

# South Staffordshire Council

## South Staffordshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document

### Habitats Regulations Assessment: Stage 1 - Screening

January 2011

ATKINS

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# 1. Introduction and Background

## Background to this Assessment

- 1.1. This Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 - Screening has been carried out by Atkins Limited (Atkins) on behalf of South Staffordshire Council for the South Staffordshire Local Development Framework *Core Strategy Development Plan Document – Publication Document*.
- 1.2. The *Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Publication Document* is hereafter referred to as the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy contains a total 53 policies for steering and shaping development within South Staffordshire as well as defining areas where development should be limited. It is a high level strategic document that sets out the long-term spatial planning framework for the development of South Staffordshire between 2006 and 2027.
- 1.3. The Core Strategy currently contains 15 Core Policies (strategic level policies) and 38 Development Policies (control/management policies which support the Core Policies). The policies are divided into five community strategy themes: Environmental Quality, Housing, Economic Vibrancy, Health and Well Being and Children and Young People. The Plan also sets out all of the supporting text for each policy.
- 1.4. This Plan is the final consultation version of the Core Strategy before it is submitted to the Secretary of State (likely to be in June/July 2011) with adoption likely to occur in March 2012. The Plan is to be put out for representations for a period of at least six weeks between March and April 2011. This version of the Core Strategy (i.e. its policies and the supporting text) may alter following feedback from the representation process. However only minor changes, if any, are anticipated.

## Background to Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.5. Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required by Regulation 61 the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitat Regulations) for all plans and projects which may have likely significant effects on European sites and are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European site.
- 1.6. European sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). HRA is also required, as a matter of UK Government policy for potential SPAs (pSPA), candidate SACs (cSAC) and listed Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) for the purposes of considering plans and projects, which may affect them<sup>1</sup>. Hereafter all of the above designated nature conservation sites are referred to as 'international sites'.
- 1.7. The stages of HRA process are:
  - **Stage 1 – Screening:** To test whether a plan or project either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on an international site;
  - **Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment:** To determine whether, in view of an international site's conservation objectives, the plan (either alone or in combination with other projects and plans) would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site with respect to the site structure, function and conservation objectives. If adverse impacts are anticipated, potential mitigation measures to alleviate impacts should be proposed and assessed;
  - **Stage 3 – Assessment of alternative solutions:** Where a plan is assessed as having an adverse impact (or risk of this) on the integrity of an international site, there should be an examination of alternatives (e.g. alternative locations and designs of development); and,

<sup>1</sup> *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*, ODPM (August 2005)

- **Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain:** In exceptional circumstance (e.g. where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest), compensatory measures to be put in place to offset negative impacts.

1.8. This report comprises Stage 1 – Screening of the Core Strategy.

### Previous HRA Work

- 1.9. Atkins completed a Habitats Regulations Assessment Review of the of the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Policy Choices Consultation Document (January 2010)* in August 2010<sup>2</sup>. This prior iteration of the Plan included draft policies only and no supporting text.
- 1.10. The Habitats Regulations Assessment Review of the Policy Choices Document highlighted where significant effects on international sites were likely and also put forward recommendations to help protect international sites so as to strengthen the next draft of the Core Strategy. This included putting forward recommendations for the wording of policies in the next iteration of the Core Strategy and additional text relating to international sites and the HRA process.
- 1.11. The Review concluded that the policies in the Policy Choices Document would not have any likely significant effects on international sites.
- 1.12. Natural England was consulted on the outcome of the Review. A response from Natural England was received in September 2010 (see Appendix A). This response stated that they agreed with the methodology used for the Review. They also made recommendations to be included in the next iteration of the Plan and these have been incorporated into the Core Strategy.

### Outline of this Review Report

- 1.13. Following this introduction:
- Section 2 of this report sets out the methodology used for the Stage 1 - Screening;
  - Section 3 provides details relating to the international sites (including their Conservation Objectives and site sensitivities);
  - Section 4 outlines details of the Core Strategy;
  - Section 5 details the other plans and projects identified which may lead to in combination effects on the international sites;
  - Section 6 details the results of the Stage 1 – Screening for the international sites; and,
  - Section 7 provides the conclusions of the Stage 1 – Screening.

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<sup>2</sup> *Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Policy Choices Consultation Document (January 2010): Habitats Regulations Assessment Review* (produced by Atkins in August 2010).

## 2. Methodology

### The Plan

- 2.1. The first step of the HRA process is to gather all available information regarding the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Publication Document*). This information is pivotal for the analysis of the Core Strategy and its impact on international sites.
- 2.2. This includes a review of the Plan to determine if any of the proposals within the Core Strategy are directly connected with, or necessary to, the nature conservation management of the international sites included in the HRA process.
- 2.3. A summary of the Core Strategy and its contents is given in Section 4.

### Determination of the International Sites included in the HRA

- 2.4. The international sites that should be included in the HRA must also be identified. An initial review of the Plan in light of the Habitats Regulations was undertaken at the beginning of the Stage 1 – Screening process. This initial review looked at the geographic extent or zone of influence of any impacts which could arise as a result of the Plan and considered which international sites should be included within the assessment.
- 2.5. All international sites within South Staffordshire and up to 20 km from its boundaries were identified<sup>3</sup>. There is one international site within South Staffordshire: the Motte Meadows SAC. This site is designated for its lowland hay meadows.
- 2.6. There are also an additional six international sites present within 20 km of the South Staffordshire district boundary:
  - **Cannock Chase SAC:** Located directly adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of South Staffordshire;
  - **Cannock Extension Canal SAC:** Located approximately 750 m east of South Staffordshire, near Wyrley Common, Cannock;
  - **Fens Pools SAC:** Located approximately 2.5 km east of South Staffordshire, in Pensnett, Dudley;
  - **Midland Meres and Mosses Ramsar Site (Phase 2 site):** Located approximately 4.2 km north of South Staffordshire, near Newport, Stafford;
  - **Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC:** Located approximately 6.1 km north-east of South Staffordshire, near Hixon, Stafford; and,
  - **West Midland Mosses SAC:** Located approximately 10 km north-east of South Staffordshire, near Stowe-by-Chartley, Stafford.
- 2.7. There are no cSACs, pSPAs or pRamsar sites present within South Staffordshire or within 20 km of the boundary of South Staffordshire.

<sup>3</sup> The Environment Agency Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) and Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) guidance notes that a proposal to construct a coal or oil fired power station should consider impacts on European sites up to 15 km away (Page 4 of the *Habitats Directive – Work Instruction: Appendix 7 Technical and Procedural Issues Specific to IPC and PPC* produced by the Environment Agency in July 2004). The most recent England Leisure Visits report states that people will travel up to 17.3 km to a countryside destination (*England Leisure Visits: Summary of the 2005 Leisure Visits Survey*, Natural England, 2005). These distances have been rounded up to 20 km on a precautionary basis to ensure that all sites that may be impacted by a new development are considered as part of the HRA process.

- 2.8. The policies within the Core Strategy are mainly of a localised nature and focus on regeneration of local services in the South Staffordshire with an increase in housing, tourism and employment in the district. Significant effects from the Plan are considered very unlikely to extend far beyond the Plan boundary. There are unlikely to be significant emissions to air or water which could be generated through developments such as large scale power stations, quarry operations and large scale pig or poultry units as proposals for types of development are not included in any of the policies present in the Core Strategy.
- 2.9. It is recognised that indirect effects such as recreational pressures may lead to effects outside of the Plan boundary and there are some international sites which may have features that are sensitive to disturbance. The following international sites have been eliminated from the Stage 1 - Screening process because the sites are not considered to be vulnerable to recreational or disturbance effects from policies within the Core Strategy: Midland Meres and Mosses Ramsar Site (Phase 2 site), Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC and West Midland Mosses SAC. This is because the policies in the Core Strategy and the nature of the designated features of these international sites are such that it is extremely unlikely that there will be any likely significant effects on these sites given their distance from the boundary of South Staffordshire.
- 2.10. The Fens Pools SAC is designated for its population of great crested newts, a European protected species. The vulnerabilities of the SAC relate to water quality, loss of terrestrial habitat and changes to ponds used by great crested newts to breed within (e.g. through desiccation, human disturbance, fish introductions and pollution). Due to distance and the lack of links between the Plan boundary and the SAC, the policies in the Core Strategy will not have any effect on the habitats on which the great crested newts depend. Therefore, the Fens Pools SAC has been eliminated from this Stage 1 – Screening process.
- 2.11. During the meeting held with Natural England (NE) on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Atkins were advised by NE that there was a need to consider the inclusion of the Severn Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites and the Humber Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites in the HRA Review completed in August 2010. These two international sites were included in the HRA of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. Consultation with the Environment Agency as well as South Staffordshire Water (SSW) and Severn Trent Water (STW) (the two local water utility companies that provide the water for South Staffordshire) was completed as part of this HRA Review. The Environment Agency has confirmed that no licences within the region that covers South Staffordshire have been found to have likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites or the Humber Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites (see Appendix B). One change to the licence at Keadby Power Station was required to ensure no significant effects on the Humber Estuary international sites (the licence was changed to include a condition that when the power station next has planned outage (2014) changes would be made to the fish screens on the intake and to the return system to prevent impingement of lamprey, one of SACs qualifying species). As such, there is no need to include the Severn Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites and the Humber Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites within this Stage 1 - Screening.
- 2.12. Therefore this Stage 1 – Screening focuses on possible likely significant effects of the Core Strategy on the following international sites: Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. Further information on the reasons for designation for each of these sites is included in Section 3 below.

### **Obtaining Information on International Sites with the Potential to be Affected**

- 2.13. The Conservation Objectives and Favourable Conditions Tables for Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC have been obtained from Natural England for the purpose of this assessment<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Information taken from *Information on Natura 2000 Sites in the West Midlands* prepared for Natural England by Treweek Environmental Consultants (Version 2, dated 14/07/09)

## Obtaining Information on Other Projects and Plans

- 2.14. In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, there is a need to consider the potential for likely significant effects of the Plan in combination with other projects and plans.
- 2.15. Statutory bodies surrounding, or in close proximity to, the three international sites were contacted for details of any other projects or plans that have been subject to HRA in order to assess effects on Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. This is in order to determine if there is an in combination effect (or cumulative impact) on these international sites.
- 2.16. The following organisations have been contacted for details of other plans and projects relating to Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC:

### County Councils

- Shropshire Council; and,
- Staffordshire County Council.

### Local Planning Authorities

- Cannock Chase District Council;
- Lichfield District Council (no information received from this Council to date, 21/01/2011);
- South Staffordshire District Council;
- Stafford Borough Council;
- Telford and Wrekin Council;
- Walsall Council; and,
- Wolverhampton City Council.

### Other Statutory Bodies

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit;
- Environment Agency;
- Forestry Commission;
- Natural England;
- Severn Trent Water; and,
- South Staffordshire Water.

## Assessing the Impacts of the Plan ‘Alone’ and ‘In Combination’

- 2.17. Following the gathering of information on the Plan and the international sites, an assessment was undertaken to predict the likely significant effects of the Plan on the international sites ‘alone’. In order to inform this process, all parts of the Core Strategy were assessed to see if they could result in likely significant effects on the three international sites. This HRA assesses the 53 policies contained in the Plan and also takes into account the supporting text.
- 2.18. The findings of this assessment are given in Table C-1 in Appendix C.
- 2.19. Where possible, policies that have been found to have no likely significant effect on an international site have been categorised into one of five different types. This has been based on *The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents (Revised Draft Guidance)* produced by Natural England in February 2009:

- **Policy Type A1:** Policies that will not themselves lead to development (e.g. because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or they are not a land use planning policy);
- **Policy Type A2:** Policies intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity;
- **Policy Type A3:** Policies intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on an international site;
- **Policy Type A4:** Policies that positively steer development away from international sites and associated sensitive areas; and,
- **Policy Type A5:** Policies that would have no effect because no development could occur through the policy itself, the development being implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on international sites and associated sensitive areas.

2.20. Section 5 summarises the findings of the HRA in relation to Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC.

2.21. The potential for likely significant effects of the Plan on the Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC in combination with other projects and plans has also been considered in this HRA. Although impacts from an individual project or plan may have no likely significant effect on an international site, cumulative impacts from other plans and projects may result in an in combination effect on one or more interest features of the international site<sup>5</sup>. Likely significant effects by these means must also be considered. As in accordance with the *Obtaining Information on Other Projects and Plans* section above, details of plans and projects that have had HRAs completed due to potential to impact upon the three international sites were reviewed in order to determine whether there is potential for in combination effects (see Section 5).

2.22. As outlined above, this Stage 1 – Screening assesses the likely significant effects (alone and in combination) of the Core Strategy on the international sites. Likely significant effect is defined as any effect that may reasonably be predicted as a consequence of a plan or project that may affect the conservation objectives of the features for which the site was designated, but excluding trivial or inconsequential effects. Likely significant effect is defined within the *Habitats Regulations Guidance Note 3*<sup>6</sup> English Nature 1999 and would include any of the following:

- Causing change to the coherence of the site or to the Natura 2000<sup>7</sup> series (e.g. presenting a barrier between isolated fragments, or reducing the ability of the site to act as a source of new colonisers);
- Causing reduction in the area of habitat or of the site;
- Causing direct or indirect change to the physical quality of the environment (including the hydrology) or habitat within the site;
- Causing ongoing disturbance to species or habitats for which the site is notified;
- Altering community structure (species composition);
- Causing direct or indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the site;
- Altering the vulnerability of populations etc to other impacts;
- Causing a reduction in the resilience of the feature against external change (for example its ability to respond to extremes of environmental conditions); and,
- Affecting restoration of a feature where this is a conservation objective.

<sup>5</sup> *Habitat Regulations Guidance Note 4: Alone or In Combination*, English Nature, May 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Produced by English Nature in 1999

<sup>7</sup> Natura 2000 sites are 'international sites' as defined earlier in this report.

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- 2.23. HRA is an iterative process. Where necessary, suggestions can be made of how to amend the Plan to avoid likely significant effects on an international site. This iterative approach has been adopted as part of this assessment: recommendations for the Plan provided to South Staffordshire Council as part of the previous HRA Review of the Policy Choices Document have been incorporated into the Draft Core Strategy. This Stage 1 - Screening assesses the Core Strategy and its policies after these recommendations have been included in the Plan.
- 2.24. The precautionary principle (as enshrined in the Habitats Regulations) has been taken into account during this HRA. The precautionary principle is used when an HRA cannot objectively demonstrate that there will be no likely significant effects on the international sites. If this occurs the subsequent stages of HRA must be completed for the project or plan.

## 3. The International Sites

3.1. This section includes information about Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC, their designation status, their location in relation to the Plan boundary, a brief description of each international site, their conservation objectives and their sensitivities<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 3.1: Information about the Motte Meadows SAC**

<b>Site Designation Status</b>	Motte Meadows SAC
<b>Location of International Site</b>	Motte Meadows SAC is located within South Staffordshire. The closest settlement to the SAC is Wheaton Aston, located approximately 0.8 km east of the international site.
<b>Brief Description of the European Site</b>	Motte Meadows is designated for its Annex I habitats: lowland hay meadows ( <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> ). The site holds a relatively large area of the habitat (approximately 40 ha).  The site contains grassland with limited influence of agricultural intensification and so demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. There are transitions to other dry and wet grassland types. The site is important for a range of rare meadow species, including fritillary <i>Fritillaria meleagris</i> at its most northerly native locality.
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	To maintain the lowland hay meadows in favourable condition, with particular reference to the MG4 and MG8 NVC communities.
<b>Sensitivities of the International Site</b>	The site is vulnerable for a number of reasons, including the threat of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increase in water levels:</b> Waterlogging from increased flooding levels has potential to affect the site, particularly if nutrient-rich water is able to lie on the meadows for any length of time. This may facilitate competition by more generalist plant species, leading to a loss of species that make up the designated habitat;</li> <li>• <b>Changes in water quality leading to eutrophication:</b> This may change the composition and structure of the vegetation on the site and may lead to the invasion by generalist native and non-native species;</li> <li>• <b>Physical damage:</b> Site-specific management requires grazing and/or mowing annually. Early grazing may affect Snake's-head Fritillary populations, whilst poaching, stock feeding and late flooding also cause problems;</li> <li>• <b>Changes in air quality leading to eutrophication:</b> As with water pollution inputs, increases the risk of competitive exclusion by other plant species, changes vegetation composition and structure; and,</li> <li>• <b>Changes in air quality leading to acidification:</b> The vegetation of this site is sensitive to increased acidification, which will change the vegetation composition and structure.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Conservation Objectives and Sensitivities have been taken from *Information on Natura 2000 Sites in the West Midlands* prepared for Natural England by Treweek Environmental Consultants (Version 2, dated 14/07/09).

Table 3.2: Information about the Cannock Chase SAC

<b>Site Designation Status</b>	Cannock Chase SAC
<b>Location of International Site</b>	Cannock Chase SAC is located in Staffordshire, to the north of Cannock. It is located directly adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of South Staffordshire.
<b>Brief Description of the International Site</b>	<p>The area of lowland heath that forms Cannock Chase SAC is the most extensive in the Midlands. The character is intermediate between the upland or northern heaths of England and Wales and those of southern counties. The dry heath communities present belong to National Vegetation Classification types H8 (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> - <i>Ulex gallii</i>) and H9 (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>) heaths (<i>British Plant Communities Volume 2: Mires and Heaths</i>, J.S. Rodwell, 1998). These habitats are the primary reason for the selection of the site.</p> <p>Cannock Chase has the main British population of hybrid bilberry (<i>Vaccinium x intermedium</i>), a plant of restricted occurrence. There are also important populations of butterflies and beetles, as well as European nightjar and five species of bats.</p> <p>Also present are northern Atlantic wet heaths with cross leafed heath (<i>Erica tetralix</i>). This habitat is a qualifying feature of the SAC but is not the primary reason for the selection of this site.</p>
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	Maintain European dry heaths and North Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> (cross-leaved heath) in a favourable condition, with particular reference to the NVC communities present: H8, H9 and M16.
<b>Sensitivities of the International Site</b>	<p>The site is vulnerable for a number of reasons, including the threat of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recreational pressure and disturbance:</b> A variety of activities are popular on-site, including horse-riding, mountain biking, dog-walking, orienteering and informal activities – all contribute to erosion and fragmentation (see below);</li> <li>• <b>Fragmentation:</b> A consequence of site management and of visitor pressure, affecting plant communities through increased isolation and access for competitive species;</li> <li>• <b>Burning and/or grazing:</b> Often required to maintain open heathland, helping prevent invasion by scrub and grasses;</li> <li>• <b>Invasive species:</b> These species affect the extent and distribution of habitats on site. Individual species, for example gorse and bracken, that are natural components of the heathland community can have a damaging effect on the site if allowed to become dominant through lack of management. Other species such as heather beetle and <i>phytophthora</i> can affect individual species;</li> <li>• <b>Succession of habitats:</b> Management is required to prevent succession to woodland, including non-native species such as pine;</li> <li>• <b>Changes in air quality leading to eutrophication:</b> Heathlands are naturally low nitrogen habitats and therefore inputs of nitrogen tend to be detrimental in increasing the relative competitive advantage of grasses and scrub (see also invasive species above);</li> <li>• <b>Changes in air quality leading to acidification:</b> Acidification of heathland ecosystems, through aerial inputs of nitrogen and sulphur, may change the species composition of the habitat and lead to premature death of desired species;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Toxic contamination:</b> Direct contamination of habitats through toxic pollutants, leading to direct mortality;</li> <li>• <b>Reduction in water levels:</b> <i>Erica tetralix</i> is restricted to wetter or waterlogged ground. Therefore abstraction that causes drying will affect distribution and abundance; and,</li> <li>• <b>Changes in water quality leading to eutrophication:</b> The vegetation of wet heath is particularly sensitive to nutrient nitrogen, whether from atmospheric or aquatic sources.</li> </ul>
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**Table 3.3: Information about the Cannock Extension Canal SAC**

<b>Site Designation Status</b>	Cannock Extension Canal SAC
<b>Location of International Site</b>	The SAC is located near Wyrley Common in Cannock. It is located approximately 750 m east of the boundary of South Staffordshire.
<b>Brief Description of the International Site</b>	<p>Cannock Extension Canal SAC is designated for the Annex II species that it supports: floating water plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>). Cannock Extension Canal is an example of anthropogenic, lowland habitat supporting floating water-plantain at the eastern limit of the plant's natural distribution in England.</p> <p>A very large population of the species occurs in the Canal, which has a diverse aquatic flora and rich dragonfly fauna, indicative of good water quality.</p> <p>The low volume of boat traffic on this terminal branch of the Wyrley and Essington Canal has allowed open-water plants, including floating water-plantain, to flourish, while depressing the growth of emergents.</p>
<b>Conservation Objectives</b>	Maintain habitat for Floating Water-plantain, with particular reference to open standing water habitats in which it occurs.
<b>Sensitivities of the International Site</b>	<p>The site is vulnerable for a number of reasons, including the threat of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recreational pressure and disturbance:</b> Floating water plantain requires relatively undisturbed water. Excessive quantities or higher speed boat traffic may cause physical damage and destruction;</li> <li>• <b>Change in water quality leading to eutrophication:</b> Polluted runoff is likely to affect the quality of the water where floating water plantain is found. This increases biological oxygen demand, reducing the levels of dissolved oxygen in water and increasing mortality of aquatic flora and fauna;</li> <li>• <b>Changes in water quality leading to increase sediment load:</b> Discharge of water carrying a high sediment load can affect water clarity;</li> <li>• <b>Changes in water quality leading to toxic contamination:</b> Road drains discharge to the site and could carry pollutant in the event of a spillage from, for example, a road tanker;</li> <li>• <b>New supply affecting water quality:</b> Any changes, for example canal restoration, that require a new water source could affect the chemical composition of the water;</li> <li>• <b>Changes in air quality leading to eutrophication and acidification:</b> Increased levels of nitrogen, and perhaps sulphur will have detrimental effects on water quality (and an increased effect in combination with impacts of runoff, see above);</li> </ul>

- **Invasive species:** Introductions of species such as American pondweed may out-compete floating water-plantain; and,
- **Physical disturbance:** Restoration to provide an additional connection to the canal network could result in a flow through the canal which could have a damaging effect to the plant communities present.

3.2. Documents that have been reviewed for additional information on Cannock Chase SAC and to help inform the Stage 1 – Screening include:

- *Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Management Plan 2009-14* (Final Draft, Cannock Chase AONB Unit, 2009);
- *Cannock Chase AONB Visitor Survey 2000*; (Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) Unit);
- *The West Midlands Regional Planning Body Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Phase II Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands* (October 2007);
- *Evidence Base relating to Cannock Chase SAC and the Appropriate Assessment of Local Authority Core Strategies* (Footprint Ecology, November 2009); and,
- *Cannock Chase Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy* (Footprint Ecology, March 2010).

## 4. Plan Details

- 4.1. The Core Strategy provides the strategic context that will guide the preparation of subsequent DPDs identified in the Local Development Framework.
- 4.2. None of the proposals within the Plan are directly connected with, or necessary to the nature conservation management of Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC.

### Brief Description of Plan

- 4.3. The Core Strategy contains broad policies for steering and shaping development as well as defining areas where development should be limited. It also sets out more detailed day to day development policies through which development will be delivered. The overall strategy will manage change that is necessary to meet the needs of current and future generations.
- 4.4. The Plan covers the period up to 2027 to allow the Council to deliver a continuous supply of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption of the Plan (intended to be January 2012).
- 4.5. The Plan includes a long term spatial vision for South Staffordshire, five Vision Locality Areas and 16 Strategic Objectives are identified in the Plan.
- 4.6. The Vision Locality Areas and the Strategic Objectives form the basis of the policies within the Plan. Both the Vision Locality Areas and Strategic Objectives have been reviewed as part of the HRA process. However, as they form the basis of the policies and as a thorough assessment of the policies has been completed as part of this Stage 1 – Screening (see Table C-1 in Appendix C), it is not considered necessary to assess the Vision Locality Areas or the Strategic Objectives separately.
- 4.7. Within the Plan there are 53 policies including 15 Core Policies and 38 Development Policies. These are divided into the following sections:
- **Spatial Strategy:** Includes Core Policy 1 and Development Policies GB1 and OC1;
  - **Environmental Quality:** Includes Core Policies 2 to 5 and Development Policies EQ1 to EQ13;
  - **Housing:** Includes Core Policy 6 and Development Policies H1 to H6;
  - **Economic Vibrancy:** Includes Core Policies 7 to 12 and Development Policies EV1 to EV14;
  - **Community Safety:** Includes Core Policy 13 and Development Policy CS1;
  - **Health and Well Being:** Includes Core Policy 14 and Development Policies HWB1 and HWB2; and,
  - **Children and Young People:** Includes Core Policy 15 only.

## Provisions within the Plan that Protect the International Sites

- 4.8. When planning applications are determined, all of the relevant policies and supporting text in the Plan are taken into account and used as the basis for decision-making.
- 4.9. Within the Core Strategy, there are a number of provisions which seek to protect the natural environment and international sites:
- **Strategic Objective 3:** This states that the Council seeks to protect and improve South Staffordshire’s environmental assets;
  - **Strategic Objective 4:** This states that the Council seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the countryside, character and quality of the landscape and diversity of wildlife and habitats;
  - **Core Policy 1 – The Spatial Strategy for South Staffordshire:** This policy states that an integral part of the Core Strategy will be to protect, maintain and enhance the natural environment;
  - **Core Policy 2 – Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment:** This policy states that development will only be supported if they will not have a detrimental impact on the interests of a natural asset and are not contrary to the control of development within international sites such as Motte Meadows SAC;
  - **EQ1 – Protecting, Enhancing and Expanding Natural Assets:** This policy states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site (or on ground water flows to these sites) alone or in combination with other projects and plans, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met (i.e. the HRA process);
  - **EQ2 – Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation:** This policy states that development will not be permitted where it would be likely to lead directly or indirectly to an adverse effect on the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC; and,
  - **Rural Diversification Section - Paragraph 9.38:** This paragraph states that any applications for large scale pig or poultry units that come forward must be subject to the HRA process to ensure there are no significant effects on international sites.
- 4.10. Furthermore there is text relating to the HRA process in Section 1 – Introduction of the Core Strategy. This text is outlined in Inset 1 below.

### Inset 1: HRA text included in the Core Strategy

Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations) a Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken of the local planning strategy in order to see whether its proposals could have the potential to result in adverse effects upon international sites. These are sites that have been designated for their international nature conservation interests and include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under European Council Directive 92/43/EEC(a) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive);
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the European Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive); and,
- The UK Government in the Circular accompanying Planning Policy Statement 9 ‘Biodiversity and Geological Conservation’ has as a matter of policy chosen to apply the Habitats Regulations Assessment procedures in respect of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), candidate SACs (cSACs) and potential SPAs (pSPAs) even though these are not European sites as a matter of law.

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There is one international site within South Staffordshire: Motte Meadows SAC near Wheaton Aston. There are also two international sites in close proximity to the District boundary, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. *The first stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process (HRA) Stage 1 Screening of the Core Strategy has found that there are no likely significant effects on these three international sites*<sup>9</sup>. Further information on the HRA process and how it will be taken forward for future projects and plans arising from the Core Strategy is explained in the HRA Assessment and a copy of the assessment can be found on the Council's website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

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<sup>9</sup> This sentence is based on the conclusions of the HRA Review of the Policy Choices Document and has been confirmed by the findings of this current screening (see Section 6 below).

## South Staffordshire Council's Commitment to the HRA Process

- 4.11. The Council are fully committed to the HRA going forward with the Core Strategy and the other associated Local Development Framework documents.

### Core Strategy

- 4.12. Following the publication of the Core Strategy, the Stage 1 – Screening will be updated to reflect any changes in the Plan.
- 4.13. This will involve re-assessing any policies or supporting text that has been changed to ensure that the findings of the Stage 1 – Screening have not altered (or amending the assessment accordingly).
- 4.14. The in combination assessment will also be updated as necessary.

### Lower Tier Plans

- 4.15. In addition to the Core Strategy, all of South Staffordshire Council's Local Development Documents (LDDs) will be subject to the HRA process. This will include the following plan: *Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)*. The need to carry out the HRA process on Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) (e.g. for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development) will be reviewed and agreed with Natural England when they are produced.
- 4.16. Should the HRA process of lower tier plans (such as the Site Allocations DPD) determine that there are proposals that might lead to likely significant effects on international sites, the Council will complete the necessary stages of the HRA process and work with Natural England to agree suitable mitigation measures. However, the proposal will not be included in the Plan if it is not possible to adequately mitigate the effects.
- 4.17. In situations where Stage 1 – Screening and Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment of the HRA process have been completed and adverse effects on the integrity of the international site(s) remain (as they cannot be mitigated) it will be necessary to proceed to Stages 3 and 4 of the HRA process. If there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (Stage 4 – IROPI), the Secretary of State will be notified to allow the Plan to be called in for determination. In these situations compensatory measures to protect the international site(s) must be put in place.

### Development Control

- 4.18. Any development proposals that arise from the policies within the Core Strategy that may have a likely significant effect on an international site will be subject to further consideration and assessment through the HRA process. Developers will be required to provide the Competent Authority (in this case South Staffordshire Council) with information relating to the relevant stages of the HRA process for the relevant international site (or sites) so as to allow the Competent Authority the ability to complete the relevant stage(s) of the HRA process.
- 4.19. Any development that, through the relevant stages of the HRA process, cannot demonstrate to the Competent Authority and Natural England that it would not have an adverse effect on an international site (or that the effects can be adequately mitigated) will be refused. This is in accordance with the precautionary principle enshrined within the Habitats Regulations.
- 4.20. In situations where Stage 1 – Screening and Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment of the HRA process have been completed and adverse effects on the integrity of the international site(s) remain (as they cannot be mitigated) it will be necessary to proceed to Stages 3 and 4 of the HRA process. If there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (Stage 4 – IROPI), the Secretary of State will be notified to allow the application to be called in for determination. In these situations compensatory measures to protect the international site(s) must be put in place.

## 5. Other Projects and Plans

- 5.1. The consultation with the surrounding authorities identified other projects or plans which have or are going through the HRA process as they were considered to have the potential to cause likely significant effects (Stage 1 Screening) or adverse effects on integrity (Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment) on the three international sites.
- 5.2. Every reasonable effort has been made to obtain information on potentially relevant other plans and projects, and to find out further details of named projects where possible. Based on the consultation, Table 5.1 below provides information about plans and projects that could act in combination with the policies in the Plan to create likely significant effects on the three international sites.
- 5.3. There are currently no other plans or projects than those outlined in Table 5.1, which have been identified as having the potential to cause a likely significant effect or adverse effects on the integrity of Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC.
- 5.4. Table 5.1 summarises the projects and plans identified and whether there is an anticipated in combination effect with the Core Strategy. There is one other project and five plans which generate potential for in combination effects with the Plan.
- 5.5. Each of these six projects/plans has been identified as potentially generating likely significant effects on the three international sites on their own. Due to the nature of the likely effects and their proximity to South Staffordshire, they are also likely to generate in combination effects with the Core Strategy that could result in greater impacts on the international sites. However, each of these six projects/plans will have to provide mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on the international sites. Coupled with the provisions within the Core Strategy that seek to protect the international sites (as outlined in Section 4 above) this will ensure that there are no in combination effects on the Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC.

**Table 5.1: Findings of In Combination Assessment**

Organisation	HRA Details	Result of HRAs	Potential for In Combination effects with Core Strategy DPD
Stafford Borough Council	Stage 1 – Screening completed on Core Strategy	These screening assessments concluded that the implementation of the Plans may lead to likely significant effects on the Cannock Chase SAC and Motte Meadows SAC. Natural England has seen the screening assessments and agreed with this conclusion. A full Appropriate Assessment will therefore be completed on these documents.	<p>There is potential for in combination effects with proposals set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>However, Stafford Borough Council will need to complete Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment of the HRA process (and the subsequent HRA stages as necessary). The Council will need to agree appropriate mitigation and/or compensation as required with Natural England to ensure adverse effects do not occur on international sites.</p> <p>The provisions to protect international sites set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (in combination with any mitigation/compensation measures to be put forward by the Stafford Borough Council) will ensure that there are no in combination effects.</p>

Organisation	HRA Details	Result of HRAs	Potential for In Combination effects with Core Strategy DPD
Cannock Chase District Council	Stage 1 – Screening completed on Core Strategy	These screening assessments concluded that the implementation of the Plans may lead to likely significant effects on the Cannock Chase SAC. Natural England has seen the screening assessments and agreed with this conclusion. A full Appropriate Assessment will therefore be completed on these documents.	<p>There is potential for in combination effects with proposals set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>However, Cannock Chase District Council will need to complete Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment of the HRA process (and the subsequent HRA stages as necessary). The Council will need to agree appropriate mitigation and/or compensation as required with Natural England to ensure adverse effects do not occur on international sites.</p> <p>The provisions to protect international sites set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (in combination with any mitigation/compensation measures to be put forward by the Cannock Chase District Council) will ensure that there are no in combination effects.</p>
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.	Stage 1 – Screening of the Black Country Authorities Joint Core Strategy (produced in June 2010).	<p>The Stage 1 noted that it was not possible to conclude no likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC as a result of air quality and recreational disturbance.</p> <p>Stage 2 of the HRA process (Appropriate Assessment) is to be completed.</p>	<p>There is potential for in combination effects with proposals set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>However, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council will need to complete Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment of the HRA process (and the subsequent HRA stages as necessary). The Council will need to agree appropriate mitigation and/or compensation as required with Natural England to ensure adverse effects do not occur on international sites.</p> <p>The provisions to protect international sites set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (in combination with any mitigation/compensation measures to be put forward by the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council) will ensure that there are no in combination effects.</p>
Cannock Chase District Council Lichfield District Council South Staffordshire District Council Stafford Borough Council	<i>Evidence Base relating to Cannock Chase SAC and the Appropriate Assessment of Local Authority Core Strategies</i> (Footprint Ecology, November 2009)	<p>The <i>Evidence Base</i> identified three issues likely to lead to significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC: increased water abstraction, deterioration in air quality, and an increase in recreational pressure.</p> <p>Due to the conclusions in the report it is understood that a partnership has been set up to progress with further works. Members of the partnership include Staffordshire authorities, Black Country authorities, Natural England, the</p>	<p>There is potential for in combination effects with proposals set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>However, the South Staffordshire Core Strategy has been written in accordance with the findings of the <i>Evidence Base</i> and the <i>Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy</i>.</p> <p>Therefore the provisions to protect international sites set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (in combination with any mitigation measures to be put forward by the</p>

Organisation	HRA Details	Result of HRAs	Potential for In Combination effects with Core Strategy DPD
	<p>Reported on a detailed assessment of effects from the four Councils Core Strategies on Cannock Chase SAC.</p>	<p>AONB Unit and the Forestry Commission. A <i>Cannock Chase Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy</i> has been produced as a result of the <i>Evidence Base</i>.</p> <p>The partnership has commissioned an up to date visitor survey which has started and will be completed in 2011.</p> <p>It is understood that the amended <i>Evidence Base</i> (if required) will be available at the end of 2011.</p>	<p><i>Visitor Impact Mitigation Strategy</i> will ensure that there are no in combination effects.</p>
<p>Land to the West of Pye Green Road, Cannock</p>	<p>Potential development of 750 houses on an area of land approximately 250 m from Cannock Chase SAC.</p> <p>Stage 1 – Screening has been completed.</p>	<p>Stage 1 - Screening identified likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC from increased water abstraction, deterioration in air quality and increased recreational pressure on the SAC.</p> <p>The Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment is currently being completed.</p>	<p>There is potential for in combination effects with proposals set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>However, the Applicant will need to complete Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment of the HRA process (and the subsequent HRA stages as necessary). The Applicant will need to agree appropriate mitigation and/or compensation as required with Natural England and the Competent Authority to ensure adverse effects do not occur on international sites.</p> <p>The provisions to protect international sites set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (in combination with any mitigation/compensation measures to be put forward by the Applicant) will ensure that there are no in combination effects.</p>
<p>Telford and Wrekin Council</p>	<p>HRA Review of Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3)</p>	<p>Currently being undertaken.</p>	<p>There is potential for in combination effects with proposals set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy.</p> <p>However, the Telford and Wrekin Council will need to complete the necessary stages of the HRA process. If necessary, they will need to agree appropriate mitigation and/or compensation with Natural England to ensure adverse effects do not occur on international sites.</p> <p>The provisions to protect international sites set out in the South Staffordshire Core Strategy (in combination with any mitigation/compensation measures to be put forward by the Telford and Wrekin Council) will ensure that there are no in combination effects.</p>
<p>AONB Unit completed an AA Screening of their</p>	<p>Stage 1 – Screening of final draft of the <i>Cannock Chase</i></p>	<p>This Management Plan was found to have no likely significant effects on the Cannock Chase SAC.</p>	<p><b>None:</b> No likely significant effects identified.</p>

Organisation	HRA Details	Result of HRAs	Potential for In Combination effects with Core Strategy DPD
	<i>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Management Plan 2009-14.</i>		
Severn Trent Water	Review of Consents (RoC) Stage 4 completed in March 2010.	<p>The RoC process concluded that the abstraction licences at Milford and Bednall could adversely impact the qualifying features of Cannock Chase SAC at fully licensed rates.</p> <p>Severn Trent Water (STW) are now working with the Environment Agency to ensure no adverse effect on site integrity (e.g. by limiting abstraction at these two points until STW are able to provide evidence of that abstraction at the fully licensed quantity does not lead to significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC).</p> <p>STW will be carrying out a pumping test at fully licensed rates in summer of 2011 (or before if possible).</p>	<b>None:</b> Measures are in place to protect the integrity of the Cannock Chase SAC. Should further testing find that pumping at the fully licensed quantity has an adverse effect on the integrity of the international site, the Environment Agency will amend the abstraction rates accordingly.
Telford and Wrekin Council	Stage 1 - Screening of Telford and Wrekin Local Development Framework in June 2009	This Stage 1 – Screening states that the documents which make up the Local Development Framework (e.g. Core Strategy) will be subject to Stage 1 – Screening when they are produced.	<b>None:</b> No likely significant effects identified.
Shropshire Council	Stage 1 – Screening of Core Strategy. The HRA included Motte Meadows SAC	The Stage 1 considered that there were no likely significant effects on Motte Meadows SAC alone or in combination.	<b>None:</b> No likely significant effects identified

## 6. Stage 1 - Screening Results

- 6.1 Table 6.1 below outlines the findings of the Stage 1 – Screening results for Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC.
- 6.2 Table C-1 in Appendix C provides the justification for the conclusions drawn below.

**Table 6.1: Stage 1 Screening Results for three international sites**

Site Designation Status	Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC, Cannock Extension Canal SAC
Describe the individual elements of the Plan likely to give rise to impacts on the International Site	<p>None of the 53 policies (or the proposals therein) present in the <i>South Staffordshire Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Publication Document</i> will lead to likely significant effects on the three SACs.</p> <p>The Plan outlines housing distribution between 15 villages in South Staffordshire in Core Policy 6. This proposed housing distribution has been reviewed and has been found not to lead to likely significant effects alone or in combination on Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC (see Table C-1 in Appendix C for justifications of these conclusions).</p> <p>A total of 29 policies in the Plan may lead to development in the long term (Policies EQ6, EQ8, H1 to H3, H5, H6, EV2 to EV10, EV13, EV14 and HWB2 and Core Policies 5 to12, 14, and 15). However, these policies do not state exact details of development nor when it may take place. Development is likely to come forward on a case by case basis and/or will be detailed in any lower tier planning documents (e.g. Site Allocations DPD).</p> <p>Should any planning applications arise as a result of these policies, all other policies within the Plan will be taken into account and used as the basis for decision making to determine the application. Therefore, any planning application would also have to take into account the possibility of likely significant effects on the qualifying features of the three international sites resulting from the proposed works, through consideration of Policy EQ1 and EQ2. These policies commit to an HRA being completed at the development control stage. Any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for). As no locations or quanta of development are provided within these policies, this approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of the plan.</p> <p>The necessary stages of the HRA process will also be completed on the Site Allocations DPD lower tier plan document. Any allocation sites put forward which may lead to adverse effects will be reviewed and where necessary removed from the Plan.</p> <p>Therefore, there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying features of the Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC from the Plan.</p>

<p><b>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Plan on the International Site by virtue of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size and scale;</li> <li>• Land take;</li> <li>• Resource requirements (i.e. water extraction etc);</li> <li>• Emissions (disposal to land, water or air);</li> <li>• Excavation requirements;</li> <li>• Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.; and</li> <li>• Other.</li> </ul>	<p>There are no likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the qualifying features of Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC from any of the policies in the Core Strategy (see Table C-1 in Appendix C below).</p>
<p><b>Describe any likely changes to the international site arising as a result of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of habitat area;</li> <li>• Disturbance to key species;</li> <li>• Habitat or species fragmentation;</li> <li>• Reduction in species density;</li> <li>• Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>	<p>There are no likely changes to the qualifying features of Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC from any of the policies in the Core Strategy (see Table C-1 in Appendix C below).</p>
<p><b>Describe whether the Plan will lead to likely significant effects on the international site alone or in combination</b></p>	<p>There are no likely significant effects on the Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC alone (see above).</p> <p>In combination effects have been considered as part of this assessment. None of the other projects and plans identified in Section 5 (see above) will lead to significant effects on Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC (providing mitigation measures are put in place).</p>

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Atkins Limited (Atkins) has been commissioned by South Staffordshire Council to undertake a Stage 1 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process (Screening) of the South Staffordshire Local Development Framework *Core Strategy Development Plan Document: Publication Document*.
- 7.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required by Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitat Regulations) for all plans and projects which may have likely significant effects on international sites. This Stage 1 – Screening assesses whether the 15 Core Policies and 38 Development Policies in the Core Strategy are likely to lead to significant effects on the international sites within and adjacent to South Staffordshire and what these likely effects are.
- 7.3 There is one international site within South Staffordshire (Mottey Meadows SAC) and an additional six international sites within 20 km. The international sites considered in this Stage 1 – Screening are Mottey Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. A total of eleven international sites were eliminated from the Stage 1 – Screening including Fens Pools SAC, Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar site (Phase 2 site), Pasturefields Saltmarsh SAC, West Midland Mosses SAC, Severn Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar site and Humber Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar site. These international sites have been eliminated from the HRA process because the sites are not considered to be vulnerable to effects arising from policies within the Plan.
- 7.4 Following the Stage 1 – Screening of the Core Strategy, it is considered that none of the policies in the Plan as it currently stands will lead to likely significant effects on Mottey Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC.
- 7.5 Of the 15 Core Policies in the Core Strategy there are 10 relating to development: Core Policy 5, Core Policy 6, Core Policy 7, Core Policy 8, Core Policy 9, Core Policy 10, Core Policy 11, Core Policy 12, Core Policy 14 and Core Policy 15. Furthermore, of the 38 Development Policies there are 19 relating to development: EQ6, EQ8, H1, H2, H3, H5, H6, EV2, EV3, EV4, EV5, EV6, EV7, EV8, EV9, EV10, EV13, EV14 and HWB2.
- 7.6 These 29 development related policies will guide development in South Staffordshire over the period encompassed by the final draft of the Core Strategy when it is produced (to 2027). However, due to the strategic nature of the policies in the Plan, the exact location of future developments is not known and it is not, therefore, possible to assess likely significant effects on the international sites at this stage. However, the Core Strategy is strongly geared towards environmental protection and there are a large number of provisions to help protect important habitats such as international sites already existing within the policies provided in this Plan. Therefore any proposed development would be expected to conform with the relevant policies within the Core Strategy (including Policy EQ1 – Protecting, Enhancing and Expanding Natural Assets and EQ2 – Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation) ensuring that there are no likely significant effects on international sites.
- 7.7 One policy, Core Policy 6 – Housing Delivery, outlines the housing distribution to be delivered between 15 villages in South Staffordshire. These proposed housing distribution has been reviewed and has been found not to lead to likely significant effects alone or in combination on Mottey Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC or Cannock Extension Canal SAC (see Table C-1 in Appendix C for justifications of these conclusions).
- 7.8 In conclusion, it is considered that the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document Publication Document* will have no likely significant effect on Mottey Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC.

# Appendices

## **A. Appendix A**

Response from Natural England In Relation to HRA Review

Date: 20 September 2010  
Our ref: SSDCCSHRA  
Your ref: South Staffordshire HRA



Ms Catherine Sellars  
Senior Ecologist, Water and Environment  
ATKINS  
The Axis (6th Floor, West Wing)  
10 Holiday Street  
Birmingham  
B1 1TF

Parkside Court  
Hall Park Way  
Telford  
TF3 4LR

Dear Ms Sellars

## **Habitat Regulations Assessment of the South Staffordshire Core Strategy**

I refer to your email which we received on 18 August 2010 in which you provided us with a copy of your current position on the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the South Staffordshire Core Policies document and sought our feedback. We very much welcome the opportunity to comment on this early draft and would like to offer the following comments and hope they are of use to you.

In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, the assessment of plans follows a two stage process. Firstly, the check for likely significant effects (alone or in combination with other plans or projects), which is a broad but precautionary filter. If likely significant effect is identified it must be followed by an 'appropriate assessment' of all elements of the plan that are considered likely to have the significant effects identified in the screening stage, and where that likely significant effect cannot be avoided.

The appropriate assessment is a more detailed consideration, based on best scientific knowledge of the effects of the plan on the ecological functioning of the European site, its interest features and conservation objectives. Depending on the outcome of the appropriate assessment, the plan-making authority may need to introduce counteracting measures to reduce potentially damaging effects on the European Site to a level at which there will no longer be an adverse effect on site integrity. The Habitats Regulations are based upon the precautionary principle, i.e. it must be demonstrated that the European site will not be adversely affected, otherwise it must be assumed that it will be.

We largely agree with the methodology outlined in the report. The review focuses on Motte Meadows SAC designated for its lowland hay meadows, Cannock Chase SAC designated for European dry heaths and Northern Atlantic Wet Heaths and Cannock Extension Canal SAC designated for its large population of floating water-plantain.

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We generally support the recommendations proposed in table 3.1 and expanded on later within the document, especially new policies relating to water and air quality. With regard to water, you may wish to include commentary on where foul water is discharged to (mains and non mains drainage) in order to be certain that water quality at European sites such as Motte Meadows will not be adversely affected. For instance “non mains drainage will not be permitted where it is likely to cause adverse effects at sensitive ecological sites.”

Additionally we note that the report suggests wording to be included within the core strategy regarding the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Natural England would support this. We would also support the recommendation for a commitment within the core strategy to complete the necessary stages of the HRA process for lower tier plans.

I hope this clarifies Natural England’s position with respect to the Habitat Regulations Assessment Review for the South Staffordshire Core Strategy. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

Grady McLean  
Environmental Planner (Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent)  
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## **B. Appendix B**

Response from Environment Agency in relation to Humber Estuary and Severn Estuary International Sites

## Sellars, Catherine E

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**From:** Steele, Naomi [Naomi.Steele@environment-agency.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 12 July 2010 15:18  
**To:** Sellars, Catherine E  
**Cc:** Walters, Gill  
**Subject:** RE: HRA and EA abstraction

Catherine

Just to confirm:

1) For the Severn Estuary- no licences within our Region were found to have an adverse effect or potential adverse effect on the Severn Estuary SAC.

For the Humber Estuary there was one licence change required to ensure no adverse effect on the integrity of the site- This was to the licence at Keadby Power Station. The licence was changed to include a condition that when the power station next has planned outage (2014) changes would be made to the fish screens on the intake and to the return system to prevent impingement of lamprey (one of SAC designation species).

2) For the Cannock Extension Canal and Motte Meadows SAC's we concluded our Review of Consents Process (RoC) at Stage 2- that there was no significant impact from any of our abstraction licences on either site. This was back in 2003.

3) Cannock Chase- Our RoC Stage 4 (March 2010) concluded that Severn Trent's (STW) Licences at Milford (Licence 03/28/04/0004) and Bednall (Licence 03/28/03/0192/G) could adversely impact the designated features of the site at fully licensed rates. To ensure no adverse effect on site integrity the Milford licence would need to be reduced by 6MI/d (this is the average quantity that was abstracted between September 2006 and August 2009 whilst monitoring has been taking place). The licence at Bednall also needs to be varied to reduce the average daily rate of abstraction by 0.5MI/d to 2.81MI/d.

For Milford we are expecting STW to apply to reduce this licence. We will time limit the reduction until they are able to provide evidence that abstraction at fully licensed quantity does not adversely impact the site. They will be endeavouring to provide this from carrying out a pumping test at fully licensed rates in summer of 2011. The EA and STW opinion (not NE) is that the full licensed abstraction unlikely to adversely affect the site but we cannot conclude this with sufficient confidence without the pumping test. It is the precautionary principle that we have to adhere to for HD sites.

For Bednall we are expecting an application to vary the licence as detailed above shortly.

I hope this provides you with sufficient clarification- please do not hesitate to call if you require anything further.

Regards  
Naomi

**Naomi Steele**  
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**For water use at home**, the Energy Saving Trust have recently launched a new web tool which helps to explore the link between water consumption and energy use with respect to household bills. It is easy to use and highlights the less obvious benefits to saving water.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/watercalculator/flashcalculator> .

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**From:** Sellars, Catherine E [mailto:Catherine.Sellars@atkinsglobal.com]  
**Sent:** 12 July 2010 14:34  
**To:** Steele, Naomi  
**Cc:** Harris, Kelly  
**Subject:** HRA and EA abstraction

Click [here](#) to report this email as spam.

Dear Naomi,

Many thanks for your help this afternoon.

I just wanted to confirm what we spoke about in relation to the HRA process within the EA and internationally important sites:

- The Review of Consents process has concluded that there are no likely significant effects on either the Humber Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar site or the River Severn SPA/SAC/Ramsar site from any abstraction points in your EA region;
- That there are no likely significant effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC and Motte Meadows SAC from any of your abstraction points. If you could confirm where this conclusion has been drawn that would be a great help;
- That the Review of Consents process for Cannock Chase SAC has found that only one abstraction point – Milford – may be leading to significant effects on the international site but that testing to confirm this cannot be carried out until summer 2011. I understand that Milford is within the Severn Trent Water area. You mentioned on the phone that both the EA and NE are fairly confident that the operation at Milford is not leading to likely significant effects but that no testing had been done to prove this yet. You also confirmed that the EA have reduced the licence extraction by 6 mega litres a day at this abstraction point and that the EA (and NE?) are sure that this is not leading to effected on the SAC.

If you could confirm the above and add to it where necessary that would be a fantastic help.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,  
Cat

**Catherine Sellars**  
Senior Ecologist, Water and Environment

**ATKINS**

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## C. Appendix C

### Findings of Stage 1 – Screening

**Table C-2:** Results of the Stage 1 –Screening of all Core Policies and Development Policies in the Core Strategy. Core Policies are shown in dark green in Table C-1, while the supporting Development Policies are shown in pale green.

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
Core Policy 1	The Spatial Strategy	The policy outlines the Major Service Villages, the Local Service Villages, the Small Service Villages and the Other Villages and Hamlets.  It also states that the South Staffordshire portion of the West Midlands Green Belt (and the open countryside beyond the Green Belt) will be protected.	No	<b>Policy Type A5:</b> The development outlined in this policy is covered in more detail by Core Policy 6 (see assessment below).
GB1	Development in the Green Belt	This policy outlines the criteria under which development within the Green Belt would be permitted (e.g. for the re-use of a building provided that the proposed use would not harm the openness of the Green Belt or for a new or extended building providing that it is for purposes directly related to agriculture or forestry).	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead directly to development. It sets out the criteria that any planning applications within the Green Belt have to take into account.
OC1	Development in the Open Countryside Beyond the West Midlands Green Belt	This policy states that the Open Countryside beyond the Green Belt will be protected for its own sake and for its landscapes, areas of ecological, historic, archaeological, agricultural and recreational value.  The policy also provides the criteria under which development within the Open Countryside would be permitted (e.g. a new or extended building provided it is for purposes related to agriculture or forestry or the re-use of a building provided that the proposed use would not harm the openness, appearance or character of the Open Countryside).	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead directly to development. It sets out the criteria that any planning applications within the Open Countryside have to take into account.
Core Policy 2	Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment	This policy states that the Council will support development (or other initiatives) where they protect, conserve and enhance the District's natural and heritage assets (including internationally important habitats).  The policy also provides criteria in respect of the above policy wording e.g. not having a detrimental impact on the interests of a natural asset and not contrary to the control of development within internationally designated areas.	No	<b>Policy Type A3:</b> Policy intended to protect the natural environment (including international sites).

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
EQ1	Protecting, Enhancing and Expanding Natural Assets	<p>This policy states that planning permission will be granted for development which would not cause significant harm to sites and/or habitats of nature conservation value.</p> <p>It also states that support will be given to proposals that enhance and increase the number of sites and habitats of nature conservation value and to meeting the objectives of the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>This policy also states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site (or on groundwater flows to these sites) alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met.</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A3:</b> Policy intended to protect the natural environment (including international sites). This policy requires any proposed development to take the HRA process into account and prove that there will be no likely significant effects on international sites as a result.</p>
EQ2	Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation	<p>This policy states that development will not be permitted where it would be likely to lead directly or indirectly to an adverse effect on the integrity of Cannock Chase SAC.</p> <p>The policy also outlines the steps that developments within the Zone of Influence may have to provide in terms of mitigation (e.g. provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace or developer contributions).</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A3:</b> Policy intended to protect the natural environment (specifically Cannock Chase SAC). The measures outlined in this policy are in line with the recommendations made in the <i>Evidence Base relating to Cannock Chase SAC and the Appropriate Assessment of Local Authority Core Strategies</i> (produced by Footprint Ecology in November 2009).</p>
EQ3	Conservation, Preservation and Protection of Heritage Assets	<p>This policy states that the conservation, preservation and protection of heritage assets will be achieved and provides an outline of the measures to be put in place to ensure this occurs (e.g. development which would affect a heritage asset should ensure it is not adversely affected).</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A3:</b> Policy intended to protect the built and historic environment.</p>
EQ4	Protecting and Enhancing the Character and Appearance of the Landscape	<p>This policy states that the intrinsic rural character and local distinctiveness of the South Staffordshire landscape should be maintained and where possible enhanced.</p> <p>The policy outlines the criteria which proposals for development should take into account.</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A3:</b> Policy intended to protect the natural environment (specifically landscape).</p>
Core Policy 3	Sustainable Development and Climate Change	<p>This policy states that the Council require development to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, make prudent use of natural resources, enabling opportunities for renewable energy and energy efficiency and helping to minimise any environmental impacts.</p> <p>This policy outlines the criteria through which this will be achieved e.g. supporting and encouraging development which facilitates sustainable modes of transport and giving preference to development on previously developed land in the most sustainable locations.</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead directly to development. It sets out the criteria in relation to sustainable development principles that any planning applications have to take into account.</p>
EQ5	Sustainable Resources and Energy Efficiency	<p>This policy states that development should meet the highest viable standards of resource and energy efficiency and contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions.</p> <p>The policy provides a number of criteria that developers will have to meet</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead directly to development. It sets out the criteria that any planning applications have to consider in relation to resource and energy efficiency only.</p>

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
		in order to obtain planning permission e.g. residential units to be delivered between 2013 and 2016 will have to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Code Level 4 as a minimum and the development seeks to minimise waste and facilitates recycling.		
EQ6	Renewable Energy	<p>This policy states that proposals for renewable energy development (both small and large scale) will be supported and outlines the considerations that these proposals will have to take into account in order to be granted planning permission (e.g. Policies EQ1, EQ2, EQ3 and EQ4).</p> <p>The policy refers to both Biomass Energy Development and Wind Energy Development. Four sites of greatest opportunity for wind energy generation are identified on Map 12 – Renewable Energy Opportunities Map.</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term in relation to Biomass Energy Development. Four potential locations are provided for possible wind energy developments in the future. These are all located towards the northern end of South Staffordshire. However, the policy does not provide any information about the exact location or the types of wind energy developments that may take place.</p> <p>The key effect from wind energy is the potential collision risk of migrating birds with the wind turbines. There are no international sites designated for their internationally important populations of bird species within 30 km of the four areas of opportunity for wind energy that are identified in the supporting text of Policy EQ6 (e.g. there are no SPAs or Ramsar sites designated for internationally important bird populations). As such, it is considered that wind energy development in any of these four locations would not have a likely significant effect on international sites designated for birds as a result.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and this policy notes that each proposal will have to consider the effects on designated sites (such as international sites), in line with Policy EQ1 and EQ2. Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. As such any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
EQ7	Water Quality	<p>This policy development will only be permitted where proposals do not have a negative impact on water quality (pollution of surface or ground water).</p> <p>The policy requires further site specific analysis of any development upstream or in close proximity to international sites and for developers to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects as a result of the works.</p>	No	<b>Policy Type A3:</b> Policy intended to protect the natural environment.
EQ8	Waste	<p>This policy states that development and activities will be encouraged which support the minimisation of waste together with the efficient use of materials.</p> <p>This policy also states that support will be given for the provision of well designed recycling facilities and recycling collection points.</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any waste developments (e.g. recycling facilities) may take place.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and this policy notes that each proposal will have to consider the effects on designated sites (such as international sites). Furthermore, Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. As such any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p>

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
				Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.
EQ9	Protecting Residential Amenity	<p>This policy states that all development proposals should take into account the amenity of any nearby residents (including privacy, security, noise, pollution and odours).</p> <p>The policy also states that noise sensitive developments will not be permitted in the vicinity of established noise generating uses (where potential for harmful noise levels is known to exist) that and development likely to generate harmful noise levels will be directly away from noise sensitive locations.</p>	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead directly to development. It sets out the criteria that any planning applications have to consider only.
EQ10	Hazardous and Environmentally Sensitive Development	<p>This policy states that the public, land uses and the environment will be protected from the actual or potential effects of hazardous or other activities likely to be detrimental to public health or amenity.</p> <p>This policy also states that permission for potentially hazardous or polluting activities will only be granted where there are kept separate from other uses likely to be sensitive.</p>	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead directly to development. It sets out the criteria that any planning applications have to consider in relation to protecting the public, land uses and the environment only.
Core Policy 4	Promoting High Quality Design	<p>This policy states that the Council expects all developments to achieve a high quality of design of buildings and landscaping.</p> <p>It also sets out the criteria that developments will be required to meet (e.g. to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, healthy and secure environment).</p>	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
EQ11	Wider Design Considerations	<p>This policy state that the design of all developments must be of the highest quality and the submission of design statements supporting and explaining the design components of proposals will be required.</p> <p>The policy also provides criteria that development must meet in relation to use, movement, form and space.</p>	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
EQ12	Landscaping	This policy provides the criteria that developments must meet to ensure that the landscaping of new developments is an integral part of the overall design which complements and enhances the development and the wider area (e.g. creates a biodiversity rich environment).	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
Core Policy 5	Infrastructure Development	<p>This policy states that new development must be supported by the required infrastructure. The policy outlines how and when new infrastructure to support new development must take place e.g. both strategic and local infrastructure provision will be linked to the phasing of new development and details will be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.</p> <p>The Policy refers to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (published by South Staffordshire Council in January 2010). The Infrastructure Delivery Plan outlines the physical, social and community and green infrastructure likely to be required in the future and who is to be responsible for delivering it.</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any developments may take place. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) outlines a number of schemes that may be taken forward in the future (e.g. M6 widening). However, the projects are aspirations only and are not commitments.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites through Policy EQ1. This policy states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. As such any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary,</p>

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
				<p>compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
EQ13	Development Contributions	<p>This policy states that contributions will be sought from developers where necessary to ensure the achievement of sustainable development.</p> <p>The policy provides a list of when development contributions may be appropriate (e.g. the management of existing sites designated for their nature conservation value and/or the creation of new nature conservation sites and habitats such as ponds, wetlands or wildlife corridors).</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.</p>
Core Policy 6	Housing Delivery	<p>This policy outlines the distribution of housing in South Staffordshire. A total of 3,675 dwellings are to be provided, of which 2,244 have already been supplied. As such this policy outlines the general areas where the remaining 1,431 dwellings (rounded to 1,440) will be secured. No specific locations for housing are provided in the policy. However, the policy provides a breakdown of housing to be provided in settlements in South Staffordshire including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Penkridge:</b> 330 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Brewood:</b> 60 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Coven:</b> 30 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Wheaton Aston:</b> 30 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Cheslyn Hay:</b> 95 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Great Wyrley:</b> 50 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Essington:</b> 20 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Featherstone:</b> 35 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Bilbrook:</b> 95 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Codsall:</b> 200 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Perton:</b> 150 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Pattingham:</b> 20 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Kinver:</b> 80 dwellings;</li> <li>• <b>Wombourne:</b> 225 dwellings; and,</li> <li>• <b>Swindon:</b> 20 dwellings.</li> </ul> <p>The housing will be distributed in accordance with the principles of settlement hierarchy defined in Core Policy 1.</p> <p>The policy also outlines what the housing developments will be expected</p>	No	<p><b>Groundwater Flows</b></p> <p>The Environment Agency (EA) has confirmed that their Review of Consents (RoC) process determined that there were no likely significant effects on the Cannock Extension Canal SAC or the Motte Meadows SAC from the abstraction licences held by South Staffordshire Water (SSW) and Severn Trent Water (STW) (see Appendix B).</p> <p>Furthermore both the EA and Natural England have confirmed, through the RoC process, that none of the SSW abstraction points are having significant effects on any international sites (including Cannock Chase SAC). SSW has confirmed that there is no deficit in water supplied for the South Staffordshire area over the next 25 years and that there will be no change to current consented abstraction licences and no schemes for new water resources. As such SSW has not been required to progress to the next stage of the RoC process and have had no HRA work completed on their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)<sup>10</sup>. SSW can therefore supply water to the increased levels of housing in the areas of South Staffordshire that SSW supply without this operation leading to likely significant effects on the three international sites.</p> <p>STW and the EA have confirmed that the RoC Stage 4 carried out in March 2010 concluded the abstraction licences at Milford and Bednall could adversely impact the qualifying features of Cannock Chase SAC at fully licensed rates (see Appendix B). To ensure no adverse effect on site integrity of this SAC, the Milford licence needs to be reduced by 6 megalitres a day (MI/d) and the licence at Bednall needs to be varied to reduce the average daily rate of abstraction by 0.5MI/d to 2.81MI/d<sup>11</sup>. The water abstraction at these points have been reduced accordingly and the EA will limit the abstraction at both points until STW are able to provide evidence of that abstraction at the fully licensed quantity does not lead to significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC (STW will be carrying out a pumping test at fully licensed rates in summer of 2011 or before if possible).</p> <p>The STW WRMP<sup>12</sup> concludes that it has the capacity to supply water to its local authorities over the WRMP period (2010 to 2035) which covers the length of the Policy Choices document. The WRMP has been subject to HRA Stage 1 Screening<sup>13</sup> and this has concluded that there are no likely significant effects on international sites (including Cannock Chase SAC).</p> <p>Given the abstraction limits that have been enforced by the EA at Milford and Bednall, and the conclusion of the HRA of STW WRMP, water can be supplied by STW to the additional housing proposed in South Staffordshire without causing likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC.</p> <p>Taking into account all of the information provided above, the effects of water abstraction from increased levels of</p>

<sup>10</sup> Personal communication with Matt Hudson (Water Resource Manager at South Staffordshire Water) on 30/06/2010.

<sup>11</sup> The Environment Agency has determined that there would be no likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC from these reduced abstraction rates. Natural England has confirmed they are in agreement with this conclusion (see Appendix D).

<sup>12</sup> Water Resources Management Plan – Final Version (June 2010), Severn Trent Water.

<sup>13</sup> At the time of writing this HRA report was not available to the public. However, the findings of this report were summarised in Section 4.4.6 of SVT's WRMP.

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
		to deliver in terms of sustainable development, green infrastructure and design. The policy states that housing that has a detrimental impact on environmental quality of an area will not be supported.		<p>housing in South Staffordshire as specified in this policy on Motte Meadows SAC, Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC can be screened out of this HRA.</p> <p><b>Assessment of Housing Distribution in South Staffordshire</b></p> <p>The provision of housing in the following locations is considered not to have likely significant effects on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Motte Meadows SAC:</b> Cheslyn Hay (14.3 km south-east), Great Wyrley (15.7 km south-east), Essington (14.8 km south-east), Featherstone (11.5 km south), Bilbrook (10.9 km south-east), Perton (11.9 km south), Pattingham (12.9 km south), Kinver (28.2 km south), Wombourne (20.2 km south and Swindon (21.6 km south);</li> <li>• <b>Cannock Chase SAC:</b> Brewood (11.6 km south-west), Coven (10.7 km south-west), Wheaton Aston (13.3 km west), Essington (10.6 km south), Featherstone (10.1 km south-west), Bilbrook (15 km south-west), Codsall (15.6 km south-west), Perton (18.8 km south-west), Pattingham (22.2 km south-west), Kinver (27.6 km south), Wombourne (24.1 km south-west) and Swindon (26.8 km south-west), and,</li> <li>• <b>Cannock Extension Canal SAC:</b> Penkridge (10.8 km north-west), Brewood (13.2 km north-west), Coven (10.8 km north-west), Wheaton Aston (17.3 km north-west), Bilbrook (12.6 km west), Codsall (14 km west), Perton (16.6 km south-west), Pattingham (20 km south-west), Kinver (32.2 km south-west), Wombourne (18.7 km south-west) and Swindon (21.1 km south-west).</li> </ul> <p>Given the distances between the villages and the international sites (all over 10 km) it is unlikely that impacts from the development at these locations would extend to the three SACs. This includes effects on groundwater flows, water quality, air quality and increased recreation for Motte Meadows SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. For Cannock Chase this includes effects on ground water flows, water quality and air quality only (see below).</p> <p>An assessment of the likely significant effects of development located within 10 km of each international site is given below.</p> <p><b>Motte Meadows SAC</b></p> <p>This SAC is vulnerable to a decrease in water quality, alteration in groundwater flows, deterioration in air quality and an increase in recreation levels.</p> <p>Development is proposed in five villages within 10 km of this SAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wheaton Aston (30 dwellings):</b> 0.8 km east of Motte Meadows SAC;</li> <li>• <b>Brewood (60 dwellings):</b>, 4.9 km south-east of Motte Meadows SAC;</li> <li>• <b>Penkridge (330 dwellings):</b> 7.7 km east of Motte Meadows SAC;</li> <li>• <b>Coven (30 dwellings):</b> 8.4 km south-east of Motte Meadows SAC; and,</li> <li>• <b>Codsall (200 dwellings):</b> 8.6 km south-east of Motte Meadows SAC.</li> </ul> <p>Motte Meadows SAC will be protected from a decrease in water quality by Policy EQ7 and to alterations in groundwater flows by Policy EQ1.</p> <p>Given the distance of the Brewood, Penkridge, Coven and Codsall from Motte Meadows it is not anticipated that the development in these locations would lead to a deterioration in air quality at this SAC. Furthermore, development in Wheaton Aston, although in close proximity to Motte Meadows SAC, is unlikely to have a significant effect on the international site due to the small number of dwellings proposed to be constructed and the requirement of Policy EV11 (which states that all proposals for development must include provisions for sustainable transport) and Policy EV5 (which states the carbon emission reductions all developments are expected to achieve).</p> <p>Motte Meadows SAC is not a tourist destination and as such there are no likely significant effects from increased recreation levels as a result of development in Brewood, Penkridge, Coven and Codsall. Wheaton Aston is located in</p>

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
				<p>close proximity to the SAC (0.8 km east). There are public rights of way that link the village to the SAC. However, these footpaths pass along the edge of the SAC only. Furthermore, in accordance with Core Policy 14 all new development is expected to make provision (or contribution towards the provision) or open space, sport and recreation facilities. This will help to ensure people from the new development remain within close proximity to their homes, meaning they are less likely to visit the SAC.</p> <p>Finally, the Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any lower tier plan documents arising from the Core Strategy (such as the Site Allocations Development Plan Document in which this housing will be allocated) will be subject to the HRA process and will have to prove to the Council and to Natural England that there would be no significant effects on international sites (or that significant effects can be adequately mitigated or compensated for). Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international site.</p> <p>Given the protection measures provided in the Plan, it is considered that development in these areas alone or in combination (see Section 5 above) will not lead to likely significant effects on Motte Meadows SAC.</p> <p><b>Cannock Chase SAC</b></p> <p>This SAC is vulnerable to changes in groundwater flows, a deterioration in air quality and increased recreation. Development is proposed in three villages within 10 km of this SAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Penkrige (330 dwellings):</b> 5 km west of Cannock Chase SAC;</li> <li>• <b>Great Wyrley (50 dwellings):</b> 6.3 km south of Cannock Chase SAC; and,</li> <li>• <b>Cheslyn Hay (95 dwellings):</b> 6.8 km south of Cannock Chase SA</li> </ul> <p>As outlined above there are no likely significant effects anticipated on this SAC from increased water abstraction altering groundwater flows). Furthermore, Policy EQ1 protects the site against alterations in groundwater flows from construction of each development.</p> <p>Given the distance of these three villages from Cannock Chase SAC it is not anticipated that the development in these locations would lead to a deterioration in air quality at this SAC. Furthermore, development in these three locations is unlikely to have a significant effect on the international site due to the requirements of Policy EV11 (which states that all proposals for development must include provisions for sustainable transport) and Policy EV5 (which states the carbon emission reductions all developments are expected to achieve).</p> <p>Cannock Chase SAC is a popular tourist destination and should development occur in these three locations it may lead to an increase in the number of people visiting this SAC. Within the 19 km Zone of Influence (as defined in the supporting text of Policy EQ2) there are an additional eight villages where development is also proposed: Brewwood (11.6 km south-west), Coven (10.7 km south-west), Wheaton Aston (13.3 km west), Essington (10.6 km south), Featherstone (10.1 km south-west), Bilbrook (15 km south-west), Codsall (15.6 km south-west) and Perton (18.8 km south-west). However, Policy EQ2 states that the provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace within development proposals may be required (to be assessed on a case by case basis) in order to avoid this occurring. Furthermore Policy EQ2 states that any proposed development that will arise from the Plan must demonstrate to the Council and Natural England that adverse effects on the SAC can be avoided (through the HRA process). If this cannot be proved then the development will not be permitted. The measures outlined in Policy EQ2 are in line with the recommendations made in the <i>Evidence Base relating to Cannock Chase SAC and the Appropriate Assessment of Local Authority Core Strategies</i> (produced by Footprint Ecology in November 2009).</p> <p>Finally, the Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with</p>

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				<p>other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any lower tier plan documents arising from the Core Strategy (such as the Site Allocations Development Plan Document in which this housing will be allocated) will be subject to the HRA process and will have prove to the Council and to Natural England that there would be no significant effects on international sites (or that significant effects can be adequately mitigated or compensated for). Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international site.</p> <p>Given the protection measures provided in the Plan, it is considered that development in these areas alone or in combination (see Section 5 above) will not lead to likely significant effects on Cannock Chase SAC.</p> <p><b>Cannock Extension Canal SAC</b></p> <p>This SAC is vulnerable to a decrease in water quality, a deterioration in air quality and an increase in recreational pressure.</p> <p>Development is proposed in four villages within 10 km of this SAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Great Wyrley (50 dwellings):</b> 2.5 km north-west of Cannock Extension Canal SAC;</li> <li>• <b>Cheslyn Hay (95 dwellings):</b> 4.3 km west of Cannock Extension Canal SAC;</li> <li>• <b>Essington (20 dwellings):</b> 5.7 km south-west of Cannock Extension Canal SAC; and,</li> <li>• <b>Featherstone (35 dwellings):</b> 7.7 km west of Cannock Extension Canal SAC.</li> </ul> <p>Cannock Extension Canal SAC will be protected from a decrease in water quality by Policy EQ7.</p> <p>Given the distance of these four villages from the SAC it is not anticipated that the development in these locations would lead to a deterioration in air quality at this site. Furthermore, development in these four locations is unlikely to have a significant effect on the international site due to the requirements of Policy EV11 (which states that all proposals for development must include provisions for sustainable transport) and Policy EV5 (which states the carbon emission reductions all developments are expected to achieve).</p> <p>Furthermore, it is not anticipated that an increase in tourism at this location will occur as a result of development in these four locations. As outlined in Policy EV3 there will be improvements to canalside facilities within South Staffordshire. This will encourage people to visit these areas rather than the SAC.</p> <p>Finally, the Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any lower tier plan documents arising from the Core Strategy (such as the Site Allocations Development Plan Document in which this housing will be allocated) will be subject to the HRA process and will have prove to the Council and to Natural England that there would be no significant effects on international sites (or that significant effects can be adequately mitigated or compensated for). Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international site.</p> <p>Given the protection measures provided in the Plan, it is considered that development in these areas alone or in combination (see Section 5 above) will not lead to likely significant effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC.</p>
H1	Achieving a Balanced Housing Market	<p>This policy states that proposals for new housing development should provide an integrated mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures which meet the needs of all sections of the local community. The need for specialist housing is recognised in this policy.</p> <p>The policy also provides a list of considerations that developments must take into account (e.g. current housing market conditions and the</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any developments may take place (e.g. specialist housing).</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites through Policy EQ1. This policy states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. As such any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no</p>

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		demographic profile of South Staffordshire).		adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for). This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy. Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.
H2	Provision of Affordable Housing	This policy states that housing must make provision for an element of affordable housing and outlines the standards required in Main, Local and Small Service Villages.	No	As for Policy H1.
H3	Affordable Housing – Rural Exception Sites	This policy outlines the criteria that must be met in order for small rural exception sites of 100% affordable housing in order to gain Council support.	No	As for Policy H1.
H4	Delivering Affordable Housing	This policy outlines the criteria that new housing developments which make provision for affordable housing must meet (e.g. be affordable and be fully integrated within the development).	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
H5	Specialist Housing Accommodation	This policy states that the Council will support the provision of specialist housing accommodation (e.g. dementia care units and retirement villages) and that sites will be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD or through planning permission.  Criteria that developments must meet is also provided.	No	This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where specialist housing may be provided. This information will be included in the Site Allocations DPD and may also arise through individual planning applications.  The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. An HRA will be carried out on the Site Allocations DPD lower tier plan document and any allocation sites put forward which may lead to significant effects will be reviewed and where necessary removed from the Plan. Furthermore, any planning applications arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).  This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy. Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.
H6	Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	This policy outlines the number of residential pitches, transit pitches and plots for travelling showpeople to be provided by the Council. However the location of these will be determined in the Site Allocations DPD.  The policy provides a set of criteria that a proposed pitch for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people must meet before being considered for inclusion in the Site Allocations DPD (e.g. proposals to be sited to ensure any impact on biodiversity and nature conservation are minimised).  The policy also outlines criteria that proposals will have to meet in order to be taken forward (including consideration of effects on international sites).	No	This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople will be provided. This information will be included in the Site Allocations DPD.  The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. An HRA will be carried out on the Site Allocations DPD lower tier plan document and any allocation sites put forward which may lead to adverse effects will be reviewed and where necessary removed from the Plan.  This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy. Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.

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Core Policy 7	Employment and Economic Development	<p>This policy states that the Council, working in partnership with businesses and local communities, will support measures to sustain and develop the local economy of South Staffordshire and encourage opportunities for inward investment and further economic development.</p> <p>The policy identifies three sites where delivery of strategic employment sites will be supported by the Council: i54 Wobaston Road, Hilton Cross and the former Royal Ordnance Factory site at Featherstone.</p> <p>The Policy also states that the Council will support proposals for development of education and training facilities at South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston).</p> <p>The policy outlines the approach to be taken when deciding where new land needs to be allocated for general employment development (e.g. that this will be focussed on the Main Service Villages).</p>	No	<p>Both the i54 Wobaston Road and Hilton Cross developments have planning permission. As such they have been through the relevant assessment process and no need for HRA was identified. Furthermore, development of education and training facilities at South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston) is assessed as part of Policy EV4 (see below). No likely significant effects on the international sites are anticipated from Policy EV4.</p> <p>The closest international site to the Featherstone site is Cannock Extension Canal SAC (located approximately 9 km east). Given this distance it is unlikely that impacts from the development at this site would extend to the SAC (or the other two international sites).</p> <p>In addition to the developments outlined above, this policy may lead to development in the long term elsewhere in South Staffordshire. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where development for employment land will be provided.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites through Policy EQ1. This policy states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. As such any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
EV1	Retention of Existing Employment Sites	<p>This policy states that sites and premises used and/or allocated for industrial or commercial purposes will be safeguarded for that use.</p> <p>It also outlines the strict criteria under which the loss of land and premises for allocated for employment would be considered (e.g. the supply and variety of available alternative employment land is sufficient to meet the District and local requirements).</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.</p>
EV2	Sustainable Tourism	<p>This policy states that the Council will support the growth of tourism in South Staffordshire consistent with the heritage and cultural association of the District with particular focus given to the promotion of sustainable tourism.</p> <p>This policy also states that the expansion and expansion of tourist related businesses will be encouraged providing that they make a sustainable contribution to the local economy and do not have a detrimental impact on the local environment.</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any developments may take place (e.g. tourist accommodation).</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites through Policy EQ1. This policy states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. As such any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
EV3	Canals and Canalside Development	<p>This policy states that proposals for new canalside facilities such as moorings, service facilities and marinas will be supported where they conserve and enhance the scenic, heritage and wildlife value of canals.</p> <p>The policy outlines the considerations that development must take</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any development may take place (except for Hatherton Branch Canal).</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and this policy notes that each proposal will have to consider the effects on designated sites (such as international sites). Furthermore, Policy EQ1 states that any</p>

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		<p>account of (e.g. sensitive design).</p> <p>The policy states that proposals for environmental improvement and restoration of canals will be supported provided that there are no adverse impacts on the natural environment (including designated sites and habitats in accordance with Policy EQ1). Specific reference is made to the Hatherton Branch Canal being included as one of the restoration projects.</p>		<p>proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Furthermore, in relation to Hatherton Branch Canal, the proposals for the canal restoration work at this location have been arranged to avoid connection to the Cannock Extension Canal SAC. As such there will be no likely significant effects on this SAC<sup>14</sup>.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
EV4	South Staffordshire College (Rodbaston)	<p>This policy states that proposals for new development associated with the use of South Staffordshire College as an education and training facility will be supported.</p> <p>It also outlines the criteria that any development must follow (e.g. the provision of satisfactory access and car parking).</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development within the grounds of Rodbaston College. The closest international site to the College is Motte Meadows SAC (located approximately 7.5 km north-west). Given this distance it is unlikely that impacts from the development within the college site would extend to the SAC (or the other two international sites).</p> <p>Furthermore, any development that arises from this policy must take account of all other policies within the Plan. This includes Policy EQ1 and EQ2.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
Core Policy 8	Hierarchy of Centres	<p>This policy states that the Council will give support to sustaining, improving and enhancing the vitality and viability of village and neighbourhood centres.</p> <p>The policy defines the Village Centres (e.g. Bilbrook and Kinver) and Neighbourhood Centres (e.g. Cheslyn Hay and Penkridge).</p> <p>Guidelines for development proposals are also provided (e.g. proposals should be appropriate in scale and type to the roles of the centres).</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any development may take place. Furthermore any development that does take place will solely be to maintain the range of services rather than adding to them.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
Core Policy 9	Rural Diversification	<p>This policy states that the Council will support the social and economic needs of rural communities in South Staffordshire.</p> <p>The policy outlines the proposals that will be supported (e.g. re-use of suitable rural buildings for appropriate employment generating uses) and also outlines the requirements the development will have to meet (e.g. the development should seek to enhance the environment).</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any development may take place.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>

<sup>14</sup> Confirmed at meeting with South Staffordshire Council on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

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EV5	Rural Employment	This policy provided the criteria by which proposals for employment development in locations outside development boundaries will be supported (e.g. it is small scale and it comprises of conversion of existing buildings).	No	As for Core Policy 9.
EV6	Re-use of Redundant Rural Buildings	This policy outlines how the Council will determine proposals for re-use of redundant rural buildings. It states that the preference is for re-use for economic purposes unless it can be demonstrated that alternative use would be preferable.	No	As for Core Policy 9.
EV7	Equine Related Development	This policy outlines the criteria that must be met for horse related facilities and equine enterprises in the Green Belt and open countryside to be supported (e.g. proposal does not have an adverse impact on the natural environment and the integrity of designated protected sites).	No	As for Core Policy 9. In addition this policy seeks to protect the environment (and, as a result, international sites).
EV8	Agriculture	This policy states that the Council will support proposals for agriculture and related to development and outlines the criteria in which this will be achieved (e.g. supporting small scale farm shops selling local produce).	No	As for Core Policy 9.
Core Policy 10	Sustainable Community Facilities and Services	This policy states that the Council will support proposals and activities that protect, retain or enhance existing community facilities and services or lead to the provision of additional facilities.  It also states that proposals involving the loss of community facilities and services will not be supported.	No	This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any development may take place.  The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).  This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.  Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.
EV9	Provision and Retention of Local Community Facilities and Services	This policy states that the Council will support the provision and enhancement of essential community facilities and services (and their retention).  The policy also outlines the criteria by which development proposing to redevelop or change the use of any existing facilities would be permitted (e.g. the premises or site cannot readily be used for, or converted to any other community facility).	No	As for Core Policy 10.
EV10	Telecommunications	This policy outlines the criteria which proposals for telecommunications development (including radio masts), equipment and installations will be permitted (e.g. there is no acceptable alternative location which would be less harmful to the environment).  The policy also states that proposals that will have a serious adverse impact on nature conservation interests will not be permitted.	No	As for Core Policy 10. In addition this policy seeks to protect the environment (and, as a result, international sites).

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Core Policy 11	Sustainable Transport	<p>This policy states that the Council will seek to ensure that accessibility will be improved and transport choice widened.</p> <p>The policy outlines the provisions that development proposals will have to include (e.g. reducing the need to travel and improving road safety). It also outlines the initiatives that it will support in order to improve rural accessibility (e.g. improvement of bus services). The policy also states that development will, either individually or collectively, have to make appropriate provisions to improve air quality and reduce the impact of travel upon the environment (in particular reducing carbon emissions that contribute to climate change).</p> <p>The policy states that improvements to the local road network will be set out in the Local Transport Plan.</p>	No	<p>This policy seeks to promote sustainable transport which may reduce the numbers of cars on the road, ultimately leading to a decrease in traffic emissions. It also states that developments must seek to improve air quality. This may help to reduce the effects of air quality on sensitive habitats at Cannock Chase SAC, Motte Meadows SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC.</p> <p>The policy outlines one specific transport scheme: i54 at Wobaston Road. This development already has planning permission. Any improvements to the local road and cycle network will be outlined in the Local Transport Plan. Currently no details of when or where these improvements will take place are provided.</p> <p>In addition, the policy may lead to other transport schemes being brought forward in the long term but no specific information these other transport schemes is provided.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for). This also applies to the Local Transport Plan. An HRA will be carried out on this lower tier plan document and where any transport schemes put forward may lead to adverse effects, they will be reviewed and where necessary removed from the Plan.</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>
EV11	Sustainable Travel	<p>This policy states that all proposals for development must include provisions for sustainable transport. It also outlines the measures which could be included in development proposals (e.g. footpaths, cycleways and the preparation and implementation of Transport plans).</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.</p>
EV12	Parking Provision	<p>This policy states that the Council will require appropriate provision to be made for off street parking in development proposals.</p> <p>It also outlines the criteria that the Council will have regard to when considering the level of provision (e.g. the need to make adequate and convenient provision for disabled parking).</p>	No	<p><b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.</p>
Core Policy 12	Wolverhampton (Halfpenny Green) Airport	<p>This policy states that the Council supports the role of the airport. It also states that the Council will resist development proposals that are not permitted development that would have a detrimental impact on the environment and nearby residents (include physical expansion of the site and runway extensions).</p>	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where any development within the airport may take place.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Furthermore, this policy seeks to protect the environment (which includes international sites). Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
EV13	Wolverhampton (Halfpenny Green) Airport – Approach to New Development	This policy states that the Council will support proposals for new high quality sustainable development directly related to the General Aviation role of the airport.  Within a defined developable area the Council will support proposals for aviation uses including the replacement of existing outdated and unsustainable buildings and high quality infill development providing they will not have a detrimental impact on the environment and nearby residents.	No	As for Core Policy 12.
EV14	Wolverhampton (Halfpenny Green) Airport – Existing and Future Uses	This policy states that the Council will support existing aviation related businesses on the site and will encourage appropriate new aviation related development.  It also states that the continued occupation of buildings on the site by existing established non-aviation uses that support the viability and sustainability of the airport will be accepted where it is consistent with national planning policy.	No	As for Core Policy 12.
Core Policy 13	Community Safety	This policy states that the design of all developments must take account of the need to reduce opportunities for crime and fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
CS1	Designing Out Crime	This policy states that the design of development must include means of reducing the opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.  It outlines the measures that the Council would support within development proposals (e.g. liaison with the Police to design out crime and fear of crime in specific schemes).	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
Core Policy 14	Open Space, Leisure, Recreation and Culture	This policy states that the Council will work with its partners to promote and provide an appropriate network of high quality accessible open space, sport and recreation facilities that meet the needs of South Staffordshire's current and future population. The policy then details how this will be achieved (e.g. supporting and securing the additional provision of existing quantity, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities).	No	This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where development may take place.  The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).  This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.  Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.
HWB1	Protection of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	This policy outlines the criteria that proposals will have to meet in order for the Council to permit the loss or displacement of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities.	No	<b>Policy Type A1:</b> This policy will not lead to development. It relates to design and other qualitative criteria for development only.
HWB2	Green Infrastructure	This policy states that the Council will support the protection, maintenance and enhancement of a network of open space, natural and	No	As for Core Policy 14.

Policy Number	Policy Title	Policy Description	Will the Policy Lead to Likely Significant Effects on the International Sites?	Justification of Finding (Refer to Section 2 above for definition of Policy Types)
		<p>semi-natural greenspace in South Staffordshire. It also states that proposals to enhance the biodiversity value of the green infrastructure network will also be supported.</p> <p>The network of green infrastructure should provide safe, accessible, high quality links between recreational areas/facilities, residential, leisure and commercial areas and provide for walking, cycling and horse riding..</p>		
Core Policy 15	Children and Young People	This policy states that the Council will support proposals and initiatives to improve access to services for children and young people and the provision, improvement and enhancement of facilities for children's play and youth development.	No	<p>This policy may lead to development in the long term. However the policy does not provide any information about when or where development may take place.</p> <p>The Plan commits to protecting internationally important sites and Policy EQ1 states that any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international site alone or in combination with other projects or plans will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met. Any development arising from this Policy will have to, where necessary, carry out the HRA process and prove to the Council and Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on international sites (or that adverse effects can be adequately mitigated or, if necessary, compensated for).</p> <p>This approach to the HRA process will not affect the deliverability of this policy or the Core Strategy.</p> <p>Therefore this policy will not lead to likely significant effects on the international sites.</p>

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