

Habitat Regulations Assessment for The Plan for Stafford Borough - Publication in respect of Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)



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Introduction / Background 1

1 Introduction / Background

1.1 This Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared in order to assist Stafford Borough Council in meeting the requirements of the European Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive).

1.2 The Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared in accordance with the Requirements of article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive and the draft Conservation (Natural Habitats and Conservation) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.

1.3 This report has also drawn on guidance contained in the NPPF, Circular 06/2005 and the EC publications 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC', and 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC'.

1.4 Following the ECL judgement on the 20th October 2005, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have drawn up guidance titled 'Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment', which has also been taken into account.

Progress to date

1.5 Work relating to the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the new Local Plan began in 2007 when a screening opinion was produced. The screening opinion concluded that ***it was not certain whether the effects identified were significant and/or likely but following the precautionary principle, the next stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, the Appropriate Assessment stage will be carried out in relation to The Plan for Stafford Borough to clarify on issues of significance.*** Natural England were consulted on the screening opinion and concluded that the report was adequate for its purpose.

1.6 In 2009 further evidence was gathered to investigate the possible effects, which were air quality, water quality and quantity and impacts from visitor recreation. A Visitor Survey Mitigation Strategy was also produced alongside. The work concluded that:

1 Introduction / Background

- *It is not possible from the data so far available to conclude that water abstraction from the boreholes at Milford and Shugborough are not having a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC and that any effect will not be greater with increased abstraction at one or both boreholes. This means that Stafford Borough Council will need to obtain assurances from the Environment Agency that a supply of water of sufficient quantity and quality will be available to meet the needs of new housing and industrial/commercial development before publishing their final development proposals in the core strategy.*
- *The general level of nitrogen deposition at Cannock Chase already exceeds the maximum critical load for dry heath and the minimum, critical load for wet heath. Any further increase in nitrogen deposition is therefore going to further contribute to an adverse effect upon the integrity of the interest features. The main source of nitrogen is from traffic and additional development in the areas surrounding the SAC is likely to generate additional traffic. The roads crossing the Chase are used by commuters and as 'rat-runs' between the various towns surrounding the Chase, and most visits to the SAC are by car. It can be anticipated that further development in the area will generate more visits to Cannock Chase, and increase direct effects on the heathland from emissions. About a third of the area of the SAC is within 200m of a road. Potential mitigation measures such as traffic calming and enhanced public transport may be successful in reducing traffic volumes around the SAC, however without accurate predictions of future vehicle flows and the extent to which these are linked to development it is not possible to be confident that mitigation measures will be successful to avoid adverse effects on integrity of the SAC.*
- *Development in the respective core strategies will result in an increase of approximately 9% in visits to the SAC. Recreational access and associated visitor pressure is associated with various impacts that include trampling, increased fire risk, erosion, spread of disease and nutrient enrichment. It will not be possible to avoid these effects if development is within 400m of the SAC or for where large single developments occur within easy travel distance or travel time from the SAC. Otherwise mitigation measures should be successful in avoiding adverse effects arising from recreational pressure. Mitigation measures will be complex, difficult to implement and require a separate strategy, followed by a more detailed implementation plan; however precedents do exist in other areas, such as Dorset and the Thames Basin Heaths.*

1.7 Since the completion of the reports in 2009, a Cannock Chase SAC Partnership was set up to oversee further work. Due to concerns over the visitor survey data that was used to assess possible recreation effects, further visitor survey data was collected over the course of 2010 - 2011. This, along with visitor observation work has been incorporated into a review of the previous reports, with the following being completed in 2012:

- Visitor Impacts Report
- SAC Impacts Report
- Visitor Survey Mitigation Report

1.8 A summary of some of the key points is below:

Introduction / Background 1

- The report follows on from an earlier report on possible mitigations for increases in visitors to Cannock Chase SAC. Since the earlier report, additional information has become available on the condition of the SAC, the behaviour of visitors and the patterns of visiting.
- New housing across all the relevant local authorities is around 78,000, an increase of around 10% with the largest percentage increases in housing within 1km bands at 1km, 5km, 8km-10km, 13km, 16km and 19km. Considering where the new houses will be built in relation to the postcodes generated from the visitor survey would suggest that the overall change in visitor levels will be in the region of 15%. This percentage change is indicative, but suggests the scale of likely change.
- It is apparent that the SAC is already suffering significant damage from existing visiting levels and that additional visiting from new developments will add to this. Such additional visiting is likely to increase levels of damage without mitigation.
- It also shows that 75% of those visitors originate from within 15km of the SAC and that without mitigation an increase in those adverse effects may be expected. Measures to offset recreation pressure from new development are therefore appropriate.
- The main problems are fragmentation of habitat from a multiplicity of paths and tracks, track and path widening with erosion, trampling and compaction and horse riders and cyclists going off the bridleways, eutrophication from dog mess and disturbance from people and dogs.

1.9 Natural England has reviewed the evidence presented in the report and advises that the conclusions are consistent with existing research into the effects of recreation and disturbance upon the habitats found within the SAC. The report supports the view that new residential development across the zone of influence, if allowed to proceed without mitigation, will have a significant effect upon the SAC. Mitigation is therefore required. Natural England recognises the adverse effects described by FE in the impacts of recreation report and advises that the recommended mitigation measures now need to be progressed in order to prevent an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC. Establishment of the recommended monitoring protocol will be key in tracking the effects of recreation in future and, indirectly, the efficacy of the mitigation measures.

1.10 Further detailed mitigation measures are described in the report and the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership are now in the process of including these into a detailed Visitor Impacts Mitigation and Implementation Plan.

1.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.11 A Habitats Regulations Assessment is the requirement that Local Authorities should consider whether projects or plans, as part of land use planning documents, will have adverse effects on Natura 2000 Sites (also known as European Sites). Natura 2000 Sites are nature conservation sites designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and includes species outlined in Regulation 10 of the Habitats Regulations 1994.

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1.12 This requirement was brought about by the United Kingdom's failure to implement Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the European Directive regarding Habitats (92/43/EEC) and enforced through the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Court ruled that UK law did not adequately transfer the Directive into British legislation.

1.13 Previous national planning policy stated that RAMSAR sites should receive the same protection as SPAs and SACs and so have been included in this assessment. The focus of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to allow development which is considered sustainable development. The NPPF states that development likely to have a significant effect on sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives would not be sustainable under the terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

1.1.1 The Habitat Regulations Assessment Process

1.14 EC guidance and the publication from DCLG titled Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment agree the following stages or tasks: -

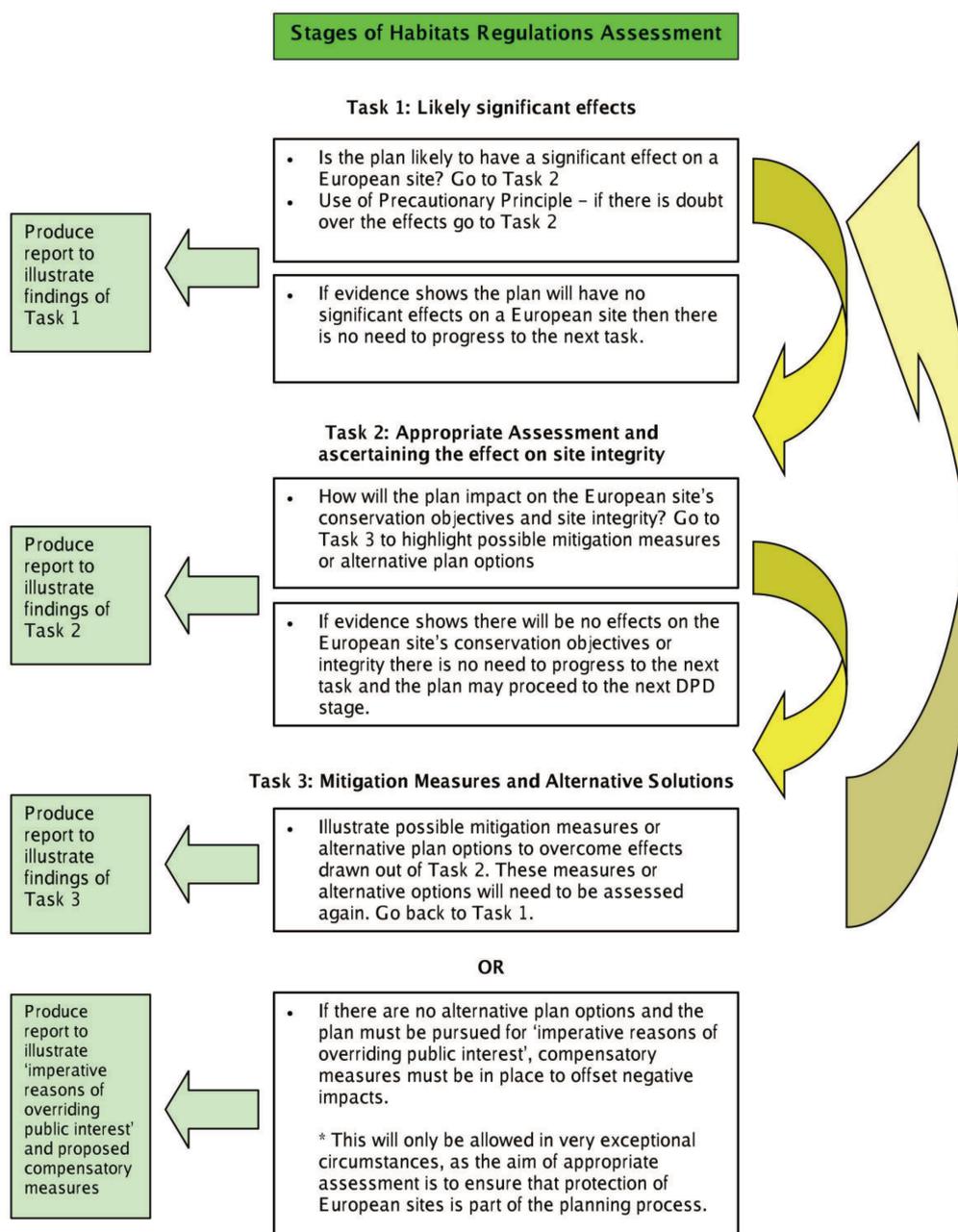
Stage one: Likely Significant Effects (Screening)

Stage two: Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining on the site integrity

Stage three: Mitigation and alternative solutions and

* Imperative reasons of overriding public interest

Habitat Regulation Assessment Process



1.1.1.1 Outcomes of the Appropriate Assessment

1.15 This report is dealing primarily with Stage Two of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity. This stage assesses in more detail the proposals in The Plan for Stafford Borough, alone and in combination with other plans or

1 Introduction / Background

projects which are likely to have a significant impact on Cannock Chase SAC. Detailed mitigation measures, including relevant policy wording is included in the assessment to determine the potential impact the integrity of Cannock Chase SAC.

1.16 It is important to remember that the HRA process is concerned solely with identifying significant effects on the Conservation Objectives of European Sites. The effects of plans and proposals on wider aspects of the European Sites will be taken into consideration as part of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) process.

1.17 If it is considered that mitigation measures will address likely effects The Plan may continue through the plan making process. However, if it is considered that the mitigation measures will not address likely effects, alternative options for the plan may need to be considered.

Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on the site integrity 2

2 Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on the site integrity

2.1 The Appropriate Assessment stage considers the impact on the integrity of the European site(s) of the plan, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Where there are adverse impacts, this stage also involves proposing and assessing potential mitigation measures to alleviate the impacts. This stage consists of six sub-stages or tasks:

- Stage 2A – analyse the site(s) and the reasons for its designation, and the underlying trends affecting it.
- Stage 2B – analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice.
- Stage 2C - analyse other plans and projects that could contribute to 'in combination' effects.
- Stage 2D - analyse how the plan – in combination with other plans and projects - and the site will 'interact' come plan implementation, i.e. Appropriate Assessment.
- Stage 2E – where applicable, propose and assess mitigation measures for addressing adverse effects.
- Stage 2F – prepare an Appropriate Assessment Report for consultation with key stakeholders including Natural England.

3 Analyse the site(s) and the reasons for its designation, and the underlying trends affecting it

3 Analyse the site(s) and the reasons for its designation, and the underlying trends affecting it

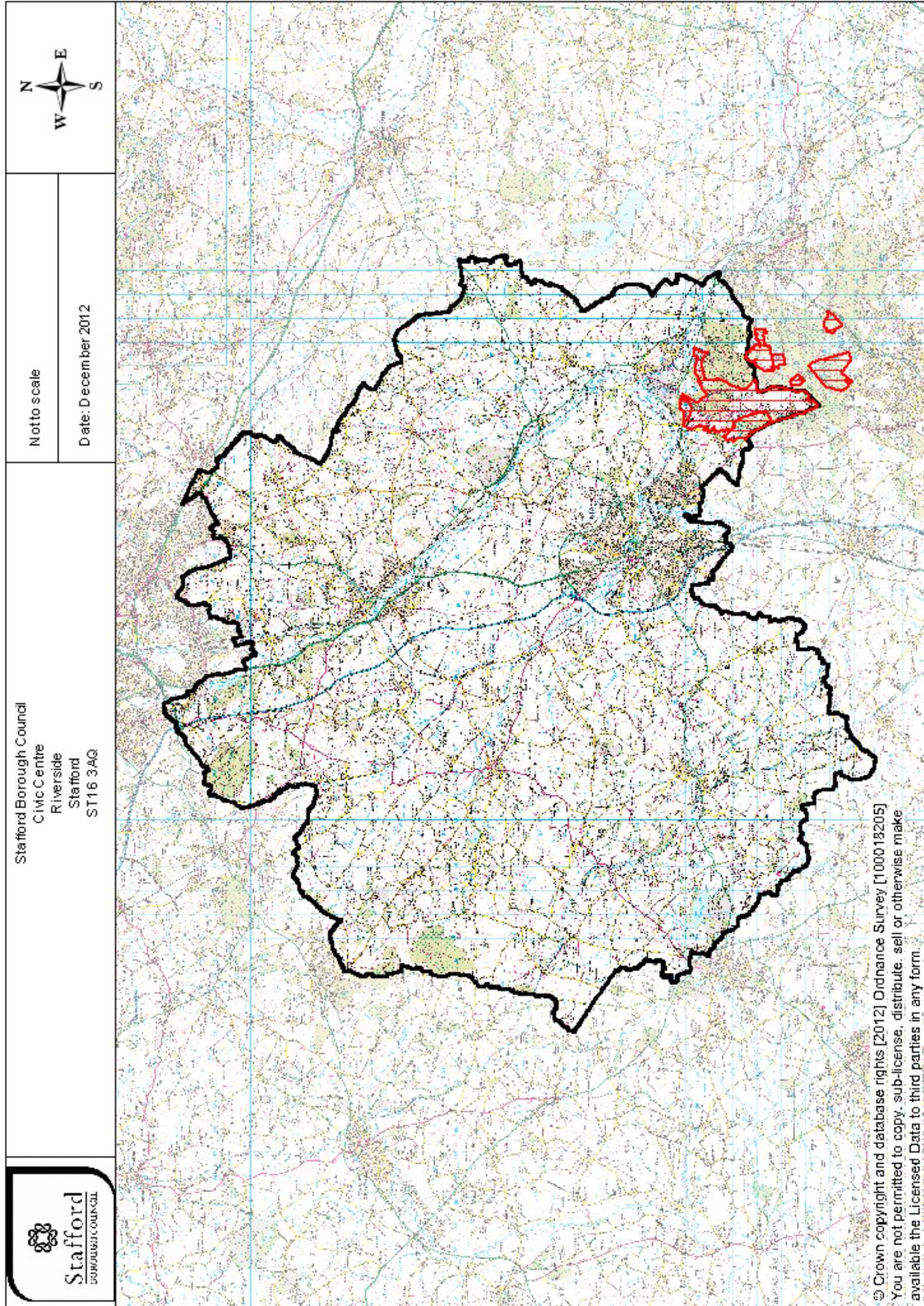
Name of Site	Reason for Designation	Conservation Objectives	Distance from Stafford Borough Boundary	Identified Impacts
<p>Cannock Chase SAC</p>	<p>European dry heaths Annex 1 habitat</p> <p>for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths Annex 1 habitat present as a qualifying feature, but not primary reason for site selection</p>	<p>The Conservation Objectives for this site are to maintain the following habitats and geological features in favourable condition, with particular reference to any development component special interest features for which the land is designated as individually listed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dwarf shrub heath 2. Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland <p>On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type. Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent.</p> <p>To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable</p>	<p>Within the Borough.</p> <p>Approx 1.5 km from Stafford Town</p> <p>The SAC lies entirely within Staffordshire County Council boundary, approximately two thirds of the SAC lies within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. The SAC borders South Staffordshire District and lies approximately 2.5km from Lichfield District Boundary.</p>	<p>Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation damage from visitors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog walking • Horse riding • Mountain biking • Off-track activities such as orienteering • Car parking <p>Other threats include the invasion of other plant species including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bracken invasion • Birch and pine scrub • Loss of heathland to fragmentation and scrub/woodland encroachment <p>The land is registered as Common Land which poses a threat to the site as the Secretary of State must give approval before fencing can take place, this means that the reintroduction of sustainable management in the form of livestock grazing has many problems.</p>

Analyse the site(s) and the reasons for its designation, and the underlying trends affecting it 3

Name of Site	Reason for Designation	Conservation Objectives	Distance from Stafford Borough Boundary	Identified Impacts
		<p>condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features.</p>		<p>Although mining in the area has ceased the site overlies coal measures which have been deep mined, resulting in fissures across the site. This is a threat to the hydrology of the site.</p> <p>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. Major increase in its use would obviously impact significantly on the site.</p> <p>The prime air pollution concerns for heathlands habitats in the UK are nitrogen deposition and ozone. Acid deposition may also be substantial, with implications for catchment water quality.</p>

4 Cannock Chase SAC

4 Cannock Chase SAC



Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice 5

5 Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice

5.1 The Plan for Stafford Borough is a strategic Borough-wide plan that will put the key strategies and policies in place and form part of the development plan for the District, guiding development to 2031. The Plan also contains a range of policies which will be used to assess all types of planning application when adopted in 2013. This report has been prepared alongside the Publication report to demonstrate that the Habitat Regulations Assessment has been carried out.

5.2 The Plan sets out the following levels of development:

- **Housing:** 10,000 new dwellings over the plan period. Of which 5,500 to be allocated at Stafford, 500 at Stone and 1,000 to come forward in the rural area over the plan period as planning applications, identified in neighbourhood plans or identified in a Sites and Allocations Development Plan Document.
- **Employment Land:** 93 hectares of readily available land for general employment uses over the plan period of which 63 hectares to Stafford, 18 hectares to Stone and 6 hectares to Ladfordfields Industrial Estate and 6 hectares to Raleigh Hall Industrial Estate.
- **Retail:** Extension of Stafford and Stone retail boundaries to allow for town centre uses to come forward over the plan period.

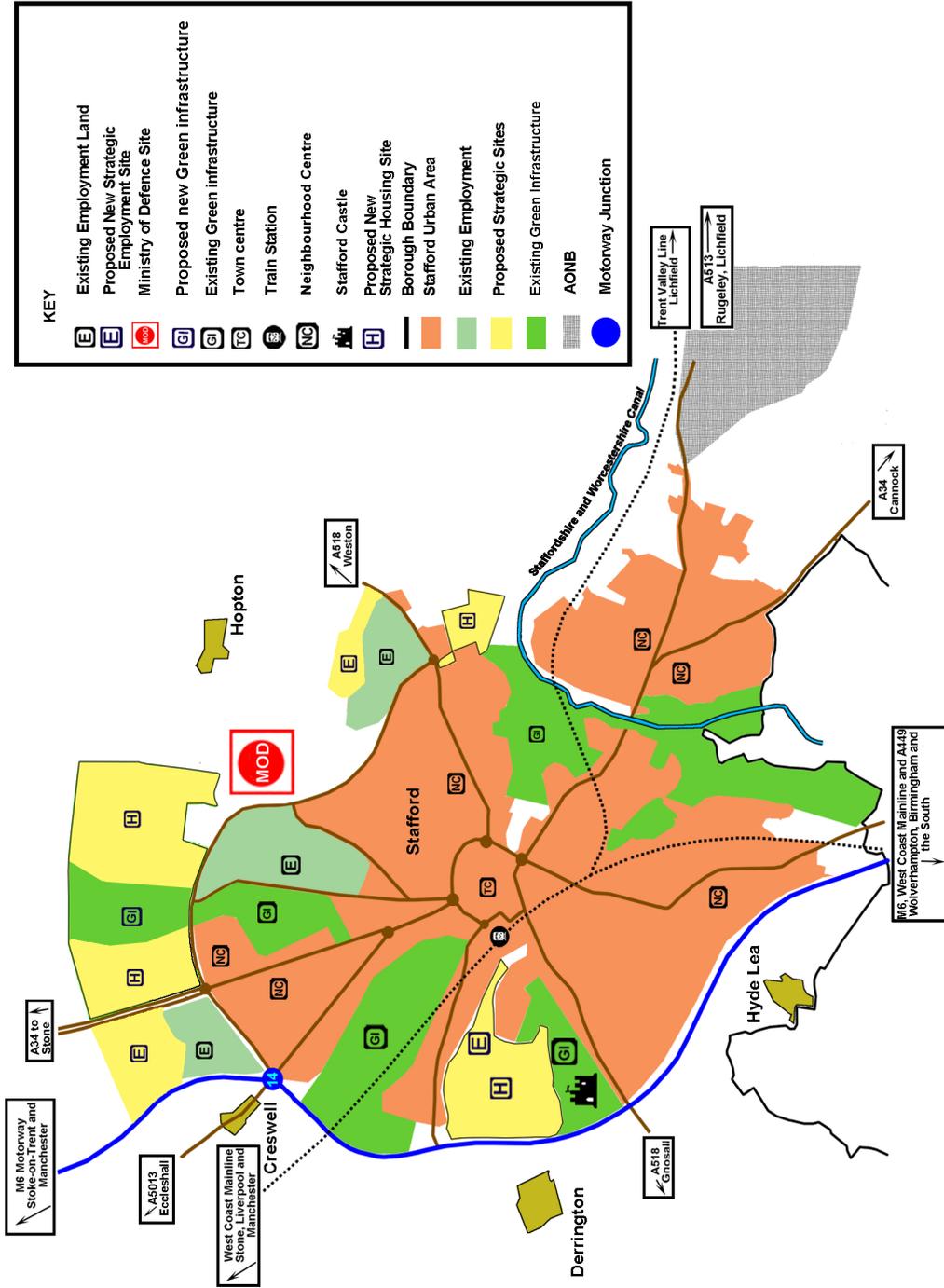
5.3 The Plan contains a number of policies which fall under the following topics: Development Strategy, Stafford, Stone, Economy, Transport, Communities, Environment and Infrastructure. The Plan is also linked to a delivery plan and contains a monitoring framework.

5.4 The Plan sets out the principles for consideration in the preparation of further documents including a Sites and Allocations Development Plan Document and Neighbourhood Plans.

5.5 Below are diagrams showing the locations of development on Strategic Sites in Stafford, Stone and the rural areas.

5 Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice

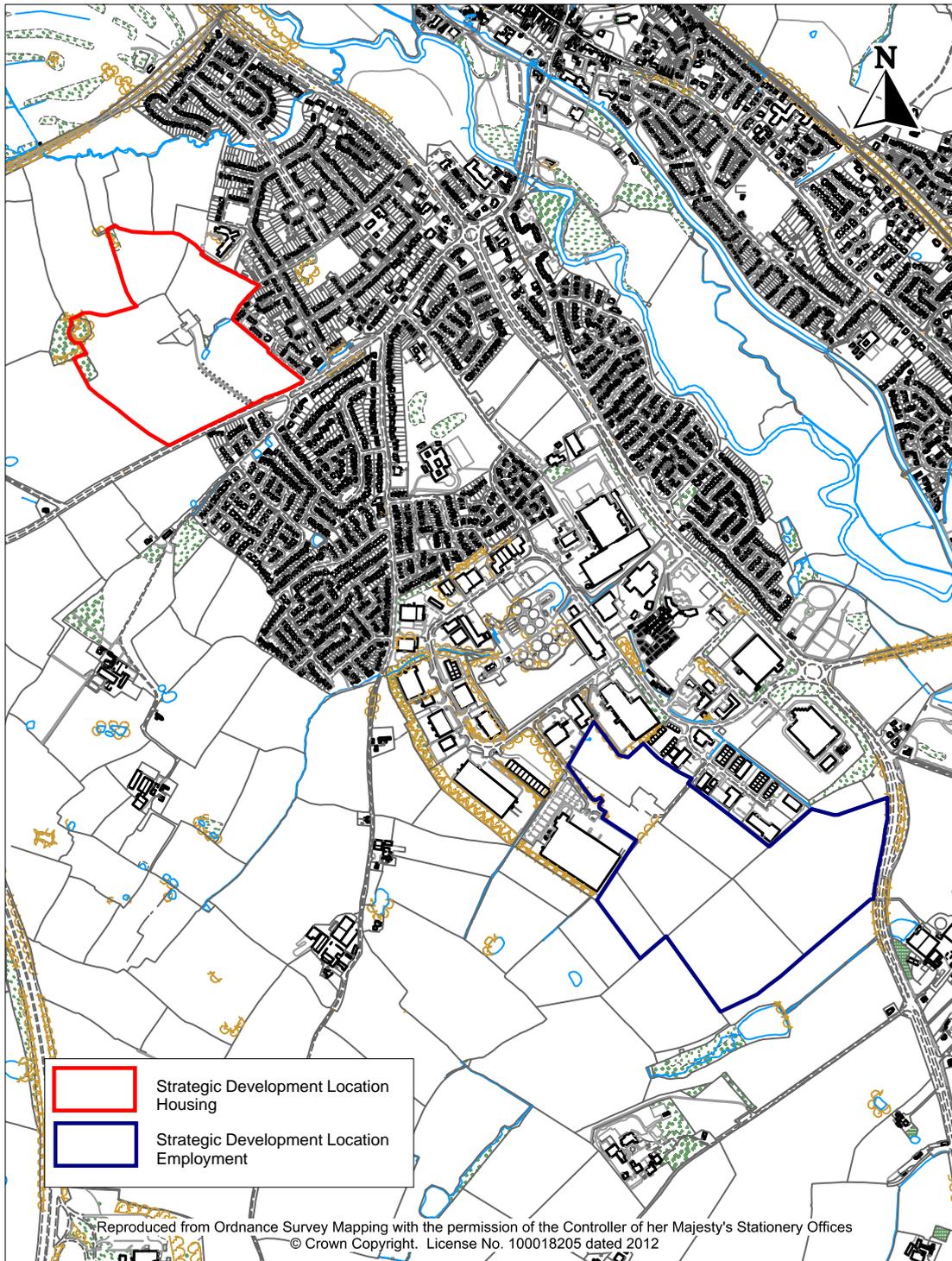
Strategic Development locations at Stafford Town



Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice 5

Strategic Development Locations at Stone

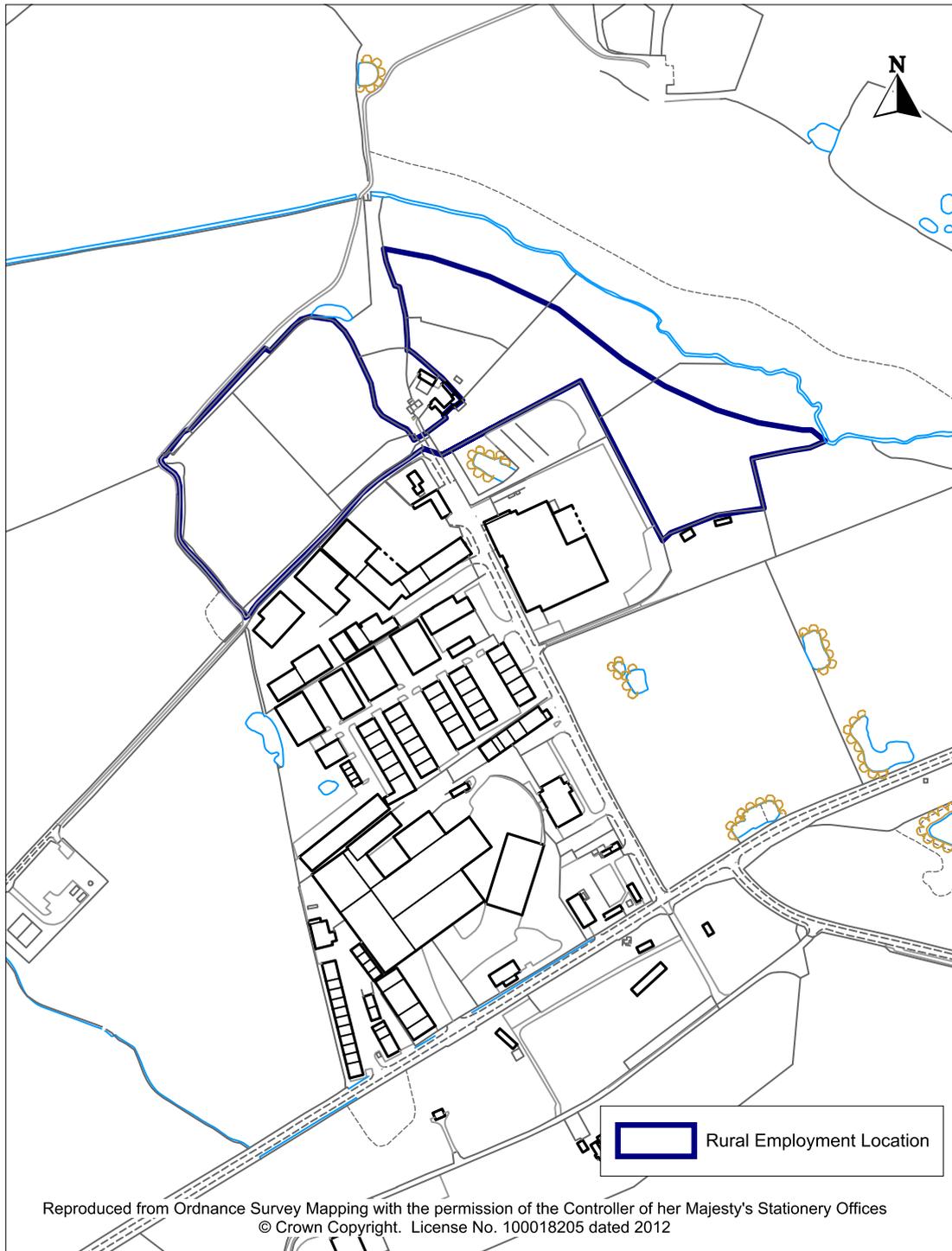
Development to the West and South of Stone



5 Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice

Extension to Ladfordfields Rural Industrial Estate

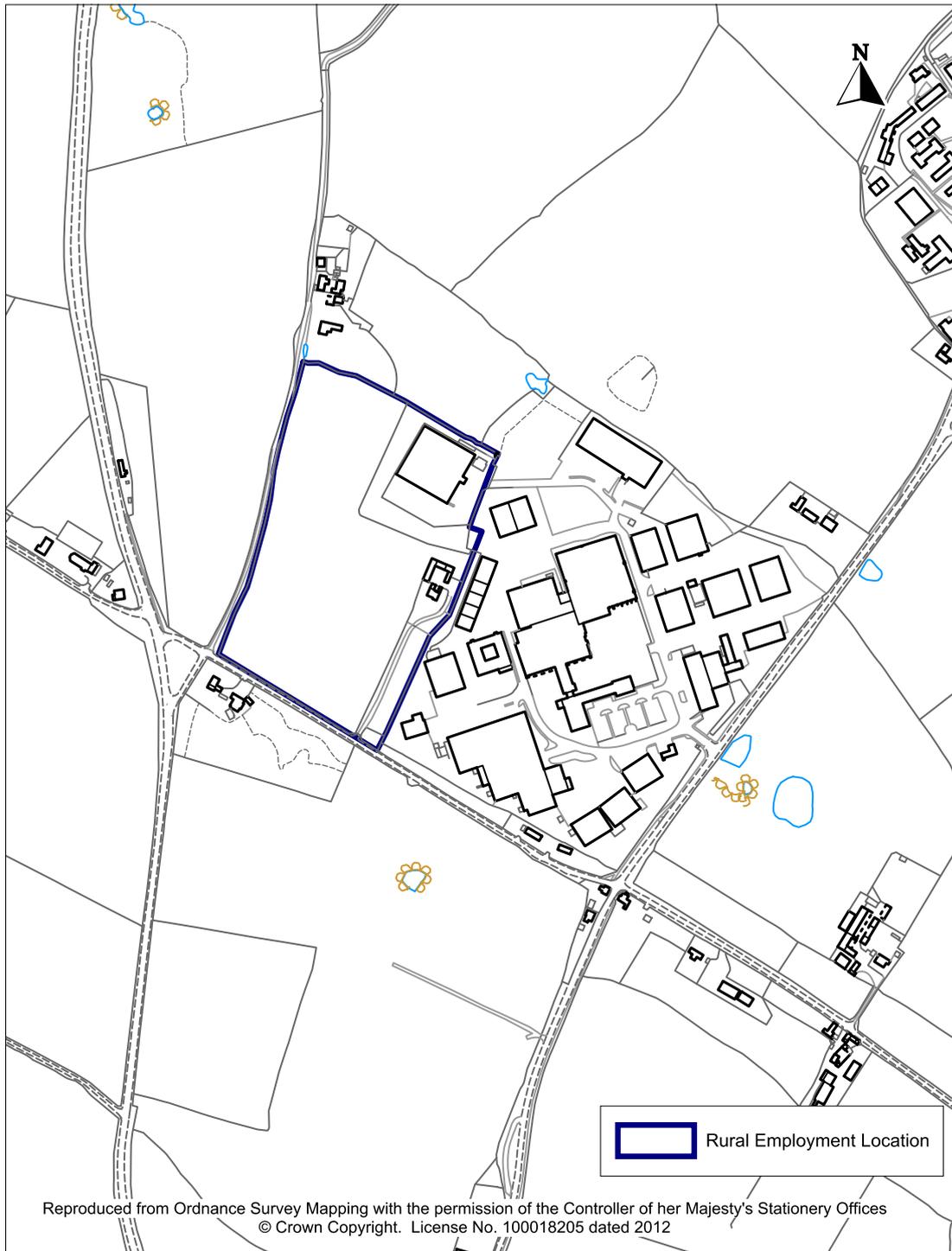
Ladfordfields Industrial Estate



Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice 5

Extension to Raleigh Hall Rural Industrial Estate

Raleigh Hall Industrial Estate



5 Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice

5.6 The main areas which could have an impact upon nature conservation interests of Cannock Chase SAC, as identified in the Screening opinion are:

- Recreation impact from increased visitors
- Air quality from increased use of certain roads
- Increase in abstraction from bore holes on in adjacent to Cannock Chase SAC to serve water requirements of new developments

5.7 The Publication document sets out the following policies:

Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice 5

Policy N5

Sites of European, National & Local Nature Conservation Importance

The highest level of protection will be given to European Sites, with new development only permitted where:

- a. There will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, or**
- b. If adverse effects are identified, it can be demonstrated that the proposed mitigation measures show that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.**

In relation to air quality issues identified, planning permission will only be granted where:

- 1. It can be demonstrated that development will not significantly contribute to adverse effects caused by local and / or diffuse air pollution at European sites, alone or in combination with other plans and projects; or**
- 2. Where development would result in an increase in local and/or diffuse air pollution at European Sites, it would be expected to include measures to secure an equivalent improvement in air quality, or reduction in emissions from other sources; and**
- 3. Require a pollution-neutral strategy for major development near to European sites.**

In relation to water quality, supply and run-off issues, planning permission will only be granted where:

- i. There will be no demonstrable unauthorised impact on the integrity of the European site;**
- ii. The development takes account of the Water Cycle Study and Surface Water Management Plan and any other successor documents.**

Developments likely to affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the national network of such sites. Cumulative effects will also be considered.

Development likely to have an adverse effect (either directly or indirectly) on:

- A Local Nature Reserve**
- A Site of Biological Importance, Biodiversity Alert Site or Regionally Important Geological site**
- A natural watercourse, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, canals and groundwater areas, including Water Framework Directive protected areas as listed in the Humber and Severn River Basin Management Plans.**

5 Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice

will not be permitted unless:

- (a) It can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal that outweigh the need to safeguard the special ecological / geological interest of the site**
- (b) It has been demonstrated, where development would result in significant harm, that it can not be reasonably located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm**
- (c) harm can be prevented, minimised, adequately mitigated or compensated for.**

Where development is permitted, the authority will impose conditions or planning obligations to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation and / or geological interest.

Where the Council considers that any designated site, protected species or any species or habitat of principal importance for conservation may be affected by a development proposal, an ecological assessment will be required to be submitted with the planning application.

Where development is permitted the Council will require developers to:

- a. minimise disturbance;**
- b. protect and enhance the site's ecological value;**
- c. ensure appropriate management;**
- d. ensure appropriate mitigation measures are designed into the proposal and work on the site does not commence until these measures are in place;**
- e. work to approved methods; and**
- f. create new or replacement habitats equal to or above the current ecological value of the site if damage or loss is unavoidable.**

New developments will be required to include appropriate tree planting, to retain and integrate healthy, mature trees and hedgerows, and replace any trees that need to be removed. Development will not be permitted that would directly or indirectly damage existing mature or ancient woodland, veteran trees or ancient or species-rich hedgerows.

Analyse the plan, including its key components and how it would be implemented in practice 5

Policy N6

Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Development will not be permitted where it would be likely to lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, directly or indirectly, of the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

To ensure this site is not harmed all development within the Stafford Borough area must take account of the following criteria:

- i. No development involving a net increase in dwellings will be permitted within the buffer area around the SAC (400 metres), as defined on the Policies Map unless, as an exception, the form of residential development would not have an adverse effect upon the sites' integrity;
- ii. Between 400 metres and 12 miles, as defined on the Policies Map, development will be expected to take all necessary steps on-site, to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects upon the site's integrity or, where this cannot be achieved within the development, make provision for mitigation measures designed to avoid such adverse effects taking place as set out in the Cannock Chase Visitor Impact Management Strategy.

Large developments within 400 metres and 12 miles of the SAC will also be required to provide targeted alternative green space within or close to the development site.

The effective avoidance and / or mitigation of any identified adverse effects must be demonstrated and secured prior to approval of the development through developer contributions as set out in the Cannock Chase Visitor Impact Mitigation Implementation Plan.

5.8 These policies would be used to determine planning applications which could have an effect on European sites.

6 Analyse how the plan – in combination with other plans and projects will ‘interact’ come plan implementation

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	Direct Habitat loss	Impact on protected species	Air Quality	Water Quality	Recreational Pressure	Water Quantity	Change in Surrounding Land Use	Invasive Species
Is the plan likely to impact upon the site	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Possible effects in combination with other plans	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

	Assessment of Effects
Assessment of effects and why not considered significant	<p>Air quality - The results of the investigation into the impact of nitrogen deposition from traffic emissions of NO₂ on the heathland in Cannock Chase concludes that the NO₂ emissions from the traffic are not sufficient to impact on the abundance of heathland vegetation or effect the soil pH and nitrate concentrations. However, the soil pH and nitrate concentrations do appear to be related to Calluna and to a lesser degree Vaccinium abundance but further investigations are required to assess the drivers that are altering these variables in the Park.</p> <p>Water abstraction - information from the Environment Agency indicate that during AMP4 work with Severn Trent Water Ltd, abstraction licenses at 2 sources were reduced to ensure no impact on Cannock Chase SAC.</p> <p>Visitor Impacts - Work relating to visitor impacts on the SAC show that existing levels of visitors are having a negative impact on the SAC. The Plan, in combination with other authorities local plans will lead to an increase in development which will lead to a predicted 15% in visitors. Any mitigation is therefore essential to ensure that there will be no impact on the qualifying features of the SAC.</p>
Conclusion	<p>It is not considered that implementing The Plan will have a significant effect on the integrity of Cannock Chase SAC in relation to air quality or water abstraction on the integrity of Cannock Chase SAC, based on evidence and discussion with the Environment Agency and implementing policy N5 in relation to planning applications. It is important that possible effects are still monitored through the plan monitoring process and the plan is reviewed if necessary.</p> <p>It is not considered that implementing The Plan will have a significant effect on the integrity of Cannock Chase SAC in relation to the various impacts of visitor use. This is based on the evidence base recommendations, the intention by the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership to produce a visitor impacts mitigation and implementation plan and the implementation of Policy N6 in relation to planning applications. It is</p>

Analyse how the plan – in combination with other plans and projects will 'interact' come plan implementation 6

	Assessment of Effects
	imperative that the mitigation and implementation plan is in place as soon as The Plan is adopted to ensure that mitigation is provided at the right time in the planning application process. It is important that the implementation of mitigation, along with reviewing the condition of Cannock Chase SAC is carried out on a regular basis.

6.1 Analyse other plans and projects that could contribute to 'in combination' effects

6.1 A description of each of the plans considered as part of the 'in combination' test can be found in appendix i.

7 Conclusion

7 Conclusion

7.1 This report looks at possible impacts as a result of implementing The Plan for Stafford in combination with other plans, policies and programmes. The Plan for Stafford Borough contains several policies that address many of the possible impacts including water quality and supply, surface run off and air quality through the aim of the development strategy. The report concludes that implementing The Plan for Stafford Borough alongside other plans, policies and programmes will not result in likely significant effects.

7.2 The Plan for Stafford Borough Publication states that development not identified at this stage will come forward via Neighbourhood Plans and/or a Sites and Allocations document. Future planning policy documents will need to demonstrate that there will be no likely significant impact on Cannock Chase SAC, using the potential impacts identified in this report as a basis for assessment.

7.3 This HRA Stage 2 Report will be open to stakeholder consultation with Natural England, the Environment Agency and any other interested stakeholder organisations alongside The Plan for Stafford Borough - Publication. Members of the public are welcome to make comments on this document if they wish.

7.4 Any comments will be incorporated into a revised report which will be part of the The Plan for Stafford Borough examination library.

i Relevant Plans

The following plans and projects have been considered as part of the 'in combination' impacts:

<p>WM Regional Spatial Strategy and Phase II Revision</p>	<p>Identifies the need to locate 365,600 new homes within the West Midlands region to 2026. The Plan identifies impacts are likely and further work has been commissioned, the effects have been considered in detail in the preparation of more specific and local LDFs. The Government has signalled its intention to abolish Regional Plans, but this has not yet taken place.</p>
<p>Staffordshire County Council Minerals Core Strategy Issues and Options 2008</p>	<p>This document sets out a long-term spatial vision for the development of minerals within Staffordshire County and will indicate where minerals can be worked. The Plan identifies broad areas of search where new minerals development could take place. Whilst proposed areas of search are located in both districts they are not close to areas of significant growth. Given this fact, the Core Strategy is not expected to give rise to in combination effects alongside this or other strategies.</p>
<p>Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Waste Emerging Core Strategy 2010-2026 Publication Consultation document</p>	<p>This document underwent examination in 2012 and is scheduled to be adopted in Spring 2013. Appropriate Assessment work significant in combination assessments are not expected to arise as a consequence of implementing the Local Plan and its policies for Stafford Borough.</p>
<p>Staffordshire County Council Local Transport Consultation Plan 2011-2026 (LTP3)</p>	<p>This is the transport plan for Staffordshire County area, it is a strategic document based on the themes - supporting growth and regeneration; maintaining the highway network; promoting equality of access and opportunity; maintaining safety and security; reducing road transport and emissions and its effect on the highway network; improving health and quality of life; respecting the environment. The plan is not yet adopted. HRA undertaken for the document and effects on Natura 2000 reported.</p>
<p>Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014</p>	<p>Plan setting out the importance of Cannock Chase and how the area should be managed with regard to landscape, visitors, education and awareness and quality. The plan is now agreed. The plan has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment and concluded that there could potentially be positive effects upon the biodiversity in the area and that certain policies could have harmful impacts from increase in visitor usage, this could lead to trampling of vegetation and erosion, these aspects will be monitored and mitigation measures will be put into effect to reduce the</p>

i Relevant Plans

	<p>impact. In combination effects on Cannock Chase SAC are possible and are being investigated with a joint assessment.</p>
<p>Cannock Chase Core Strategy: Local Plan (Part 1) Publication document</p>	<p>The West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option sets out a draft requirement for 5,300 new homes to 2028 together with 88 hectares of employment land. Cannock Chase District Council are currently undertaking work as part of the Habitats Regulations and in combination effects have been considered for both the Cannock Extension SAC and Cannock Chase SAC.</p>
<p>South Staffordshire District Core Strategy : Submission 2011</p>	<p>The West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option sets out a draft requirement for 5,300 new homes to 2026 together with 84 hectares of employment land. Cannock Chase District Council are currently undertaking work as part of the Habitats Regulations and in combination effects have been considered for both the Cannock Extension SAC and Cannock Chase SAC.</p>
<p>East Staffordshire Borough Core Strategy : Pre Publication Strategic Options August 2011</p>	<p>The West Midlands RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option set out the figure for the amount of new housing within East Staffordshire between 2006 and 2026. This figure is set at 13,000 net with the majority to be in located in and around Burton upon Trent. Current consultation is considering extending the plan period to 2031 and states that a proportion of the development will need to occur on greenfield sites. Potential impacts upon the River Mease SAC will need investigating.</p>
<p>Black Country Adopted Joint Core Strategy 2011</p>	<p>The joint core strategy for Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, will provide 63,000 houses up to 2026. There is potential for in combination effects on the Cannock Extension SAC which are being investigated with Cannock Chase District Council and the Cannock Chase SAC which are being investigated with a joint assessment.</p>
<p>Birmingham Core Strategy 2026 : Consultation Draft December 2010</p>	<p>The emerging Core Strategy seeks to provide 50,600 homes and deliver 100,000 new jobs up to the period 2026. There is potential for in combination effects on the Cannock Chase SAC and these are being investigated with a joint assessment.</p>
<p>Big City Plan : Birmingham</p>	<p>The plan states the population will grow by 100,000. With over 5,000 homes in the City Centre. Increase the size of the City centre. No in combination effects are likely due to the proximity of the Natura 2000 sites and the strategic growth points in the Lichfield and Tamworth LDF.</p>
<p>Rugeley Power Station Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) plans</p>	<p>Rugeley Power Station is presently installing a flue gas desulphurisation plant in order to comply with European Union Large Combustion Plant Directive, which aims to apply tighter limits on sulphur dioxide emissions. The 2002 Rugeley Power Station Proposed FGD Plant – Environmental Statement states that the plant may lead to an increase in carbon dioxide emissions, but these should be insignificant. The process will result in decreased Sulphur</p>

Relevant Plans i

	<p>emissions but there will be an increase in Nitrogen. These effects will be considered in the further in relation to the in combination effects on the Cannock Chase SAC.</p>
<p>Environment Agency consents for water extraction</p>	<p>The purpose of The Tame, Anker and Mease Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy Consultation Draft 2007 plan is to enable the Environment Agency to manage water resources at the local level in order that the need for water for housing, employment and agricultural users can be balanced with the needs of the water environment. The existing CAMS indicated that there is no water available for abstraction from the River Mease to serve additional abstraction need.</p>
<p>Severn Trent Water Limited: Water Resource Plan Asset Management Period 2005-10</p>	<p>Looks to 2030, but specifically covers the period to 2010. It considers key issues, which could have an impact on water supply, and sets out objectives to ensure STW can deliver its planned level of service. The plan considers drought management, abstraction reductions, leakage water efficiency etc</p>
<p>South Staffordshire Water PLC Water Resources Plan 2009</p>	<p>The report identifies that there is sufficient capacity for the proposed increase in population during the 25 year period 2010-2035. Sets out objectives to improve service, reduce leakage and improve resource development to meet future needs. Also reports on performance of previous water management plan including efforts to reduce the impact of water abstraction from sensitive sites. The report identifies that work is needed to consider a reduction in water abstraction licences on the River Mease and River Humber and that Environment Agency will be involved in this process.</p>
<p>Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy. July 2007</p>	<p>Catchment abstraction management strategies (CAMS) are six-year plans that record how the Environment Agency are going to manage water resources in each catchment area.</p>
<p>Outline Planning Application for housing development at Curborough, Lichfield District</p>	<p>Planning Application for 5,000 houses and associated facilities as a freestanding new settlement close to Lichfield City.</p>
<p>National Forest Strategy 2009-2014</p>	<p>Sets out a strategy to increase tree cover from 6% to around 33% across an area of around 200 square miles of Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. Parts of the National Forest lie within Lichfield District and Tamworth. To date over 7 million trees have been planted in the entire National Forest since 1994 increasing woodland cover to 16%. The strategy also promotes the development of woodland related tourism and business development throughout the National</p>

i Relevant Plans

	<p>Forest. The strategy also promotes the development of woodland related tourism and business development throughout the National Forest.</p>
<p>Lichfield District Council Core Strategy</p>	<p>The will set out what the District Council would like to achieve in Lichfield City, Burntwood and the rural areas and will set out broadly what type of development is required in the District, how much and where. It will influence the physical environment; the way people live and work; and will help deliver the needs of the District's residents, employers, retailers and visitors. The consultation documents allowed for discussion on appropriate levels of development, but identified an emerging strategy for the following local requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Housing: 8,000 homes. ● Employment Land: 127 hectares of readily available land for general employment uses between 2006-2026. ● Retail: Up to an additional 35,000m2 of retail floorspace (gross) within Lichfield City and up to 16,000m2 (gross) in Burntwood . ● Offices: Up to 30,000m2 of floorspace focused on Lichfield City Centre and allowing up to 5,000m2 within Burntwood town centre.
<p>Stoke -on-Trent and Newcastle Core Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Housing Requirement of 6,257 and 13,500 dwellings for Newcastle and Stoke ● 25,000m² of additional gross comparison retail floorspace to 2021 and a further 10,000m² to 2026; ● 60,000m² of additional gross office floorspace within, or on the edge of the town centre, to accommodate new employment of a type in keeping with the role of the Town Centre. ● Long term employment land supply 84 hectares and 165 hectares for Newcastle and Stoke.
<p>Tamworth Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Option</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Housing: 5,500 dwellings. ● Employment Land: a five year reservoir of 14 hectares, a minimum of 28 hectares up to 2016, with a longer term requirement of 56 hectares. ● Retail: 25,000 square metres of floorspace up to 2021 followed by a further 10,000 square metres. ● Offices: 20,000 square metres of floorspace.

	<p>The Option report proposed a sequential approach to delivering the spatial strategy for the town and recognised that land outside of the urban area will be required to deliver growth and that there were a number of constraints to achieving this.</p>
<p>Telford and Wrekin Core Strategy</p>	<p>The plan runs from 2006 to 2016 and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1330 new dwellings per annum up to 2011, and a maximum of 700 new dwellings per annum 2011-2016 ● A maximum of 2850 dwellings will be brought forward under the New Growth Points Initiative ● Development to be focused at Telford, including the Strategic Sites of Lightmoor, Lawley and East Ketley, will be the location for the overwhelming majority of new homes and 60 new dwellings per annum at Newport. 170 new dwellings to the rural area ● Telford to continue to be the focus of retail and office development
<p>Outline Planning Application and masterplan for housing development at Pye Green</p>	<p>Proposal for 700 houses and open space, approx 230 metres south west of the Cannock Chase SAC. A HRA setting out the following mitigation measures has also been supplied:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No development within 400 metres of the perimeter of the SAC. 2. The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) within the site to encourage residents to use local green spaces rather than visit the SAC. 3. Encourage residents to use areas outside the SAC (and AONB) for recreation. 4. Educate new residents through a Local Information Pack on the importance of the SAC, how they could protect it, encourage them to use SANGS etc.

ii HRA of Regional Spatial Strategy

ii HRA of Regional Spatial Strategy

The Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Regional Spatial Strategy prepared by URSUS Consulting Ltd & Treweek Environmental Consultants in 2007 highlight the following likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC:

- *Those parts of Cannock Chase SAC within 200 m of the A34, 513 or 460 may be exposed to increased levels of deposition of atmospheric pollutants, causing changes in the plant species composition of the vegetation communities for which the site is designated. Levels of traffic on these and more local roads could be further exacerbated by increased recreational use of the site associated with an expanding local population. Increasing recreational use could create a future need for additional supporting infrastructure or facilities, which could potentially require land-take within or near Cannock Chase SAC.*
- *Another possible consequence of increased recreational use could be impacts on water quality and localised eutrophication.*
- *All these effects could be further exacerbated by the in-combination effects of the South Staffordshire Economic Regeneration Strategy and Visitor Economy Strategy.*
- *Water abstraction is an existing issue at the site which could potentially be exacerbated by housing development.*
- *Recreational pressure and disturbance, particularly from dog-walking, horse-riding, mountain-biking and off-track activities (orienteering noted): all of these cause or contribute to erosion, creation of new tracks and damage to vegetation*

iii Footprint Ecology Reports

The following reports have been completed by Footprint Ecology to support the Habitat Regulations Assessment:

- Evidence Base Report (2009)
- Visitor Impact Management Strategy (2009)
- Cannock Chase Observation Report (2012)
- Cannock Chase Visitor Report and Map Annex (2012)
- Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Report (2012)
- Special Area of Conservation Impacts Report (2012)

iv Evidence Base

iv Evidence Base

- Stafford Borough Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Department of the Environment study of the effects of pollution climate upon peat chemistry and drainage water (year unknown)
- Scoping Opinion for Proposed Stafford Area Improvements Norton Bridge Grade Separation Scheme: October 2011
- Southern Staffordshire Outline Water Cycle Study: July 2010
- Correspondence with Environment Agency (see below)
- An investigation into the impact of nitrogen deposition from traffic emissions of NO₂ on the heathland in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire: November 2012

Naomi Perry

From: Austen, Richard [richard.austen@environment-agency.gov.uk]
Sent: 06 February 2012 13:58
To: Naomi Perry
Cc: Perry, Laura
Subject: RE: HRA and EA abstraction

Hi Naomi,

Thankyou for your enquiry about abstraction and the RoC for Habitats Directive sites potentially impacted by your LDF. I have put comments against each site as provided by yourself. We have completed the RoC process at all of the sites and have implemented solutions where necessary to meet the requirements of the Habitats Directive. Any new abstraction licence applications will have to demonstrate that they are not having an impact on any SAC before a licence would be granted. This would also have to be agreed by Natural England.

* Motte Meadows, Salt Pasturefields, Cop Mere, Chartley Moss
These sites were assessed as part of the RoC and found not to be impacted by abstraction.

* Aqualate Mere
Aqualate Mere was part of the Restoring Sustainable Abstraction programme and was signed off in 2011 with the recommendation to continue monitoring but no licence changes were required. This concluded a detailed investigation made by Severn Trent Water Limited (STWL) in AMP4 (2005-10) when they investigated the impact of their groundwater abstraction on the SSSI. The Environment Agency has also investigated other abstractions in the vicinity of the SSSI.

* Cannock Chase SAC
We assessed the impact of abstraction upon the Wet Heath areas of the Cannock Chase SAC with STWL during AMP4. As a result of the review STWL reduced their abstraction licenses at 2 of their sources to ensure no impact on the SAC.

And outside the Borough:

* River Mease SAC
We undertook a RoC investigation into the impacts of abstraction on the SAC. As a result of the review STWL revoked one of their licenses, South Staffs Water changed one of their licenses and 6 agricultural abstractors in the catchment signed up to an agreement to limit the amount of water they take in any year. These actions mean the SAC is protected.

* Cannock Chase Extension Canal SAC, Betley Mere (under Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase I Ramsar designation), Black Firs and Cranberry Bog (under Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase II Ramsar designation)
These sites were assessed as part of the RoC and found not to be impacted by abstraction.

* Humber Estuary SAC
We changed Keadby Power Station's abstraction licence to include a condition to put fish screens on the intake to protect lamprey and agreed to review before implementation date (2014) if new evidence was available. New evidence was provided, proving no impact on Lamprey, so we have now removed the condition. Any Surface Water abstraction in the Trent catchment will have a condition that prevents abstraction at low flows to protect the estuary.

Hopefully this covers what you need to know but if you need any more information or any clarifications please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards
Rich

Richard Austen

iv Evidence Base

Senior Environment Planning Officer (Restoring Sustainable Abstraction)
Environment Agency - Central Area/Midlands Region
email: richard.austen@environment-agency.gov.uk

Tel Internal: 722 4888
Direct line: 01543 404888

Sentinel House
9 Wellington Crescent
Fradley Park
Lichfield
WS13 8RR

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

P If you see environmental incidents or fish in distress call our incident hotline on
0800 80 70 60

-----Original Message-----

From: Steele, Naomi
Sent: 25 January 2012 10:35
To: Taylor, Anne; Austen, Richard
Cc: nperry@staffordbc.gov.uk
Subject: FW: HRA and EA abstraction

Hi both,
Please see email below from Naomi Perry at Stafford Borough Council. Please could you
respond to her- I think there are sites across both your areas.

Many thanks
Naomi

-----Original Message-----

From: Naomi Perry [mailto:nperry@staffordbc.gov.uk]
Sent: 25 January 2012 10:28
To: Steele, Naomi
Subject: HRA and EA abstraction

Good morning,

My name is Naomi Perry and I'm a planning officer at Stafford Borough Council. I am
currently preparing the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening opinion looking at
potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites within and outside the Brough, as a result of the
Local Development Framework in combination with other plans.

After reviewing neighbouring authorities work, I note you have provided confirmation on
current abstraction licenses/review of consents in relation to European sites. Would you
be able to provide something for my records? The sites in the Borough are:

- * Motte Meadows
- * Salt Pasturefields
- * Cop Mere
- * Aqualate Mere
- * Chartley Moss
- * Cannock Chase SAC

And outside the Borough:

Evidence Base iv

- * River Mease SAC
- * Cannock Chase Extension Canal SAC
- * Betley Mere (under Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase I Ramsar designation)
- * Black Firs and Cranberry Bog (under Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase II Ramsar designation)
- * Humber Estuary SAC

I appreciate that some might not have abstraction licenses but any information you can provide will be really useful for our HRA, in order for us to confirm no impacts or address potential impacts through suitable policies.

Kind Regards

Naomi Perry
Planning Officer
Stafford Borough Council
Tel: 01785 619591

Get involved with the LDF online at <http://staffordbc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

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v Cannock Chase SAC Partnership

v Cannock Chase SAC Partnership

The Cannock Chase SAC Partnership consists of membership of the following authorities and organisations:

- Birmingham City Council
- Cannock Chase AONB Unit
- Cannock Chase District Council
- East Staffordshire Borough Council
- Lichfield District Council
- Natural England
- South Staffordshire District Council
- Stafford Borough Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- The Black Country Authorities
- The Forestry Commission

In 2010, the following objective and actions were agreed by the Partnership:

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Partnership is to use statutory planning processes and specific habitat management activities to secure appropriate mitigation of the impacts on the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of Development Plan and Local Transport Plan Policies & proposals contained in individual planning applications and projects thereby ensuring that the integrity of the SAC is maintained.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Collectively and individually ensure that all plans, projects & management activities meet the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 that significant adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC are avoided or fully mitigated
2. Develop, commission and oversee data collection and assessment required to allow identification of impacts and development of mitigation proposals, to include visitor survey, traffic impact assessment, recreational impact assessment
3. Develop and implement consistent planning policies in Development Plan Documents and Local Transport Plans which provide a framework for a mitigation strategy.

Cannock Chase SAC Partnership v

4. Produce a costed mitigation strategy including evidence of its deliverability with identified implementation responsibilities, funding sources and a programme of mitigation works to be reviewed on an annual basis
5. Agree a Governance structure including a protocol for decision making on management and spending of the funding based on the evidence from the mitigation strategy.
6. Agree monitoring arrangements.