Screening Opinion for Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council Local Development Frameworks in respect of Cannock Chase Natura 2000 site

Introduction / Background

This screening opinion has been prepared jointly to assist Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council in deciding whether an Appropriate Assessment of their Local Development Frameworks (LDF) in relation to Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation is required under the European Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive).

The screening opinion 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.

This report has also drawn on guidance contained in PPS9, 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'.

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.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment

A Habitats Regulations Assessment is the requirement that Local Authorities and Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) should consider whether projects or plans, as part of land use planning documents, will have adverse affects 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.

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.

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' states that RAMSAR sites should receive the same protection as SPAs and SACs.

Cannock Chase SAC

This document, relates only to Cannock Chase SAC, which lies both within Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase District. Whilst there are other Natura 2000 sites within and surrounding Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase District, these will be covered in separate documents.

The purpose of a Habitats Regulations Assessment is to assess the impacts of landuse plans and projects against the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site and to ascertain whether there will be an adverse affect on the integrity of the site. If significant effects are identified by the assessment, alternative plan options need to be examined.

Methodology

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

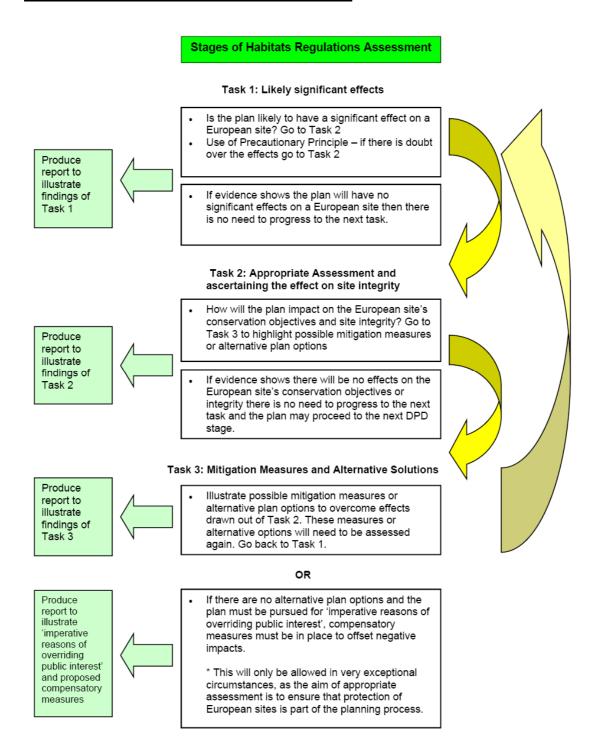
Stage one: Likely Significant Effects (Screening)

Stage two: Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining on the site integrity

Stage three: Mitigation and alternative solutions and

* Imperative reasons of overriding public interest

The Habitats Regulations Assessment Process



Outcomes of Screening Decision

This report is dealing primarily with Stage One of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, the screening stage. This stage assesses in general terms whether the proposals in Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council LDF's are likely to have a significant impact on Cannock Chase SAC. If no likely effects are determined, the Appropriate Assessment stage need not be carried out and each authorities LDF proposals may continue through the LDF process.

However, if the screening stage decides that the plans or projects will result in likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC, a separate Appropriate Assessment of Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase District Council LDF's will need to be carried out.

Stage One: Likely Significant Effects (Screening)

Screening has four tasks: -

- 1. Determining whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site
- 2. Describing the project or plan and any others that in combination have the potential to significantly affect the Natura 2000 site
- 3. Characteristics of the site and identification of possible effects
- 4. Assessing the significance of any effects

Task 1: Determining whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site

	·
Management of the s	site
Location of the plan	Stafford Borough LDF covers the whole of Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase LDF covers the whole of Cannock Chase District
Area of the project or plan	Stafford Borough is approx 230 square miles and Cannock Chase District is approximately 30 square miles
Brief Description	Both LDF's aim to set out the spatial planning strategy for the local authority areas until 2026. The strategy for Stafford Borough will see the delivery of approximately 12,500 new homes until 2026 along with an increase in employment land delivery. Cannock Chase LDF, as set out in the recent consultation document considers a range of 6,000 – 8,842 new homes until 2026 along with 85 – 152 hectares of employment land. For both LDF's these figures will be refined in the Preferred Options Stage.
Is the proposed plan or policy directly necessary to the site management for	No, neither the Stafford Borough LDF nor Cannock Chase LDF is directly necessary to the site management for nature conservation.
nature conservation?	

Task 2: Describing the project or plan and any others that in combination have the potential to significantly affect the Natura 2000 site

Description of the	Description of the Plan				
Size of the Plan	Stafford Borough LDF relates to the whole of Stafford Borough,				
	which covers approximately 230 square miles				
	Cannock Chase LDF relates to the whole of Cannock Chase District				
	which covers approximately 30 square miles				
Plan Sector	Spatial Plan for Stafford Borough				
Physical changes	In accordance with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy				
resulting from the	Stafford Borough LDF will aim to deliver approximately 12,500 new				
project or plan	dwellings between 2006 – 2026. This will lead to physical changes				

	in certain parts of the Borough.
	Cannock Chase District LDF will aim to deliver dwellings in the range of 6,000 – 8,842 between 2006 – 2026
	In addition the Cannock Chase District LDF proposes a range of 85 – 152 hectares of employment land between 2006 – 2026
Resource Requirements	
Duration of construction, operation and decommissioning	Both LDF's cover the time period from 2006 to 2026
Emissions and waste	Both Stafford Borough LDF and Cannock Chase LDF, in combination with neighbouring authorities LDF's, the M6 widening and changes in electricity production at Rugeley Power Station may have a negative impact on air quality.
Transportation requirements	None specified in the LDFs, although the both LDF's may have negative impacts in combination with the M6 widening project
Plan implementation period	Both LDF's cover the time period from 2006 to 2026
Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site	Two thirds of Cannock Chase SAC lie within Stafford Borough and one third lies within Cannock Chase District. In terms of distance to particular settlements, Cannock Chase SAC lies approximately 2km from Stafford, 1.6km from Rugeley and adjacent to Hednesford and Pye Green.
Cumulative impacts with other projects or plans	There may be water resource, air quality and recreation cumulative impacts arising from both Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase LDF's in combination with each other and neighbouring authorities LDF's, water company abstraction rates, M6 widening plans and Rugeley Power Station Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) plans.

Task 3: Characteristics of the site and identification of possible effects

Description of t	Description of the Site						
Name	Cannock Chase SAC						
Date of	April 2005						
designation							
Site	The site comprises of lowland heathland and is the most extensive in						
Description	the Midlands region.						
	Character of the vegetation is intermediate between the upland and						
	northern heaths of England and Wales and those of the southern						
	counties.						
	The heathland includes energies of comparing (Vessinium vitie ideas) and						
	The heathland includes species of cowberry (<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>) and crowberry (<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>), alongside being home to the main						
	British population of the hybrid bilberry (<i>Vaccinium intermedium</i>), a						
	plant of restricted occurrence.						
	plant of restricted occurrence.						
	The site has important populations of butterflies and beetles, European						
	nightjar (<i>caprimulgus europaeus</i>) and five species of bats.						

Reason for European Designation Qualifying Features Rey Environmental features that support site integrity Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size Character 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Cannock Chase District boundary. Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Site Objectives 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 interest features. Site On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat space are any cluster for mount of cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Unlerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation.	0.4	0.070/ 5
Reason for European dry heaths Annex 1 habitat for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Qualifying Features pesent as a qualifying feature, but not primary reason for site selection Sympathetic management of heathland vegetation Climate Maintenance of soil chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation	Site condition	2.27% Favourable
Reason for European Designation Qualifying Features Key Environmental features that support site integrity Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Dotheracter Conferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives Site Objectives To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition with particular reference to any development condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent. Site Unlarability / Unl		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
European Designation Gualifying Features Key Environmental features that support site integrity Distance from Sympathetic management of heathland vegetation Climate Boundary Size General site character Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives The Conservation Objectives for this site are to maintain the following habitats and geological features in favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated interest features. Site Unlnerability Distance from Sympathetic management of heathland vegetation Climate Maintenance of soil chemistry Maintenance of soil chemistr	5	
Designation Qualifying Northern Atlantic wet heaths Annex 1 habitat present as a qualifying feature, but not primary reason for site selection Sympathetic management of heathland vegetation Climate Maintenance of soil chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Approximately two thirds of the SAC lies within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation Country Park there are many threats to track creat		
Northern Atlantic wet heaths Annex 1 habitat present as a qualifying feature, but not primary reason for site selection Sympathetic management of heathland vegetation Climate Maintenance of soil chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Water		
Features		÷
Environmental features that support site integrity Maintenance of soil chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Maintenance of the SAC lies within Stafford Borough Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: • Dwarf shrub heath • Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation Vulnerability / Vulnerability		
Environmental features that support site integrity Water chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Water chemistry Water chemistry Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size Approximately two thirds of the SAC lies within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. I 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Objectives Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
features that support site integrity Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Maintenance of hydrology Water chemistry Approximately two thirds of the SAC lies within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Boundary and one third lies within Stafford Borough Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type. Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Support site integrity Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Stafford Borough General site character Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each designated habitat type. Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
integrity Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Stafford Borough General site character Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Uulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Distance from Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase District boundary. Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Stafford BC Boundary Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Size		
Size 1,271.78 ha of which 886.81 ha is within Stafford Borough General site character Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: • Dwarf shrub heath • Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		boundary and one third lies within Cannock Chase district boundary.
Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (0.5%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		4 074 70 ha afactich 000 04 ha is within Otaffand Dansonh
Character Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (76.3%) Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Coniferous woodland (12%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation	cnaracter	
groves, vineyards, (10.5%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
industrial sites) (0.7%) Site Objectives 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: • Dwarf shrub heath • Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Site Objectives 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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
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: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
reference to any development component special interest features for which the land is designated as individually listed: • Dwarf shrub heath • Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation	Site Objectives	
which the land is designated as individually listed: Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Dwarf shrub heath Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		which the land is designated as individually listed:
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland 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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		Divide de multiple de de la
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. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
of each designated habitat type. Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		Broadleaved, filixed and yew woodland
of each designated habitat type. Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent
evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent. To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent.
favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		To maintain the dwarf shrub heath habitats at Cannock Chase SSSI in
Site Vulnerability / Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Site Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a Vulnerability / Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		·
Vulnerability / Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation		
Vulnerability / Country Park there are many threats to track creation and vegetation	Site	Due to much of Cannock Chase being popular and well-used as a
, www.egeeenere moreumig;	Issues	damage from visitors including;
Dog walking		
horse riding		
mountain biking		
Off-track activities such as orienteering		The state of the s
Car parking		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Other threats include the invasion of other plant species including		Other threats include the invasion of other plant species including
Bracken invasion		Bracken invasion
Birch and pine scrub		Birch and pine scrub
	1	
Loss of heathland to fragmentation and scrub/woodland encroachment		

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.

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.

Furthermore the underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer with water abstracted for public and industrial uses and the effects of this on the wetland features of the Chase are not fully understood. Major increase in its use would obviously impact significantly on the site.

The prime air pollution concerns for heathlands and sub-artic scrub habitats in the UK are nitrogen deposition and ozone. Acid deposition may also be substantial, with implications for catchment water quality.

Task 4: Assessing the significance of any effects on Cannock Chase SAC

Assessment Criteria

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site

Stafford Borough LDF

12,500 new dwellings in the Borough between 2006 – 2026 and the allocation of additional employment land may impact on the Cannock Chase SAC.

Cannock Chase LDF

A range of 6,000 - 8,842 new dwellings in Cannock Chase District Council and 85 - 152 hectares of employment land between 2006 - 2026.

Other plans and projects include:

16,000 new dwellings in Lichfield Borough and 5,000 new dwellings in South Staffordshire District.

Current water abstraction rates by Seven Trent Water and South Staffs Water at sites on or surrounding the SAC. It is currently unknown if abstraction at some of these sites are having a negative impact on the wet heaths at Cannock Chase or whether an increase in water abstraction could have a negative impact on the SAC.

The FGD Plant presently under construction will reduce the amount of sulphur Dioxide produced by the station, but the process will increase Nitrogen emissions.

The widening of the M6 within Stafford Borough may lead to an increase in usage and therefore an increase in Carbon Dioxide and Nitrogen emissions. The effect on Cannock Chase SAC is unknown.

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts
Of the project (either along or in combination with other
Plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:

- Size and scale;
- Land-take;
- Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;
- Resource requirements (water abstraction etc);
- Emissions (disposal to land, water or air);
- Excavation requirements;
- Transportation requirements;
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning;

Possible impacts include

- Increased visitor use and associated impacts on Cannock Chase SAC
- Increased water demand may lead to increased water abstraction at boreholes within and surrounding the Chase
- Increased nitrogen deposition
- No initial phasing of development for the districts the delivery of housing and employment land likely to be constant over the plan period of 2006 – 2026
- No development proposed within the Cannock Chase SAC
- Two thirds of the 1268-hectare SAC lie in Stafford Borough with the remaining third in Cannock Chase District.

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:

- Reduction of habitat area:
- Disturbance to key species;
- Habitat or species fragmentation;
- Reduction in species density;
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc);

• Climate change

Reduction in water flows Water quality Habitat fragmentation Reduction in habitat area Vegetation change

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:

- Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site
- Interference with the key relationships that define the function of the site

Impacts may interfere with the soil chemistry of the SAC and give rise to other species, which may invade the heathland. Increased Nitrogen levels can be expected to favour grassland species rather than those that are characteristic of dwarf shrub heath

Impacts may alter the hydrology of the SAC, interfering with the wet heath habitats. Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

- Loss:
- Fragmentation;
- Disruption;
- Disturbance;
- Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)

Recreation

The Cannock Chase AONB Visitor Survey 2000 concludes that approximately 1.27 million visits are made to Cannock Chase on an annual basis. 70% of visitors originate within 10 miles of their destination.

The most popular locations are Milford Common, Marquis Drive, Birches Valley, Seven Springs, the Sherbrook Valley and Castle Ring.

Visitors mostly cite walking as their reason for visiting the Chase, but other activities such as cycling, games and equine activities are other activities for which people visit the Chase.

The report states that the principal areas of conflict centre on the use of the Chase by growing numbers of mountain bike riders and a smaller number of horse riders. Conflicts centre especially upon concerns over personal safety as well as problems of damage to paths.

Using the evidence above, it is possible to judge that an increase in dwellings in Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase District will increase visitor numbers to the Chase, based on current distance travelled by visitors. Damage to paths is an existing problem and may be exacerbated by an increase in visitors.

Dog walking is already resulting in vegetation change along path edges due to fouling. Survey evidence (Cannock Chase Council 2007) shows vegetation change attributable to increased nutrient levels at distances of up to 280 metres from car parks and other access points.

Water abstraction

The 2002 Seven Trent Water commissioned Halcrow report titled Cannock Chase Hydrogeological Study: Final Report investigates current Seven Trent Water abstraction sites in or surrounding the SAC. Two of these, Shugborough and Milford pumping stations may have an impact on the wet heaths at Sherbrook and Oldacre Valleys. An updated study in 2006 by ESI confirmed that while there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the public water supply sources are having a detrimental impact on groundwater levels across the SAC area, it is possible that abstraction at licensed rates could affect stream flows and local groundwater levels further. If this is the case, the extent of the wet heaths may be affected and this would conflict with the conservation objectives for the SAC. Further investigations, regarding the issue of groundwater levels are being carried out and results are expected in March 2008.

Current abstraction levels are below the full licensed abstraction levels.

South Staffs Water Plc have several water abstraction licences at pumping stations within Cannock Chase District, surrounding the SAC at Moors Gorse, Brindley Bank and Slitting Mill. In addition South Staffs Plc operate other pumping stations at Maple Brook, Seedy Mill and Shenstone, which lie within a different groundwater catchment. Following discussions with The Environment Agency and Natural England, South Staffs Water Plc have been informed that the scale of their operations does not warrant the need for Appropriate Assessment but the impact of abstractions at Moors Gorse and Slitting Mill are being investigated by the EA as part of the Memorandum of Understanding that is linked to a group licence.

In addition South Staffs Water Plc have no plans to increase our abstraction licence quantities for these sources. Should a supply demand shortfall be identified in the next South Staffs Water Plc water resources plan, the deficit will be met by alternative measures/locations.

Air Quality

Air Pollution Information System (APIS) state that the main concerns for lowland heathland are the impacts of nitrogen deposition and acid deposition. Lowland heaths may also be at risk from nearby air pollutant sources such as farming or industrial activity.

For upland heathland the key concerns are the effects of nitrogen deposition and ozone.

The critical load for nitrogen deposition on lowland heathland is 10 – 25 kg N ha⁻¹ year⁻¹.

Acid deposition consists of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides for which the critical loads are:

Sulphur Dioxide 20 μg SO² m⁻³ annual mean and half-year (Oct-March) mean

Nitrogen oxides 30 μg N0x (as N02) m⁻³ annual mean; 75 μg N0x (as N02) m⁻³ 24-hour mean

The critical load for nitrogen deposition on upland heathland is 10-20 kg N ha⁻¹ year⁻¹ and 3000 ppb hours (accumulated over a threshold of 40 ppb or AOT40) over a period of up to three months for ozone.

While collection of such data on or nearby the SAC is limited Nitrogen Dioxide is measured at Birches Valley, approximately 1.5km from the SAC boundary. Figures are provided monthly from January 1994, with the most recent figure for November 2006. In the last three months there has been an increase in Nitrogen Dioxide from 11.9 to 16.7 ug/m³. The highest measurement of nitrogen dioxide was recorded in November 1997 at 62.8 ug/m³. Currently nitrogen dioxide measured at low level is below the critical load, but in the past this has been exceeded and the effects of this are unknown.

The total load deposited on the SAC may not be directly correlated with atmospheric nitrogen levels recorded at Birches Valley as much of the nitrogen reaching the SAC will be in rainwater derived at least in part from high-level sources. Data published by the Critical Loads Network suggests that total nitrogen deposition in the area exceeds critical load.

	Environment data for 2006 report to local authorities for Rugeley Power Station CO2 emissions from Rugeley Power Station have fluctuated over the last 7 years, but were reduced in 2006. Levels of Sulphur Dioxide, Oxides of Nitrogen and Hydrogen Chloride were also reduced in 2006. However the amount of electricity produced in 2006 was below that generated in previous years.
	Rugeley Power Station is presently installing a flue gas desulphurisation plant in order to comply with the 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 emissions but there will be an increase in Nitrogen.
Describe from the above those elements of the	Water abstraction and water quality impacts are not known.
project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or	Air quality impacts from increased populations and households in Stafford Borough and neighbouring authorities along with increase traffic in Stafford Borough due to the M6 widening are unknown.
where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known	Recreational impacts. It is thought that a significant increase in dwellings and population, in both Stafford Borough, Cannock Chase along with neighbouring authorities areas will lead to an increase in visitors to the Chase.

<u>Conclusion: Screening Opinion</u> <u>Task 4: Assessing the significance of any effects on Cannock Chase SAC:</u> <u>Conclusion</u>

Is the plan or project	No, neither Stafford Borough LDF nor Cannock Chase LDF are directly linked to the management of the site.
directly	
linked to the	
management	
of the site?	
Are significant	It is not certain whether the effects identified in this report (see task 4 table) are significant and/or likely but following the
effects likely?	precautionary principle, the next stage of the Habitats
	Regulations Assessment, the Appropriate Assessment stage will be carried out in relation to both Stafford Borough LDF and
	Cannock Chase District LDF to clarify on issues of significance.

Task 4: Table of likely Significant Effects Matrix for Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase District Local Development Frameworks

Site	Qualifying features	Key environmental conditions to support site integrity	Possible impacts that will arise from Stafford and Cannock LDF's	Is the impact 'significant'?	Describe other plans, projects or trends that 'in combination' will have possible impacts	Are impacts 'significant'?
Cannock Chase SAC	European dry heaths, intermediate between uplands of northern England and Wales and those of southern counties	Sympathetic management of heathland vegetation	12,900+ new houses for Stafford Borough between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include: Increased visitors and recreational use of Chase resulting in erosion, trampling of vegetation etc	Yes?	16,000+ new houses for Lichfield District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include: Increased visitors and recreational use of the Chase resulting in erosion, trampling of vegetation	Yes?
			6,000 – 8,842 new houses for Cannock Chase District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include: Increased visitors and recreational use of the Chase resulting in erosion, trampling of vegetation etc		5,000+ new houses for South Staffordshire District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include: Increased visitors and recreational use of the Chase resulting in erosion, trampling of vegetation etc	Yes?

Site	Qualifying features	Key environmental conditions to support site integrity	Possible impacts that will arise from the plan	Is the impact 'significant'?	Describe other plans, projects or trends that 'in combination' will have possible impacts	Are impacts 'significant'?
Cannock Chase SAC	European dry heaths, intermediate between uplands of northern England and Wales and those of southern counties	Maintenance of soil chemistry	12,900+ new houses for Stafford Borough between 2006 – 2026 Increased levels of eutrophication resulting from dog fouling along path/edges etc.	Yes?	16,000+ new houses for Lichfield District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include Increased levels of eutrophication resulting from dog fouling along path/edges etc.	Yes?
			6,000 – 8,842 new houses for Cannock Chase District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include: Increased levels of eutrophication resulting from dog fouling along path/edges etc.	Yes?	5,000+ new houses for South Staffordshire District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include Increased levels of eutrophication resulting from dog fouling along path/edges etc.	Yes?

Site	Qualifying features	Key environmental conditions to support site integrity	Possible impacts that will arise from the plan	Is the impact 'significant'?	Describe other plans, projects or trends that 'in combination' will have possible impacts	Are impacts 'significant'?
Cannock Chase SAC	European dry heaths, intermediate between uplands of northern England and Wales and those of southern counties	Maintenance of soil chemistry	Expansion of industrial areas in Cannock Chase District Possible increase in nitrogen deposition due to atmospheric pollution	Yes?	Widening of M6 motorway in Stafford Borough • Possible increase in atmospheric pollution due to more traffic travelling through the Borough Installation of a flue gas desulphurisation plant at Rugeley Power Station • Reduction in SO2 emissions but possible increase in carbon dioxide and N emissions	No, Rugeley Power Station Proposed FGD Plant – Environment Statement states that carbon dioxide emissions should be insignificant in the context of sector and national carbon dioxide emissions

Site	Qualifying features	Key environmental conditions to support site integrity	Possible impacts that will arise from the plan	Is the impact 'significant'?	Describe other plans, projects or trends that 'in combination' will have possible impacts	Are impacts 'significant'?
Cannock Chase SAC	North Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica</i> tetralix	Maintenance of hydrology	12,900+ new houses for Stafford Borough between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include Increase in demand for water, which could result in increased water abstraction	Yes?	5,000+ new houses for South Staffordshire District between 2006 – 2026. Impacts include • Increase in demand for water	Yes?
			6,000 – 8,842 new houses for Cannock Chase District between 2006 – 2026 Impacts include: Increase in demand for water		16,000+ new houses for Lichfield District May increase demand for water	No, South Staffs Water state there will be no increase in abstraction rates at Pumping Stations on Cannock Chase