9 In accordance with NE’s advice, any plan or project which will lead to development within the catchment of the River Test cannot be approved unless nitrogen neutrality has been demonstrated via quantitative means, and an appropriate assessment conducted by the competent authority has concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of any of the Solent region European sites.
- 3.10 In 2022 the River Lambourn SAC and the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site were identified by NE as being in unfavourable condition due to excessive phosphorus inputs. A very small area of both of these sites are located within Wiltshire. Any overnight accommodation development within the catchment of the SAC or Ramsar site are now required to demonstrate phosphorous neutrality and be subject to an

appropriate assessment which concludes no adverse effect on the SAC or Ramsar site alone or in combination with other plans or projects in order to be authorised.

### **Screening of the Calne Community NP Area**

#### *Recreation*

- 3.11 In relation to Salisbury Plain, the SAC habitat features were screened out of appropriate assessment for the WCS on the advice of NE. The Salisbury Plain SPA can also be screened out of appropriate assessment in respect of this NP as the NP area is located approximately 5.4km beyond the 6.4km ZOI around the SPA within which the majority (75%) of visitors to the Plain are expected to live. This is based on the data collated by means of a visitor survey commissioned by Wiltshire Council in 2015.
- 3.12 Recreational pressure on the River Avon SAC is recognised to occur in limited circumstances predominately where significant development lies immediately adjacent or in close proximity to the river, which will not occur as a result of this NP as the closest component of the River Avon SAC lies approximately 12.7km south east of the NP area at its closest point. The River Avon SAC has therefore been screened out of appropriate assessment.
- 3.13 The NP area lies approximately 51.1km from the New Forest SPA/SAC, at its closest point, and is therefore a substantial distance beyond the 13.8km ZOI around the SPA/SAC within which the majority of day visitors to the New Forest originate<sup>11</sup>. Appropriate assessment with respect to the New Forest SPA/SAC has therefore been screened out.
- 3.14 The NP area lies approximately 8.6km from the nearest component of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and there are no core roosts functionally linked to the SAC or core areas associated with core roosts within the NP area.
- 3.15 The NP area lies approximately 13.1km beyond the 9.4km outer recreational zone of influence around the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, and as such appropriate assessment will not be required in respect of this European site.
- 3.16 The NP area lies approximately 5.1km to the north west of the closest point of the Pewsey Downs SAC. As the NP area lies more than 5km from the SAC and the NP does not allocate sites for development, appropriate assessment with respect to this SAC has been screened out.

#### *Hydrology / Hydrogeology*

- 3.17 In terms of hydrology/hydrogeology, the NP area is located within the catchment of the Bristol Avon rather than the Hampshire Avon, and as such there is no pathway for a likely significant effect on the River Avon SAC as a result of the NP.
- 3.18 There have been no water resource issues identified for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC which is the only SAC from the above list to lie fully within the Bristol Avon catchment. Furthermore, the Bristol Avon has not been identified as a cause of water resource issues for the Salisbury Plain SAC/SPA.

#### *Air Pollution / Nitrogen Deposition*

- 3.19 The Wiltshire Core Strategy HRA identified that increased traffic would lead to potential effects through an increase in atmospheric pollution and nitrogen deposition upon a range of European sites within 200m of a main road. Such effects were considered to be very small and difficult to predict at the strategic level<sup>12</sup>. The NP does not allocate any sites for development and all of the European sites listed above are a considerable distance from the NP; as such it is concluded that the NP will not result in significant effects on European sites as a result of nitrogen or particulate matter deposition.

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<sup>11</sup> Wiltshire Core Strategy Updated Habitats Regulations Assessment, April 2014

<sup>12</sup> Update to the Wiltshire Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment, February 2014 (Exam/89)

*Physical Damage / Interruption of Flight Lines / Disturbance*

- 3.20 The NP area is located approximately 11.8km from Salisbury Plain SPA, and therefore beyond the 6.4k Zol, and 34.6km from Porton Down SPA, from its closest point. Therefore, it is considered that the plan area is sufficiently distant from the two SPAs and known functionally linked habitat, for any development within the plan area to cause direct physical damage to, or fragmentation of, breeding and foraging habitat for the Annex I species stone-curlew. The plan area is also considered too remote for development within the plan area to result in anthropogenic disturbance or visual stimuli that could have an adverse effect on stone-curlew breeding at either SPA.
- 3.21 In terms of the potential to cause physical damage to features which provide habitat for bats, such as breeding, roosting and foraging habitat, and the potential to interrupt or fragment/sever bat flight lines, or to cause disturbance to such features, it is deemed that the NP area is sufficiently distant from the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC (and there are no core roosts or core areas located within the NP area), and too remote to have implications for bats at the Mottisfont Bats SAC or the Chilmark Quarries SAC.

**4. Screening of Policies in the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 2023-2038 Pre Submission Consultation Draft February 2024**

- 4.1 The Calne Community NP comprises 30 policies; these are detailed and assessed in Table 1 below.
- 4.2 All parts of the NP have been screened for potential impacts which may arise from the plan alone or in combination with other plans and projects. None of the policies allocate sites for development or would lead directly to development, nor would they result in a likely significant effect on any European sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. This is due to the nature, scope and scale of the proposals set out in the NP, and on account of the distance of the NP area from any European sites and the absence of a potential pathway for effect.
- 4.3 Any further drafts of the NP and/or changes made to the NP as a result of the examination in public should be subject to a rescreening assessment before the plan is adopted.

**TABLE 1: Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening of the Calne Community NP**

A / B (Green) – Screened out  
 C / D (Red) – Screened in

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Policy C1 – High Quality Sustainable Development in the Calne Community Plan Area	A2 and A3	<p>This policy supports developments in the Clane area that are of high quality, are sustainable and contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of communities and the natural world. Development proposals are expected to demonstrate mitigation against and improved resilience to the effects of climate change, and to ensure the natural, historic and cultural assets are managed for future generations.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to ensure development within the NP area is of a high quality and sustainable. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy C2 - Sustainable Construction and Energy	A1, A2 and A3	<p>This policy seeks to ensure that all developments are designed to reduce their impact on the environment and can create high quality internal and external spaces for people to use. Developments will be required to demonstrate how they have implemented the principles and requirements set out in the policy or explain where it has not been feasible. The policy then goes on to set out requirements for new developments and existing buildings, including reducing energy demand and increasing efficiency.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to ensure sustainable construction across all developments, a reduction in energy usage and an increase in energy efficiency. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	



Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Policy C3 – Calne Community Energy	A1	<p>This policy encourages community owned renewable energy schemes which directly benefit the local community within the NP area. The policy goes on to set out criteria which should be demonstrated by an application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Community support;</i></li> <li>b. <i>Administrative and financial structures, such as a Community Benefits Society, to deliver and manage the energy scheme;</i></li> <li>c. <i>Local energy self-sufficiency through integration into the local grid or by other means, so that the energy generated can be supplied directly to domestic, business and other buildings, demonstrated by direct reduction to buildings’ energy consumption;</i></li> <li>d. <i>No adverse impacts on the local environment, or residential amenity that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.</i></li> </ul> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to encourage community owned renewable energy schemes. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy NE1 – Local Green Space	A2 and A3	<p>This policy states that Local Green Spaces - <i>will be protected from inappropriate development, particularly in regards to the characteristics underpinning their designation, such as beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.</i></p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect local green spaces within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy NE2 – Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity	A1 and A2	<p><i>Biodiversity</i></p> <p>Development proposals must include provision for the protection, enhancement and maintenance of wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Proposals must demonstrate how they have applied the adopted Calne Design Guidelines and Codes (2023).</p> <p>Matters highlighted as particular importance include:</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p><i>a. securing a net gain for biodiversity as calculated to reflect the latest local or national policy and advice, through planning conditions or planning obligations;</i></p> <p><i>b. protecting and enhancing designated sites, including SSSI's, designated County Wildlife Sites, nature reserves, and other priority habitats as shown on Figure N17.a, as well as for sites with observations of protected species as detailed in the Biodiversity Topic Paper (CCNP 2022);</i></p> <p><i>c. protecting, and wherever possible enhancing woodland, hedgerows, ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, ditches, and wildlife habitats. Corridors should include ecology buffers of up to 200m of the main watercourse of the River Marden and 100m of other watercourses including the disused Wiltshire &amp; Berkshire Canal.</i></p> <p>The policy also expects major developments to demonstrate its contribution to the delivery of local nature recovery objectives.</p> <p><i>Protected Species</i></p> <p>Proposals which could harm legally protected species or habitats will only be supported where impacts can be avoided or mitigated. In particular, the policy sets out the following:</p> <p><i>a. development within 100 - 200m of the River Marden where the adjacent land is accessible to otters;</i></p> <p><i>b. development that would reduce or damage the habitat of water voles (in particular in the Abberd Brook area);</i></p> <p><i>c. development that would require the removal of hedgerows or trees that support the movement of bats.</i></p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy NE3 – Green and Blue Infrastructure Network	A2	This policy seeks to ensure the green and blue infrastructure within the NP area is maintained and protected, and where possible enhanced. Proposals must demonstrate that they have been informed by the adopted Calne Design Guidelines and Codes (2023) document and major developments should demonstrate the use of Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Standards. The policy goes on to state that there will be a presumption against development that	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>encroaches upon or hams a green or blue infrastructure asset. Where impacts are unavoidable, they must be mitigated in full that an appropriate habitat improvement scheme with a net improvement.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and enhance the green and blue infrastructure network within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Policy NE4 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows</p>	<p>A2</p>	<p><i>Protection of Ancient of Veteran Trees</i>            This policy does not support development which would result in the loss of ancient woodlands or individual trees. Buffers to woodlands or individual trees should be in accordance with the latest guidance from Natural England.</p> <p><i>Protection of other Trees and Hedgerows</i>            Development proposals should ensure other trees and hedgerows are retained to the maximum extent possible and incorporated into new development as placemaking features.</p> <p><i>Replacement Planting</i>            Where developments cannot avoid the loss of trees then replacement planting will be required in accordance with the criteria in this policy, the wider NP and the NP Tree topic paper.</p> <p><i>Trees and Tackling Climate Change</i>            The size, species and placement of trees provided as part of the landscape and green infrastructure of development proposals will be expected to take practicable opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. increase canopy cover (with a target of 20%) and assist in providing shade and shelter;</li> <li>b. assist in reducing or mitigating run-off and flood risk on the development site; and,</li> <li>c. connect into the wider green infrastructure network.</li> </ul> <p>The policy also expects proposals to set out appropriate measures to secure long-term maintenance of newly planted trees.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
		<p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows within the NP area from new developments. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Policy NE5 – Setting of Calne and Calne Without</p>	<p>A1, A2 and A3</p>	<p><i>Pastoral Setting</i>            This policy sets out the need for new developments to respect the pastoral setting of Calne and Calne Without and should address their impact on, for example, the rural edges of the town and villages and the separate identity of settlements and important views. Where possible, developments should also deliver enhancements to the landscape character.</p> <p><i>River Marden Valley</i>            In the River Marden Valley, proposals will be expected to address, with mitigation where appropriate, their impact on the character, appearance, setting, recreational use and tranquillity of the valley.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect the setting of Calne and Calne Without, and the River Marden Valley. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Policy BE1 – Design Principles for Local Distinctiveness</p>	<p>A1 and A3</p>	<p>This policy supports developments within the NP area that demonstrate good design, contributing to the conservation, enhancement and extension of positive and distinctive characteristics in the various character areas of the NP area. It requires developments to have regard to National Design Guidance and Wiltshire Council design policy and the adopted Calne Design Guidelines and Codes (2023). Major developments are expected to demonstrate how the proposals complement and extend the positive characteristics of the character area and highlights that good design will be important in all locations.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect the local distinctiveness of areas within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	

Policy	Initial screening Category	Policy Summary and Assessment under Habitats Regulations	Comments and Recommendations
Policy BE2 – Heritage Assets	A1 and A3	<p><i>Designated Heritage Assets</i></p> <p>Development will be expected to preserve and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance, special interest and setting of the conservation areas, open green space and other designated heritage assets such as listed buildings across the NP area.</p> <p><i>Non-Designated Heritage Assets</i></p> <p>Development proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets of local interest will be required to take into account the character, context and setting, including important views towards and from the building or structure.</p> <p>Where any heritage asset is affected, a heritage statement should be included with proposals.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect designated and non-designated heritage assets within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy CF1 – Community Facilities	A1 and A2	<p>This policy sets out 4 criteria which must be met for proposals which result in the loss of community facilities to be supported by the NP. The policy also states that proposals for the provision of new community facilities will be supported where they would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the local environment or residential amenity.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect community facilities within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy CF2 - Community Infrastructure and Phasing of Development	A1	<p>This policy sets out how Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions paid to Calne Town Council or Calne Without Parish Council will be used. The policy goes on to state that: <i>Development proposals must consider, assess and address their infrastructure requirements and plan the related programmes of work to ensure that these dovetail together and minimise any disruption to the community, and to protect the amenity and safety of existing residents and minimise disruption, during the development, the agreement of a related construction programme and process should be a condition of any planning consent.</i></p>	

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		<p>The policy will not lead to development but sets out how CIL contributions will be used within the NP area and seeks to minimise disruption during the construction phase of projects. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy CF3 – Burial Space	A1, A2 and A3	<p>This policy states – <i>Proposals for additional public and non-denominational burial space to meet increased needs and to provide burial choices within Calne and Calne Without Parish will be supported subject to meeting all necessary environmental criteria and maintaining the amenity of neighbouring residents and does not cause unacceptable levels of increased traffic and congestion.</i></p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but supports the creation of additional burial spaces within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy GA1 – Highway Impact	A1 and A2	<p><i>1. Impact on safety</i>            This policy supports proposals that provide access to the local road network in a way that mitigates potential adverse transport impacts. The policy seeks to ensure there is no further detriment to key areas on the network within the NP area. Criteria are provided for new developments which involve alterations to existing highways or the provision of new highways.</p> <p><i>2. Impact on Air Quality</i>            Proposals which are likely to adversely affect air quality anywhere in the NP area will be required to demonstrate that impacts can be effectively mitigated.</p> <p><i>3. Impact of HGVs</i>            Major developments that will result in HGV movements through Calne town centre and the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) will need to identify mitigation measures in the Transport Assessment and provide a Travel Plan.</p> <p><i>4. Mitigation of Impacts</i>            Proposals that avoid Calne town centre and the AQMA and do not result in unacceptable impacts on congestion, air pollution, noise pollution and or safety will be sought where feasible.</p>	

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		<p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to reduce highway impacts from new developments. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy GA2 – Public Realm	A1 and A3	<p>The policy states that <i>‘Development proposals must consider, assess, and address their impact on the streets, pavements, parking areas and other public spaces and the opportunities provided to improve the quality, accessibility, and safety of the public realm’</i>. The policy goes on to state that proposals that demonstrate ‘people-friendly streets’ will be supported.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and improve the public realm. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy GA3 – Sustainable Transport and Inclusive Active Travel	A1	<p>This policy supports developments which prioritise travel in the following way: walking, then cycling, then public transport, then car clubs, electric vehicles and lastly private fossil-fuelled vehicles. Development proposals should connect to the existing pedestrian, cycle and public transport network across the NP area. Proposals will be supported where they can demonstrate how they contribute to the protection, enhancement and extension of the area’s active travel network. The policy sets out several criteria for major developments to consider.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to ensure that new developments protect, enhance and extend the active travel network within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy GA4 –Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Charging	A1	<p>This policy seeks to encourage the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles by increasing charging infrastructure across the NP area. New infrastructure will be in accordance with national or local standards as relevant and must have appropriate regard to pedestrian movement.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to encourage the use of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments</p>	

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		will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.	
Policy GA5– Parking Provision	A1	<p>This policy supports proposals that demonstrate a design led approach in accordance with the adopted Calne Design Guidelines and Codes 2023. The levels of on and off-road parking shall be in accordance with the Wiltshire Car Parking Strategy and cycle parking and storage will be required in line with parking standards and design guidance set by Wiltshire Council.</p> <p>The policy seeks to ensure appropriate parking and cycle parking and storage provision and will not lead to development. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy GA6 – Walking and Cycling for Leisure and Recreation	A3	<p>This policy seeks to protect and enhance existing walking and cycling routes that connect Calne town centre, local neighbourhoods and the surrounding countryside. Enhancement and extension of sections of leisure and recreation routes within the NP area will be prioritised, including the 5 routes set out in the policy. The policy goes on to state that improvements to the provision of facilities to encourage cycling, for example secure storage and signage, will be supported.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and enhance the walking and cycling provision within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy WS1 – Protecting and Promoting Sustainable, Low Carbon Local Employment	A1	<p>This policy seeks to protect employment land within the NP area and supports new employment development on existing employment land where it meets the criteria set out in the policy.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and enhance employment land and employment opportunities within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy WS2– Supporting Local	A1 and A3	This policy supports proposals for small-scale development for business space outside of Calne, Studley and Derry Hill settlement boundaries where proposals are for farming or to diversity	



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Agriculture and Farm Diversification		<p>and support an existing rural based business. The policy goes on to list criteria which proposals will need to meet in order to be supported.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but supports farming and farm diversification proposals within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy WS3 - Supporting the Local Visitor Economy	A1, A2 and A3	<p>This policy supports developments that maintain, enhance or expand the tourism and visitor economy within the NP area where the proposal is in accordance with the Core Strategy and where the development would protect and enhance the NP areas local character and environment, designated and non-designated heritage assets and will contribute positively to sustainable economic vitality. The policy goes on to list proposals which will be supported. It also supports developments within the open countryside where they protect or enhance rural character, are well connected to local services and do not harm neighbouring businesses.</p> <p>The policy will not lead directly to development but supports the maintenance, enhancement and expansion of the tourism and visitor economy in the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy WS4– Calne Town Centre	A1 and A3	<p>This policy supports proposals for main town centre uses within the defined Calne town centre boundary and within the Calne Town Centre Primary Shopping Area where they are in accordance with the emerging Local Plan and have regard to and make a proportionate and positive contribution to the delivery of specific Calne Town Centre objectives and any subsequently adopted Calne Town Centre Strategy.</p> <p>The policy will not lead directly to development but supports development within Calne town centre. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy WS5 - Local, Neighbourhood	A1	<p>This policy supports development proposals for change of use or alteration to frontages in Calne and Derry Hill where they protect or strengthen the role, character and vitality of the settlement.</p>	

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Centres in Calne and Derry Hill		<p>Proposals for the change of use of floorspace within class F2 (community facilities) are supported by this policy where they are in accordance with NP policy CF1 Community Facilities. The policy also supports proposals for the use of under-used or vacant floorspace above ground floor frontage for residential, business or community uses where they provide a high quality of self-contained accommodation and will not harm the amenity of existing residents or the viability of the ground floor or neighbouring business uses.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but supports the development of local neighbourhood shopping floorspace. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy H1 – Housing within Settlement Boundaries	A1, A2 and A3	<p>This policy supports small infill housing proposals of up to 10 dwellings within the defined settlement boundaries where they meet the criteria set out in the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. Accord with the settlement boundaries;</i></li> <li><i>b. Do not cause harm to the valued landscape setting and green infrastructure of the settlement, the natural scenic beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB, adjacent Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the River Marden valley and designated local green spaces;</i></li> <li><i>c. Where relevant, protect or enhance the character of the Calne, Derry Hill and Sandy Lane Conservation areas and the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets;</i></li> <li><i>d. Are proportionate scale, land-use character and design that enhances local character of the settlement or part of the settlement within which they are located informed by the Calne Design Guidelines and Codes.</i></li> </ul> <p>The policy will not lead directly to development but supports small scale infill development within settlement boundaries. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy H2 – Affordable Housing	A1	<p>This policy requires residential developments of 10 or more dwellings or developments on sites larger than 0.5ha to include affordable housing in line with Wiltshire Council’s adopted Local Plan policies. The policy goes on to state that in response to local housing needs, affordable housing schemes in the NP area should provide 67% affordable rented housing, 8% intermediate discounted market housing and 25% First Homes provided at a discount of 30%.</p>	

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		<p>The policy will not lead to development but sets out requirements for affordable housing for developments of a certain size. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy H3 – Housing Mix	A1	<p>This policy sets out that residential developments should include open market and affordable dwelling types and sizes that address the assessed local needs of the community. The policy then goes on set out market and affordable housing delivery priorities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 2 and 3 bedroom starter homes;</li> <li>b. 3 and 4 bedroom family homes;</li> <li>c. Include a mix of smaller and single storey housing types to address increasing needs and demand for accessible housing and local downsizing;</li> <li>d. Schemes will be expected to provide a high standard of internal space.</li> </ul> <p>The policy will not lead to development but sets out housing mix priorities for developments within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy H4 – Housing to meet the needs of Older and those Living with Disabilities	A1	<p>This policy supports proposals for new or expanded housing for older people, including extra care housing and residential nursing home facilities, in Calne and Derry Hill where they meet the criteria in the policy, including where they are in conformity with NP Policy H3 Affordable Housing and do not result in the net loss of housing within the NP area.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but supports housing to meet the needs of older and disabled people. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
Policy H5 – Adaptable and Accessible Housing	A1	<p>This policy supports residential schemes of 10 or more units where they meet the criteria in the policy to enable disabled or older people to live actively and inclusively within their local communities. The policy goes on to state that planning, conservation area or listed building applications will be supported where the proposals meet the criteria in the policy in order to</p>	

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		<p>allow local residents with changing mobility and accessibility needs to continue to live in their homes.</p> <p>The policy will not lead to development but seeks to ensure adaptable and accessible homes are provided within the NP area. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	
<p>Policy H6 – Exception Sites and Community Led Housing</p>	<p>A1 and A3</p>	<p>This policy supports Rural Exception, First Home Exception and Community led Housing sites where they meet the criteria set out in the policy. The policy also supports proposals for self-build or custom build within settlement boundaries or as part of allocated site developments where they conform to adopted Local Plan policy. Developments that demonstrate exemplary standards of sustainable construction and environmental performance are also supported by this policy.</p> <p>The policy will not lead directly to development but supports exception sites and community led housing schemes. The policy will not have a likely significant effect on any European sites. Developments will be considered at the planning application stage to ensure they comply with this policy, the NPPF and other relevant Development Plan policies.</p>	

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1. The HRA screening exercise presented in this document has concluded that the Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 2023-2038 Pre Submission Consultation Draft February 2024 will not result in a likely significant effect on any European sites or their qualifying features either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. Therefore, it has not been necessary to subject the NP to an appropriate assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
- 5.2. It should be noted that if any changes are made to the NP or the policies contained therein, it will be necessary for the amended NP to be subject to a repeat HRA screening exercise before it can be 'made'.

Prepared by Naomi Harvey, Ecologist, Wiltshire Council, 13 March 2024

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