



CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2014

SUMMARY OF HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT FOR CORE STRATEGY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2005, the European Court of Justice ruled that land-use plans should be subject to an “Appropriate Assessment” of their implications for European sites. In addition as a matter of policy, the Government has chosen to apply the procedures on Ramsar sites and potential SPAs even though these are not classified as European sites as a matter of law.
- 1.2 As the key planning policy document forming the Council's Local Development Framework, the policies within the Core Strategy have been the subject of Appropriate Assessment. The first report was published in May 2008 (Draft Preferred Options Stage) and this was followed by three update assessments in April 2009 (Submission Version), August 2011 (Addendum) and June 2013 (Main Modifications) to assess changes to Core Strategy policies. Please note that the update reports should be read in conjunction with the first report.
- 1.3 Copies of the reports are attached or they can be viewed online at www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

2. Methodology Used

- 2.1 All the Appropriate Assessment documents were carried out in two stages. Firstly, the plan was screened to ascertain whether it would, alone or in combination with other plans, have a significant effect on any European site. Secondly, the plan was assessed in order to ascertain whether it would, alone or in combination with other plans, have any effect on the integrity of the sites identified during screening. The process involved:
 - identification of European Sites that could possibly be affected by SMDC's Core Strategy, qualifying features of those sites, and key environmental conditions to support the sites' integrity;
 - identification of possible impacts on the sites arising from SMDC's Core Strategy;
 - discussions with adjoining local authorities and other relevant agencies to examine the possibilities of 'in combination effects' of their plans and programmes (first publication in 2008);
 - draft identification of impacts and sites that could be screened out, and those that were likely to require more detailed appropriate assessment.
 - discussions with Natural England on the results of the screening report to discuss the findings, the approach adopted, and source information that would be needed to complete the analysis (part of first publication in 2008);
 - collection of data from relevant sources;
 - conclusions about the likely 'in combination' impacts of SMDC's Core Strategy on the European Sites, and conclusions about the measures needed to avoid these impacts in terms of appropriate policies;

- preparation of an appraisal report to inform the Appropriate Assessment.

2.2 During the screening exercise 22 European sites were considered (including 5 Ramsar sites) of which 18 could be screened out of any more detailed assessment and the four remaining were determined to need further examination because of the potential effects that some of the policies (particularly relating to tourism) could have on these sites. The sites screened in were:

- South Pennine Moors SAC;
- Peak District Dales SAC;
- Peak District Moors SPA and;
- Cannock Chase SAC.

2.3 To carry out the review process, a set of questions based on key criteria that relate to the qualifying interests and integrity of the sites was established to aid in the decision making process for assessing whether the changes made to policies would impact on site integrity.

Key Questions Used in the Review Process

| |
|---|
| Will the policy change cause physical loss or damage to the European site? |
| Will the policy change cause pollution to land, sea or air that might impact upon the qualifying features? |
| Will the policy change restrict the capacity to meet conservation objectives? |
| Will the policy change disrupt those factors which help maintain the favourable conditions of the site? |
| Will the policy change interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key flora and fauna that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site? |
| Will the policy change increase disturbance close to the site? |
| Will the policy change encourage further access to the site by the public and their pets? |
| Will the policy change result in the removal of roosting grounds? |
| Will the policy change cause an increase in the scale or nature of development near the site, which could cause an impact on the site and affect site integrity? |
| Will the policy change alter the type of development currently near the site that could lead to future impacts on the site? |
| Will the policy change affect areas utilised by qualifying bird species outside of the SPA? |
| Will the policy change encourage the encroachment on bird flight paths or affect their habitat? |
| Will the policy change increase developmental creep that could attract other types of development that might be more likely to have an impact on the site? |

3. Results at each Assessment Stage

May 2008

3.1 Within the Core Strategy eight policies were found to have an uncertain or potentially negative effect on one or more of the European sites identified in the screening process. These policies were:

- **SS2** (the Future Provision of Development);
- **SS4** (the Distribution of Development);
- **SS6** (Rural Areas);
- **SS6a** (Larger Villages);
- **SS6d** (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside);
- **SD1** (Use of resources);
- **TCR2** (Retailing Outside Town centres) and;
- **TR1** (Tourism and Cultural Facilities).

3.2 Mitigation against any potential negative effects of the Core Strategy was identified within overarching core strategy policies NE1, SS1 and within other, more specific policies within the core strategy. In addition to this, suggested alterations have been made to four core strategy policies, in order that they are more robust and that the necessary protection measures are highlighted where they are most relevant. Core Strategy policies SS1, SD1, R1 and SS6c were altered in this way.

April 2009

3.3 In relation to the changes proposed to the Core Strategy at this time, six policies were considered to have an uncertain or potentially negative effect on one or more of the European sites identified in the screening process. These policies were:

- **SS2** (the Future Provision of Development);
- **SS5a** (Leek Area Strategy - NEW POLICY);
- **SS5b** (Biddulph Area Strategy - NEW POLICY);
- **SS5c** (Cheadle Area Strategy - NEW POLICY);
- **SS6** (Rural Areas);
- **SS7** (Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor - NEW POLICY).

3.4 Mitigation against any potential negative effects of the Core Strategy was identified within overarching core strategy policies NE1 and SS1 and also Policy SS6c.

August 2011

3.5 In relation to the changes proposed to the Core Strategy at this time, six policies were considered to have an uncertain or potentially negative effect on one or

more of the European sites identified in the screening process. These policies were:

- **SS3** (Distribution of Development)
- **SS5a** (Leek Area Strategy)
- **SS5b** (Biddulph Area Strategy)
- **SS5c** (Cheadle Area Strategy)
- **SS6** (Rural Areas)
- **E1** (New Employment Development)

3.6 Mitigation against any potential negative effects of the Core Strategy was identified within overarching Core Strategy policies NE1 and SS1 and also Policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c.

June 2013

3.7 In relation to the main modifications proposed to the Core Strategy at this time, four policies were considered to have an uncertain or potentially negative effect on one or more of the European sites identified in the screening process. These policies were:

- **SS2** (Future Provision of Development)
- **SS5** (Towns)
- **SS6** (Rural Areas)
- **SD2** (Renewable & Low Carbon Energy)

3.8 Mitigation against any potential negative effects of the main modifications to the Core Strategy was identified within overarching Core Strategy policies NE1 and SS1 and also Policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c.

4. Conclusions / Implications for Core Strategy

May 2008

4.1 The policies within the Core Strategy generally provide a positive framework for conservation and enhancement of the District's biodiversity, including the Natura 2000 sites.

4.2 Core Strategy policy SS6c identifies regeneration and economic growth opportunities on two specific sites: Anzio Camp on Blackshaw Moor and Froghall Copperworks. Redevelopment of the Anzio Camp site could create potential tensions between those draft Core Strategy policies which promote economic prosperity and those which aim to protect the European sites and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Whether the economic re-development of the type envisaged can be accommodated without causing significant adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC and SPA sites can only be determined when detailed

masterplans are put forward and they in turn are subject to more detailed EIA and Appropriate Assessment. Some additional wording is recommended for Policy SS6c to sharpen the protection offered to the European and Ramsar sites. (Wording amendments were made to the policy to reflect this).

- 4.3 Two other areas of development have been identified which could, either on their own within Staffordshire Moorlands District or cumulatively (in-combination) with similar developments within adjacent local authority areas, potentially impact on the integrity of the SPA and SAC sites identified in this Appropriate Assessment. These are tourism development and renewable energy schemes (particularly wind turbines). There is insufficient detail on plans and schemes coming forward to make it possible to be specific about possible impacts and quantify them for either of these areas. Further assessment may be needed once specific proposals are put forward.
- 4.4 The Core Strategy will have sufficiently robust policies (SS1, NE1) to safeguard against possible negative effects at this high strategic level.
- 4.5 Consultation with Natural England raised one particular concern and that was in connection with the potential future development of Anzio Camp. This has been covered in Section 4.2.5 of the main report. It is also felt that if suggested modifications to Policies SS1 and SS6c are made then this will provide the necessary mitigation to ensure that the implementation of the Core Strategy would not lead to significant effects on the site integrity of European sites in the area. (Wording amendments were made to the policies to reflect this).

April 2009

- 4.6 The assessment focused on two main areas where possible policy changes could have triggered an effect on European sites. These were:
- tourism-based regeneration; and
 - housing and employment land development.

The Effects Of Tourism-Based Regeneration

- 4.7 There is mention within policy SS5a of the intention to increase tourism opportunities and to promote links with the Peak District. The policy could therefore increase footfall and visitor pressure on heathland and blanket bog habitats in the area. It will therefore be necessary to carefully manage access to the Peak District and to limit further development in the near vicinity of the SAC.
- 4.8 Point 7 within Core Strategy policy NE1 contains mitigation against the possible negative effects of tourism and recreation on the natural environment. It states that the Council will:
“recognise the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict”. With measures put in place to ensure that there is no conflict, and that the natural environment is

protected against the impacts of sport and leisure activity there should be no negative effects arising from tourism-based regeneration.

Development In The Vicinity Of European Sites

- 4.9 Of the three policies that deal with housing and employment development in the towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle, those that relate to Leek are most likely to have an adverse impact on European Sites because of the close proximity of developments. The policy states that locations for housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocations DPD in the following priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:
- within the Urban Area (Area 8);
 - extensions to the Urban Area to the north of Leek (Area 3); and
 - extensions to the Urban Area to the north east/ eastern fringes of Leek (Areas 5/6).
- 4.10 Although these broad areas are not placed within the SAC, they do indicate that the spread of development is towards the SAC and the National Park, rather than away from it.
- 4.11 SMDC understands the potential risks posed by development policies and also the nonspecific tourism policies and so recognises the importance of:
- steering development to the most sustainable locations (preferably previously developed land and buildings) as emphasised in policy SS5;
 - making sure that protected areas and in particular the European Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are avoided and that no future developments will have any adverse effects on site integrity;
 - protecting and where possible enhancing biodiversity throughout the District.
- 4.12 Several overarching policies have been designed to provide the necessary mitigation and ensure that the site integrity and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites are not compromised. These policies have to be applied before the Council will grant planning permission, and would need to be applied against plans for housing and employment land development in the vicinity of Leek. Three main policies within the draft Core Strategy will provide the necessary mitigation. These are:
- Policy NE1 (Biodiversity & Geological Resources)
 - Policy SS1 (Development Principles)
 - Policy SS6c (Other Rural Areas Area Strategy)
- 4.13 Given the overall scale of development proposed and their likely locations, together with the application of policies NE1, SS1 and SS6c, it is expected that there would be no adverse effects on the site integrity of the European sites.

August 2011

4.14 Assessment at this stage has focussed on 2 main areas where possible policy changes could have triggered an effect on European sites. These are:

- Housing development in the 3 towns and rural areas; and
- Employment development

Development in the Vicinity of European Sites

District Wide Housing Requirements

4.15 The reduction in overall housing numbers (from 6000 dwellings to 5500 dwellings over the plan period) is likely to result in a more positive impact on the European sites compared with previous proposals as less development will now take place.

Rural Areas

4.16 The shift in distribution of housing development between Cheadle (reduced from 25% to 22%) and the rural areas (increased from 25% to 28%) raises a possible negative impact depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites.

4.17 As the precise location of development in the rural area will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.

4.18 There are policy measures within the Core Strategy to remove the risk to European sites, namely Policies SS6a, SS6b, SS6c, NE1 & SS1.

Towns

4.19 Previously, it was concluded that policies relating to Leek were most likely to have an adverse impact on European sites due to the close proximity of the development to the Peak District SACs and SPA. However, the sites in question have now been deleted from the list of broad areas for housing development, creating a more positive outcome than previously. Deletions of broad areas for housing development have also been made in Biddulph and Cheadle. The areas which remain did not raise any specific concerns in the previous assessment.

June 2013

4.20 Assessment at this stage has focussed on one main area where possible policy changes could have triggered an effect on European sites, namely increasing the future provision of development in the District from 5500 dwellings to 6000 dwellings.

4.21 In terms of changes to the District wide housing requirements, the 6000 figure was the original figure used in the earlier Submission Core Strategy (published in May 2009). At that time, the broad conclusion reached was that it is the precise location of this development which is the most important factor in determining

impact on European sites and that Core Strategy policy provided necessary mitigation to avoid harm to these sites, though further analysis would be required at the site allocations stage to ensure appropriate sites are allocated.

- 4.22 Similarly at this stage, despite the increased scale of housing development proposed in the main modifications to the Core Strategy, the application of the policy measures within the Core Strategy (set out above), is likely to create no adverse effects on the site integrity of the European sites.
- 4.23 Precise locations for small urban extensions in the towns and sites for development in rural areas will be determined in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and will be appropriately assessed at that time.



Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Core Strategy

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

March 2008

Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Screening Report for the Appropriate Assessment**

March 2008

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Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Screening Report for the Appropriate Assessment

For and on behalf of
Natural Capital Ltd.

Approved by: Dr Phil Say

Signed:



Position: Director

Date: 07 March 2008

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EUROPEAN SITES

In May 1992, Governments throughout the European Union adopted legislation designed to protect Europe's natural resources. The legislation is called the Habitats Directive and it protects the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. It complements the Birds Directive adopted in 1979.

At the heart of both these Directives is the creation of a network of sites called Natura 2000. The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). SPAs are important for rare and vulnerable birds because they rely on them for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration. The Habitats Directive requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. SACs are classified under the Habitats Directive and provide rare and vulnerable animals, plants and habitats with increased protection and management. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 network. All EU Member States are required to manage and implement Natura 2000.¹

Appropriate Assessment of plans that could affect SPAs or SACs is required by Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive.

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives....”

Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive goes on to discuss the alternative solutions, the test of 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest,' (IROPI) and compensatory measures.

The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to SPAs and SACs. Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. The interest features of the European Sites must be maintained in "favourable condition". This means that the abundance, distribution, structure or function of the plants and animals comprising the interest features must not be adversely affected by human activities. Plans and projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and the IROPI test as mentioned above substantiates that they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

1.2 CONTEXT FOR STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

In October 2005, the European Court of Justice ruled that land-use plans should be subject to an "Appropriate Assessment" of their implications for European sites. A letter from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in March 2006 communicated this ruling to Chief Planning Officers. In addition as a matter of policy, the Government has chosen to apply the procedures on Ramsar sites

¹ Natura 2000 Networking Programme: www.natura.org

and potential SPAs even though these are not classified as European sites as a matter of law.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) is in the process of producing the Core Strategy setting out the overall vision and spatial strategy for the district until 2021. It is in the process of undertaking a sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment of the Emerging Core Strategy and its policies, and under the new legislation is also carrying out an Appropriate Assessment. This is considered to be of particular importance in view of the presence of several European sites in the near vicinity of the district.

Natural Capital was invited by SMDC to undertake the research and provide the information so that it could, as the competent authority, carry out the Appropriate Assessment. The purpose of the Appropriate Assessment is, therefore, to assess the impacts of the policies within the Emerging Core Strategy against the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The assessment must determine whether the plan's policies would adversely affect the integrity of any site in terms of its nature conservation objectives. If any negative effects remain after mitigation has been identified then other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

The first stage in the Appropriate Assessment is called the 'screening' stage (see *Section 1.3*). The screening process aims to be a first sieve of European Sites that the proposed Core Strategy could possibly affect.

1.3 METHODOLOGY USED FOR THIS APPRAISAL

European guidance⁷ on Appropriate Assessment recommends a process of up to four stages:

1. **Screening:** Determining whether the plan 'in combination' is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
2. **Appropriate Assessment:** Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan 'in combination' would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site. If not the plan can proceed.
3. **Assessment of alternative solutions:** Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of alternatives.
4. **Assessment where no alternative solutions exist:** and where adverse impacts remain.

Government guidance⁹ summarises the process into 3 main stages:

1. Establishing the likely significant effects.
2. Carrying out the Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity.
3. Determining mitigation, alternative solutions and considering whether there are "*imperative reasons of overriding public interest*" (see *Section 1.2*).

This appraisal covers stage 1 of both of the above processes. The screening stage was carried out in an iterative manner during January and February 2008, and the process involved:

- identification of European Sites that could possibly be affected by SMDC's Core Strategy, qualifying features of those sites, and key environmental conditions to support the sites' integrity;
- identification of possible impacts on the sites arising from SMDC's Core Strategy;
- discussions with adjoining local authorities and other relevant agencies to examine the possibilities of 'in combination effects' of their plans and programmes;
- draft identification of impacts and sites that could be screened out, and those that were likely to require more detailed appropriate assessment.

Following discussions with SMDC the next steps following this screening stage will involve:

- discussions with English Nature on the results of the screening report to discuss the findings, the approach adopted, and source information that would be needed to complete the analysis;
- collection of data from relevant sources (these would be listed in a bibliography to be included in the final report);
- conclusions about the likely 'in combination' impacts of SMDC's Core Strategy on the European Sites, and conclusions about the measures needed to avoid these impacts in terms of appropriate policies;
- preparation of an appraisal report to inform the Appropriate Assessment;
- consultations with Natural England on the draft Appropriate Assessment report.

2 SCREENING

2.1 EUROPEAN SITES TO BE SCREENED

Table 2.1 lists the Natura 2000 Sites that are either within Staffordshire Moorlands District or within the general area. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show their locations and also those of the surrounding local authorities. Figure 2.1 shows the location of Staffordshire Moorlands District in the context of European sites in the wider West Midland, East Midland and North West regions of England. Figure 2.2 shows the location of Staffordshire Moorlands District in the context of the principal European sites in Stoke and Staffordshire and adjacent local authority areas. The SPA sites in particular are designated because of their important breeding birds and visiting migrants. These include an array of wild fowl and wader species. Many of the breeding birds and migrants tend to move around in large flocks to feed and roost, particularly in winter. This can involve the birds moving between coast and inland sites often outside the designated European sites, sometimes to adjacent farmland and uplands. Therefore the protection of these areas will be important for protecting in turn the integrity of the SPAs.

Table 2.1 European Sites that could possibly be adversely affected by SMDC's Core Strategy

| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to District Town | | | Reason for Designation |
|---|--|----------|---------|---|
| | Leek | Biddulph | Cheadle | |
| South Pennine Moors (SAC) | 3.5 | 13 | 14.5 | <p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: European dry heaths, Blanket Bog, Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles.</p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> |
| Peak District Dales (SAC) | 9 | 20 | 10.5 | <p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>), <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines.</p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: European dry heaths, Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>, Alkaline Fens, Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>)</p> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: white-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>.</p> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | 3.5 | 13 | 14.5 | <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.2% of the GB breeding population of <i>Asio flammeus</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.3% of the GB breeding population of <i>Falco columbarius</i>.</p> |

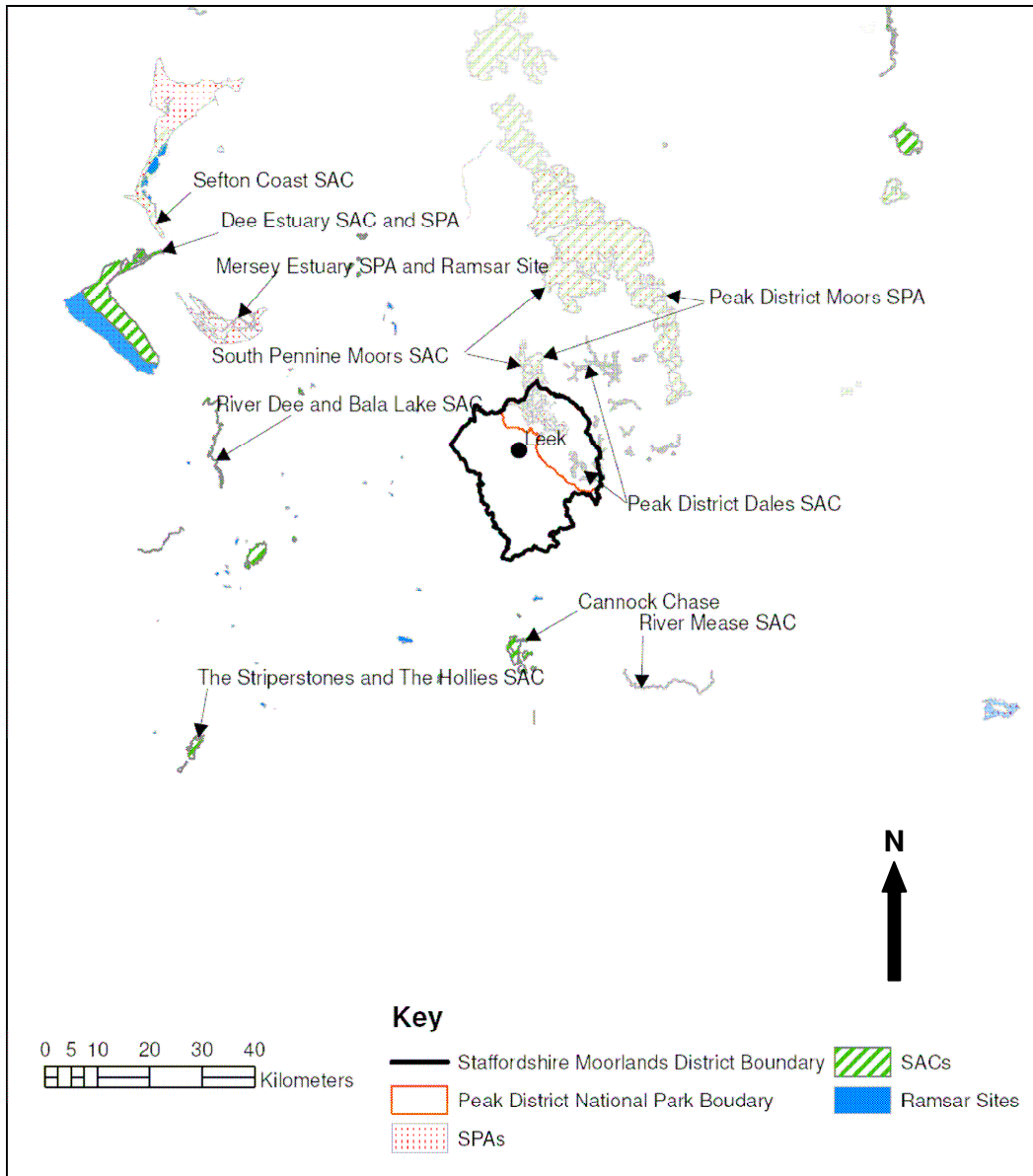
| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to Staffordshire Moorlands District Boundary | Reason for Designation |
|---|--|--|
| | | Area provides breeding ground for 1.9% of the GB breeding population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> . |
| West Midlands Mosses (SAC) | 9km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds, Transition mires and quaking bogs. |
| Cannock Chase (SAC) | 14km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: European dry heaths. Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh (SAC) | 10km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Inland salt meadows. |
| Oak Mere (SAC) | 30km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>), Transition mires and quaking bogs. |
| River Dee and Bala Lake (SAC) | 45km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> , Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> . Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> , Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> , River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> , Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> , Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> . |
| Dee Estuary (SAC) | 60km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Estuaries, Annual vegetation of drift lines, Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts, Embryonic shifting dunes, Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes'), Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes'), Humid dune slacks. |
| Manchester Mosses (SAC) | 35km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. |
| Rixton Clay Pits (SAC) | 33km | Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> . |
| Brown Moss (SAC) | 35km | Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> . |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | 40km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Active raised bogs. Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. |
| Mottey Meadows (SAC) | 25km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Lowland hay meadows |

| | | |
|------------------------------|------|--|
| | | (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>). |
| River Mease (SAC) | 26km | <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculon fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation.</p> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i>, bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>, Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>.</p> |
| Dee Estuary (SPA) | 60km | As above for Dee Estuary SAC. |
| Mersey Estuary (SPA) | 42km | <p>Area provides over-wintering site for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2% of the GB population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, • 1.9% of the population of <i>Anas acuta</i> (North-western Europe), • 2.9% of the population of <i>Anas crecca</i> (North-western Europe), • 4.2% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Anas Penelope</i> (Western Siberia/North-western/North-eastern Europe), • 3.6% of the population of <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa), • 1.6% of the population of <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>(Iceland – breeding), • 1.1% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Numenius arquata</i> (Europe – breeding), • 2.3% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>(Eastern Atlantic – wintering), • 1.4% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (North-western Europe – wintering), • 2.2% of the population of <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>(North-western Europe), • 2.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering), • 0.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (Europe – breeding). <p>On passage the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>(Europe/Northern Africa – wintering), • 3.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering). |
| Mersey Estuary (Ramsar Site) | 42km | <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 89576 waterfowl.</p> <p>Presence of qualifying species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12676 individuals of common <input type="checkbox"/>helduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) representing an average of 4.2% of the population. • 2011 individuals of black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> representing an average of 5.7% of the population. • 6651 individuals of common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, representing an average of • 2.6% of the population. <p>Qualifying Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10613 individuals of Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> representing an average of 2.6% of the population. |

| | | |
|--|------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 565 individuals of northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> representing an average of 2% of the GB population. • 48364 individuals of dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) representing an average of 3.6% of the population. |
| Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 (Ramsar site) | 11km | The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora & fauna. |
| Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 (Ramsar Site) | 9km | Description as above; containing nationally scarce cowbane <i>Cicuta virosa</i> and, elongated sedge <i>Carex elongata</i> . Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes <i>Dicranum affine</i> and <i>Sphagnum pulchrum</i> . Also supports an assemblage of invertebrates including several rare species. There are 16 species of British Red Data Book insect listed for this site including the following endangered species: the moth <i>Glyphipteryx lathamella</i> , the caddisfly <i>Hagenella clathrata</i> and the sawfly <i>Trichiosoma vitellinae</i> . |
| Rostherne Mere (Ramsar Site) | 24km | Rostherne Mere is one of the deepest and largest of the meres of the Shropshire-Cheshire Plain. Its shoreline is fringed with common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> . |
| The Dee Estuary (Ramsar Site) | 60km | <p>Presence of extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. Features as expressed above in Dee Estuary SAC section.</p> <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 74230 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe: 9346 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the population. • Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>, Europe & NW Africa –wintering: 19174 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population. • Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i>, N. arquata Europe (breeding): 4195 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population. • Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>: 8281 individuals, representing an average of 3.3% of the population. <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i>, NW Europe: 3058 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the GB population. • Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, NW Europe 4976 individuals, representing an average of 8.2% of the population. • Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, E Atlantic/W Africa –wintering: 603 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population. |

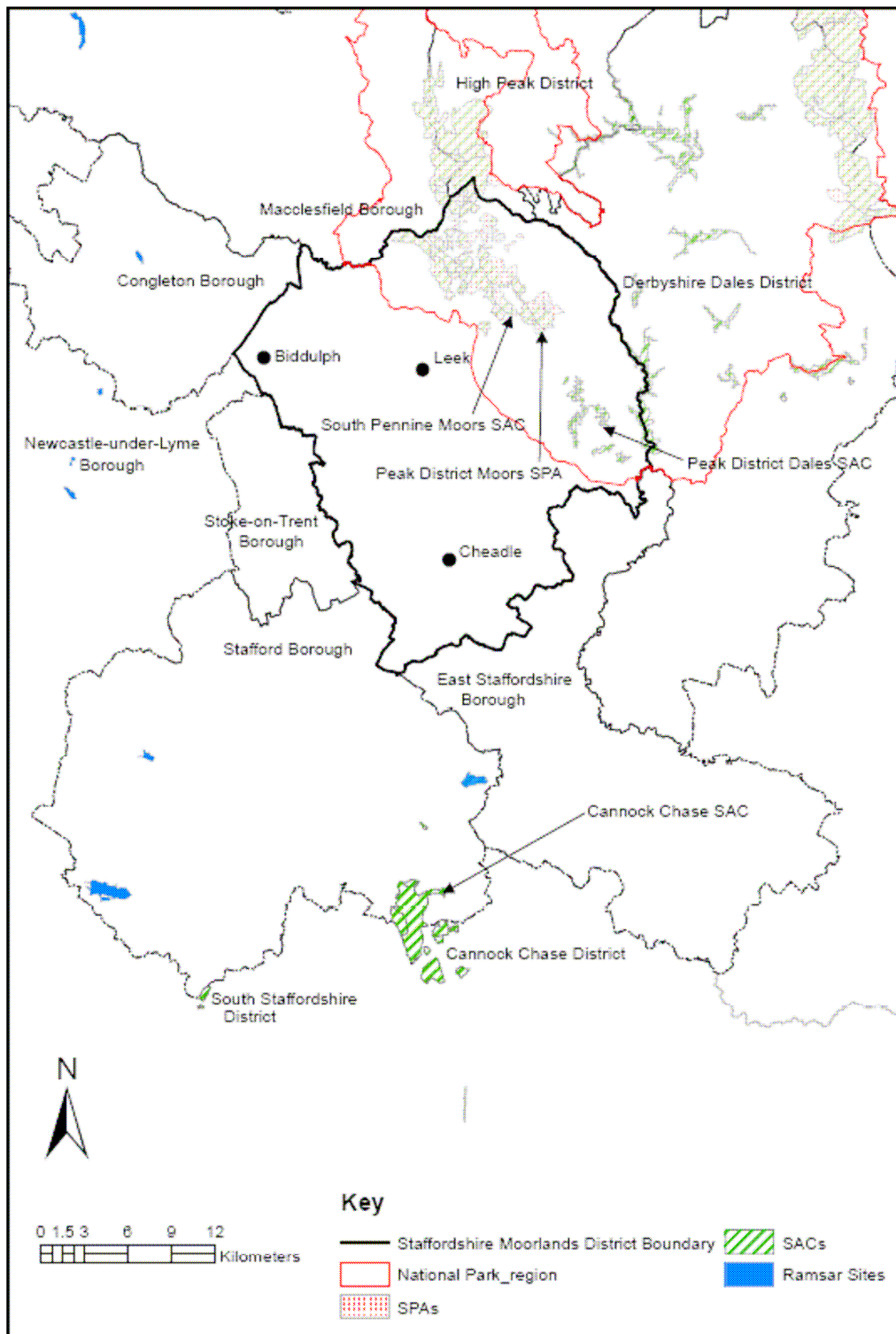
| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, W & Southern Africa (wintering): 3729 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population. • Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, W Siberia/W Europe: 19157 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the population. • Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe: 2791 individuals, representing an average of 7.9% of the population. • Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, W Palearctic: 322 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population. • Ruddy turnstone , <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, NE Canada, Greenland/W Europe & NW Africa: 291 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population. |
|--|--|--|

Figure 2.1 Location of Staffordshire Moorlands District in the North Midlands and North West of England in the Context of the Key European Sites ²



² Not all sites necessarily shown and named on this map – see also *Figure 2.2*

Figure 2.2 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council boundary showing more detailed location of key European sites within West Midland, East Midland and North West regions of England.



2.2 THE SMDC LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND POSSIBLE EFFECTS

2.2.1 Core Strategy

In terms of future significant development, SMDC's emerging Core Strategy provides for:

- A preferred development approach that focuses development on the 3 market towns of Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph and the larger villages, but allows for limited development in other settlements to meet local needs.
- A managed rate of housing development rising to 320 dwellings/annum by 2016 and falling to 288 by 2026.
- An increased rate of housing development is proposed for Cheadle, to reflect growth aspirations, and a reduced development rate in Biddulph and rural areas is proposed as this reflects strategic constraints.
- A minimum of 1700 affordable housing units to be provided between 2006 and 2026 distributed between the towns and rural areas.
- Spatial Strategy policies that establish a settlement hierarchy and level and type of development appropriate for each settlement category.
- Major regeneration opportunities at Cornhill, Churnetside Business Park, Leek and Cheadle Town Centres and Biddulph East and in the countryside at Bolton Copperworks, Froghall and Anzio Camp.
- The need for strategic transport improvements on A520 to A53 access road link, Leek; A521, Cheadle; and Alton Towers – Denstone link.

2.2.2 Possible Effects

Whilst some environmental effects can be quite specific and localised to developments that may be either in or very close to the European sites, it should be remembered that certain impacts to sites further a field could be brought about by the “knock-on” effects of development within the area.

The possible effects (direct and indirect) of policies in the Emerging Core Strategy in the context of designated sites are likely to be in the form of:

- **Land take:** There could be the potential to disturb, remove and replace habitats and associated flora and fauna (possibly including qualifying and protected species) at the sites of development (through e.g. site clearance and construction activities) and then depending on their location there could be indirect negative impacts on nearby sites of conservation importance (including disturbance and downstream contamination affecting habitats, flora and fauna). There can also be risks of possible fragmentation of habitats and destruction or interruption of wildlife corridors. In the case of migratory and/or breeding birds that flock in winter to feed and roost and where the flocks can move between sites and sometimes over considerable distances, there can be risks of impacts through land take on the integrity of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites further a field.
- **Water resources:** Development is likely to lead to an increased demand for water and wastewater treatment in those parts of the District targeted for increases in housing and business premises development. There will be a requirement to make sure that increased water abstraction has no significant impacts on the European sites (e.g. impacts on hydrological

regimes that in turn influence habitats and both plant and animal species), either those in the near vicinity or further a field. There will also be a need to ensure that wastewater is treated to acceptable levels in order to safeguard the quality of controlled waters and to make sure that there is no deterioration in amenity value of the District's rivers and lakes especially those associated with European sites both within Staffordshire Moorlands District and those that could be affected further a field.

- **Traffic levels and congestion:** Increases in road traffic (cars, lorries, public transport) will inevitably lead to increases in emissions and associated atmospheric pollution which can affect sensitive plant species (such as lichens). Knock-on increases in congestion or travel time whilst commuting, particularly in the key towns of Leek and Biddulph will lead to further emissions that will only exacerbate the problem. Increased traffic creates noise, vibration and other nuisances which could disturb bird species. Increases in emissions, noise and vibration are likely to have a negative impact on biodiversity and the wider environment. This could affect sites both within the Staffordshire Moorlands area and further a field.
- **General urbanisation:** more development, more activity, more noise, more clutter, more light and generally more disturbance within the environment. Growth in population and commercial businesses will inevitably lead to increases in waste generation. All of these factors could put pressure on European Sites in particular where there are towns and villages nearby – such as the South Pennine Moors SAC.
- **Increased tourism and recreation:** which could lead to more visits into or near to the European sites with consequential noise, disturbance (vehicles, cycles, people, and dogs) trampling and litter all of which could affect sensitive habitats and bird species. This could apply not only to those sites in or near to Staffordshire Moorlands (e.g. Peak District Dales SAC) but also possibly those further a field (e.g. River Mease (SAC)).
- **Renewable energy schemes:** if wind farm or individual turbine developments are encouraged this could lead to potential cumulative effects of the turbine structures, noise, disturbance etc on wildlife. This could arise from turbines on their own or there could be an “in-combination” effect from wind farms proposed for upland moorland habitats (in adjacent local authority areas) which could affect roosting or feeding sites of certain waders and wildfowl. This can also affect flight patterns and bird movements in general. There will be effects not only during the operation of wind farms but also from the construction and decommissioning phases. These can have impacts on ground conditions, hydrology, soils, habitats and vegetation. There can also be impacts associated with the construction and operation of sub-stations and power lines (pylons) needed for onwards transmission. All can cause destruction of habitats and disturbance to breeding/feeding bird species.

Table 2.2 provides a brief summary of the more “generic” operations and actions that would be likely to cause an effect on a European site and would therefore need to be considered within the Appropriate Assessment.

Table 2.2 Generic actions that can cause effects on European Sites

| Operations likely to cause deterioration or disturbance | Actions that can cause the effect |
|--|---|
| Physical loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal • Smothering |
| Physical damage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Prevention of natural erosion as in coastal defences, flood defences • Mineral extraction • Water abstraction • Recreational pressure – trampling, erosion etc • Drainage – increased run-off and land form disturbance can affect hydrology and groundwater of wetland sites |
| Non-physical disturbance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise/ visual presence – recreational or industrial • Transport/navigation |
| Toxic (and non-toxic) contamination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient enrichment • Changes in turbidity (e.g. flood defence) • Changes in water level (e.g. water abstraction) • Changes in salinity (e.g. water abstraction) • Agricultural run-off |
| Biological disturbance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of non-native species • Selective extraction of species |

It should be emphasised that the lists in *Section 2.2.3* and *Table 2.2* are examples of the possible effects and more specific actions and operations are assessed against the interest features and conservation objectives in *Table 2.5*.

2.3 POSSIBLE IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

The guidance^{3, 4} indicates that it is essential to consider possible developments in adjoining local authority areas in order to assess whether there could be any “in-combination” effects caused by the cumulative effects of additional development plans and programmes. *Table 2.4* indicates some possible developments in adjoining local authority areas that would need to be taken into consideration. This information has been sourced from either discussions with respective planning officers or from reviews of relevant local authority Core Strategies and Local Plans or a combination of both.

³ *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*, Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2006.

⁴ *Appropriate Assessment of Plans: Discussion Paper*, Scott Wilson et al, June 2006

Table 2.4 Developments in Nearby Districts and Other Relevant Strategies/Plans – In-Combination Effects

| Local Authority or Agency/Organisation | House Construction Proposed (where relevant) | Other Development or relevant plan | Sources of Information |
|--|--|--|--|
| Macclesfield Borough Council | Houses planned to be built at a rate of 300 per year until 2026, 10% of which will be affordable. The majority will be regeneration and therefore will not need additional land. | No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites. | Graham Chiles: 01625504673 |
| East Staffordshire District Council | 6,000 houses planned, up to 2026. Mostly concentrated around currently developed areas especially in the town of Burton upon Trent. | Encouragement of tourism focused mainly on the market town of Uttoxeter (town lies approximately 6 km from Midland Meres and Mosses phase 1 Ramsar Site) Growth of employment land is expected to stay focused around towns. | Sandra Ford: 01283508362 |
| Stafford Borough Council | 10,300 houses planned, up to 2026. | Further development of the Blyth Bridge Industrial estate. Possible change of use to more heavy industry. | Ben Williscroft/ Naiomi Perry: 01785619538 |
| High Peak Borough Council | Houses planned to be built at a rate of 300 per year until 2026, 10% of which will be affordable. The majority will be regeneration and therefore will not need additional land. | No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites. | Mark James |
| Congleton Borough Council | Houses planned to be built at a rate of 300 per year until 2026. Estimated number of new dwellings to 2014: Alsager – 300 Congleton – 415 Middlewich – 120 Sandbatch – 470 Rural – 380 Borough Total – 1585 | Estimated Additional Employment Land (ha) to 2014 Alsager – 10.5 Congleton – 30.6 Middlewich – 59 Sandbatch – 5 Rural – 22 Borough Total – 127.1 | Richard House 01270 529 767 |
| Stoke-on-Trent Council | Stoke on Trent 11400 net additional dwellings of which broadly – City Centre – 500 Inner urban areas – 5700 Stoke outer urban – 4600 The phasing of housing development within the plan area will be approximately 400 – 500 dwellings per annum throughout the plan period. | Two major employment land developments will be delivered in the plan period – The 28 hectare extension to Keele University and Science Park (should be completed by approx 2015) The Regional Investment Site at Chatterley Valley (approximately 70 hectares), which spans the boundary of both authorities (should be completed by 2015). Will promote low impact rural tourism - use of existing parks, waterways, small | David Goode David.Goode@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk 01782 742475 |

| Local Authority or Agency/Organisation | House Construction Proposed (where relevant) | Other Development or relevant plan | Sources of Information |
|---|--|--|---|
| Newcastle Borough Council | <p>Newcastle under Lyme 5700 net additional dwellings of which broadly –</p> <p>Town centre – 1400 Silverdale – 600 Chesterton – 300 Knutton and Cross Heath – 600 Other urban Newcastle – 1600 Kidsgrove - 300 Rural Areas – 900</p> <p>The phasing of housing development within the plan area will be approximately 400 – 500 dwellings per annum throughout the plan period.</p> | <p>scale developments, diversification of agricultural activities etc. It is not anticipated that there will be any large scale tourism development in the rural areas.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the area's industrial/cultural heritage -in particular the ceramics industry, will continue to be the primary attraction for most visitors and a key aim is to promote Burslem as a cultural/tourist destination.</p> | <p>David Goode David.Goode@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk 01782 742475</p> |
| Derbyshire Dales District Council | <p>Houses planned to be built at a rate of 200 per year until 2026, 10% of which will be affordable. The majority will be regeneration and therefore will not need additional land.</p> | <p>No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites.</p> <p>Growth of tourism to be encouraged and increased at a measured and sustainable rate. The natural landscape is a draw to tourists and this is to be managed carefully. Ashborne is to be developed as a market town attraction to tourists.</p> | <p>Mike Hase: 016297611251</p> |
| Cannock Chase Council | <p>Forecasted housing development for the district expected to follow recommendations of the regional spatial strategy at 290 houses per year and to be concentrated around the towns of Cannock, Rugeley and North Canes . Pye Green Valley, located next to Cannock Chase SAC, is an area recently released from greenbelt and is now a potential housing site. The Sports stadium on Pye Green Road is also now to be allocates as space for housing.</p> | <p>The three main employment sites in the district are; Kingswood (in Cannock), Lakeside (in Rugeley and The Towers Business Park (located in Rugeley). These areas are expected to remain at the same capacity for the foreseeable future. The Autoelectronics industrial site in Rugeley will undergo a change of use towards housing and this business will be relocated within the district.</p> <p>Tourism is expected to focus on encouraging people to Cannock Chase SAC, but this will be done in a controlled way, under the Cannock Chase Management Plan.</p> | <p>Tony Lancaster: 01543 464481</p> |
| Peak District National Park Planning Authority | <p>Housing completions in the Peak District National Park were 121 in 2007 and this is expected to stay at a similar level until 2026.</p> | <p>There are five main employment sites in the Peak District National Park and these are based around light industry and office based employment. None of these five sites are expected to undergo any major change of use or expansion.</p> <p>The Peak District National Park closely monitors tourist activity and manages the area in accordance with demand and footfall.</p> | <p>Brain Taylor on 01629816303.</p> |

2.4 SCREENING AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

2.4.1 Screening the European Sites

Annex A shows the rapid screening table used for assessing the potential for impact of the 32 draft Core Strategy Policies on the various SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites within Staffordshire Moorlands District or in the near vicinity (within neighbouring authority areas).

Table 2.6 shows the results of the screening process for each of the European sites considered. On the basis of this screening process it was considered that (18) of the (22) European sites (five of which are also classified as Ramsar sites) could be screened out. In other words it was considered that none of the policies within SMDC's Core Strategy would be considered likely to have a significant adverse effect on site integrity and the conservation objectives.

Screening did establish the possibility of effects on four of the sites:

- South Pennine Moors (SAC);
- Peak District Dales (SAC)
- Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA
- Cannock Chase (SAC)

Screening suggested that for all of these four sites there was some uncertainty as to the possible effects of policies in the Emerging Core Strategy that would support tourism (e.g. Draft Policy TR1 'Tourism and Cultural Facilities').

Possible effects on all of these European sites will be examined in more detail in during the next stages of the assessment.

2.4.2 Screening the Potential Environmental Effects

Because of the possibilities of adverse environmental effects on the four European sites arising from tourism-related policies within the Emerging Core Strategy (and possibly in combination with similar policies of adjacent authorities) the potential environmental effects discussed in *Section 2.2.2* are considered in the context of the four sites and summarised in *Table 2.5*.

Table 2.5 Screening the Potential Tourism-related Environmental Effects in Relation to the European Sites

| Action likely to cause effect | Activities related to tourism and recreational activity |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Physical loss of plants and habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal |
| Physical damage to habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Recreational pressure – trampling, erosion, water sports • Drainage – increased run-off and land form disturbance can affect hydrology and groundwater of wetland sites • Construction of gates, fences, footpaths |
| Disturbance to birds and animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise/ visual presence • Traffic |

| Action likely to cause effect | Activities related to tourism and recreational activity |
|-------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling • Walking • Dogs • Horse riding • Game sports • Water sports |
| Biological disturbance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of non-native species |

Table 2.6 Screening Process for Each of the European Sites Considered

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <p>South Pennine Moors (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>European dry heaths, Blanket Bog, Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> . • European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Blanket bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Transition mires and quaking bogs . • Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large numbers of people use the area for recreational activities as around two-thirds is within the Peak District National Park. Therefore access management is a key issue. • Accidental fires • Maintenance of the ecosystems relies primarily on appropriate grazing levels and burning regimes. • Atmospheric pollution over the last few hundred years has depleted the lichen and bryophyte flora and may be affecting dwarf-shrubs. The impact has arguably been greatest on blanket bog, wet heath and transition mire where the bog-building <i>Sphagnum</i> mosses have been largely lost. • The former extensive cover of woodland is now fragmented, relatively small-scale and largely | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SAC. • The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. • The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but again this has not been measured and is uncertain. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of these would be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity but applying the precautionary principle this site taken forward for more detailed appraisal. • Screened in. |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | | <p>restricted to steeper valley sides. Woods are often unfenced and open to grazing which restricts tree regeneration. In some <i>Rhododendron</i> has invaded, choking out native flora.</p> | | |
| <p>Peak District Dales (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>), <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines.</p> <p>European dry heaths, Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>, Alkaline Fens, Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>)</p> <p>white-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>.</p> <p>Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for crayfish and lamprey.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European dry heaths. • Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>. • Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Alkaline fens. • Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 Hectares. • Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. • <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • <i>Lampetra planeri</i> . • <i>Cottus gobio</i> . <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main threat to the limestone grasslands of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SAC. • The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. • The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but again this has not been measured and is uncertain. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of these would be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity but applying the precautionary principle this site taken forward for more detailed appraisal. • Screened in. |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| | | <p>the Peak District Dales is inappropriate grazing management. This results in either neglect and invasion by scrub, or overgrazing and the loss of the important vegetation communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed developments have the potential to interfere with drainage patterns within the site. The impact of dust from quarrying needs to be assessed. The woodlands within the SAC occupy very steeply-sloping dalesides, where access is always going to be problematic, and development pressures are therefore limited. Existing permission for limestone or mineral extraction is a potential threat to some of the woodlands on one part of the site. There will be a need to work closely with game fishing interests to ensure that fishery management does not adversely affect the freshwater features of the SAC. The same is true of shooting tenants, who may impact on the overall ecology of the woodland. | | |
| <p>Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.2% of the GB breeding population of <i>Asio flammeus</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.3% of the GB breeding population of <i>Falco columbarius</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 1.9% of the GB breeding population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bogs. Heath and scrubland. Dry grassland. Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major urban and industrial centers near to the Peak District Moors provide significant visitor pressure and approximately two-thirds of the moorlands are open to public access. Habitat damage through physical erosion or fire, combined with disturbance of breeding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SPA. The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but this has not been measured and is uncertain. | <p>None of these would be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity but applying the precautionary principle this site taken forward for more detailed appraisal.</p> <p>Screened in.</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| | | <p>birds, can be significant. Initiatives for sustainable recreation are being necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many habitats are sub-optimal (in vegetation terms) as a consequence of historic air pollution, high grazing pressure and wildfire burns. Breeding birds in the south-west of the area may be declining on both open moorland and enclosed rough grazing land, possibly due to general agricultural improvement of the surrounding areas. | | |
| West Midlands Mosses (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Transition mires and quaking bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colonisation of open schwingmoors or <i>Sphagnum</i> lawns and rafts in the West Midland Mosses by birch and Pine. Several sources of nutrient enrichment, including atmospheric deposition of nutrients, pose a potential threat at these sites. All parts of Abbots Moss are vulnerable to recreational disturbance, particularly the northern portion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMDC policies unlikely to have direct effect. Although there is a possibility that policies which support tourism in the Emerging Core Strategy together with those of other local authorities could increase the number of visitors and associated footfall in the general Staffordshire area, this in itself would not be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity of this SAC. | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| Cannock Chase (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>European dry heaths.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> . European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of Cannock Chase falls within a popular and well-used Country Park. Visitor pressures include dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering, all of which cause disturbance and result in erosion, new track creation and vegetation damage. Bracken invasion is significant, but is being controlled. Birch and pine scrub, much of the latter from surrounding commercial plantations, is continually invading the site and has to be controlled. Cannock Chase overlies coal measures which have been deep-mined. Mining fissures continue to appear across the site even though mining has ceased and this is thought to detrimentally affect site hydrology. The underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer with water abstracted for public and industrial uses and the effects of this on the wetland features of the Chase are not fully understood. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SPA. The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but this has not been measured and is uncertain. As this SAC is vulnerable to visitor pressures and disturbance from tourists there may be a risk of in-combination effects. | Screened in |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Inland salt meadows.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Inland salt meadows for which this is the only known outstanding locality in the United Kingdom and</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Windfarms could conceivably pose a risk but there are no feasibility studies for sites in the | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| | <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 10 hectares.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This inland saltmarsh is dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with livestock grazing and no, or minimal use, of agricultural chemicals. Dependent upon the brine source being maintained and, whilst the hydrogeology of the site is not fully understood, it would be likely to be vulnerable to any abstractions of water from the underground aquifer. | <p>near vicinity, and none that would relate to SMDC policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Core Strategy would not be expected to adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity of this SAC. | |
| Oak Mere (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>), Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom and which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. Transition mires and quaking bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nutrient-poor water of Oak Mere is highly sensitive to enrichment and there is a potential risk from chemical pollution, especially when the water table is high. The local water table is restricted, and has undergone natural lowering following successive drought years, this has led to a reduction in the size of the Mere. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology of this site so there should be no threats to the site integrity. | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a continual possibility of accidents and spillages on the busy road network on the sides of the Mere. • The Mere's natural topographic setting is being modified by numerous commercial sand extractions in the vicinity. | | |
| <p>River Dee And Bala Lake (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation.</p> <p>Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>, Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>.</p> <p>Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>, Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>, Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable to Atlantic salmon, Floating water-plantain, Sea lamprey, Brook lamprey, River lamprey, Bullhead and Otter.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> • Vegetation, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> . • <i>Lampetra planeri</i>. • <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>. • <i>Salmo salar</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • <i>Cottus gobio</i>. • <i>Lutra lutra</i>. • <i>Luronium natans</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>The site and its features are threatened by practices which have an adverse effect on the quality, quantity and pattern of water flows, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate flow regulation; • excessive abstraction (for industry, agriculture and domestic purposes); • threats to water quality from direct and diffuse pollution; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eutrophication and siltation. • Degradation of riparian habitats due to engineering works, • agricultural practices and invasive plant species may also have an adverse effect. <p>The Atlantic salmon population is threatened by excessive exploitation by high sea, estuarine and recreational fisheries.</p> <p>Introduction of non-indigenous species could also threaten both fish and plant species.</p> | | |
| Dee Estuary (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>)</p> <p>Estuaries, Annual vegetation of drift lines, Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts, Embryonic shifting dunes, Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes'), Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes'), Humid dune slacks.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries. • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Annual vegetation of drift lines, which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 100 hectares. • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts. • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) and for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Embryonic shifting dunes, which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity | Screened out |

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| | | <p><i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"). Humid dune slacks. <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>. <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sizeable areas of saltmarsh in the Dee remain ungrazed and therefore plant species that are susceptible to grazing are widespread. This distinctive flora would therefore be sensitive to increase in grazing pressure. The intertidal and subtidal habitats of the estuary are broadly subject to natural successional change, although shellfisheries and dredging are a current concern. Threats to the estuary's conservation come from its industrialised shorelines on the Welsh side and the impact of adjacent historic industrial use. These include land contamination from chemical and steel manufacture and localised water quality problems. | | |
| Manchester Mosses (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage natural regeneration of bogs.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three sites have suffered from drainage in the past and are affected by continued, if reduced, drainage, particularly from boundary ditches. Agricultural land forms a significant part of the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity | Screened out |

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| | | <p>adjacent land on all three sites, which will have implications for restoration, particularly as re-wetting is one of the key requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three sites are affected by scrub invasion, which is being controlled in some areas but will need further attention. The sites are located close to heavy industry (Greater Manchester and Merseyside). Air quality may therefore have an impact on <i>Sphagnum</i> regeneration. | | |
| Rixton Clay Pits (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To encourage conditions favourable the conservation and growth of Great Crested Newt populations.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p><i>Triturus cristatus</i> (Great Crested Newt), for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>A possible conflict between grassland management and great crested newts has been identified.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |
| Brown Moss (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p><i>Luronium natans</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Colonisation by trees is being addressed but continues to be of concern due to the shading, nutrient and hydrological effects on the open water and heathland.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

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| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Active raised bogs.</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage natural regeneration of bogs.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active raised bogs, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the site is subject to mineral planning consents for peat extractions which are currently being reviewed. Part of the site has been subject to large-scale commercial extraction, involving drainage over much of the peat body. Afforestation and agricultural improvement on marginal areas of the peat body have accelerated the lowering of water levels, resulting in encroachment by scrub and a decline in the extent of peat-forming communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |
| Mottey Meadows (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>).</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above conditions.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>), for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meadows are dependent upon traditional agricultural management - hay-cutting and aftermath grazing with no use of agrochemicals. The site is therefore vulnerable to nutrient run-off from adjacent agricultural land. The site is also vulnerable to a lowering of both ground and surface water levels, because the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

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| | | <p>floristic composition is dependent on a high water table in autumn and winter.</p> | | |
| <p>River Mease (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation.</p> <p>Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i>, bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> <p>White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>, Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable to Spined loach, bullhead, White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish and Otter.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation. • <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> • <i>Cobitis taenia</i> for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom. • <i>Cottus gobio</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • <i>Lutra lutra</i> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Diffuse pollution and excessive sedimentation are catchment-wide issues which have the potential to affect the site.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| Dee Estuary (SPA) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>As above for Dee Estuary SAC.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidal rivers • Estuaries • Mud flats • Sand flats • Lagoons <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall the estuary would benefit from improvements in water quality. Investment by water companies is being undertaken and existing consents are being reviewed. • Wildfowling occurs but at lower levels than in the recent past. An estuary-wide study of wildfowling activities has been prepared which will be followed by a more detailed management plan. • Cockle beds have suffered from over-exploitation. New bylaws and code of practice have been introduced to control this. • There have been some small scale developments (e.g. port infrastructure at Mostyn). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| Mersey Estuary (SPA) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Area provides over-wintering site for:</p> <p>1.2% of the GB population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, 1.9% of the population of <i>Anas acuta</i> (North-western Europe), 2.9% of the population of <i>Anas crecca</i> (North-western Europe), 4.2% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Anas Penelope</i> (Western Siberia/North-western/North-eastern Europe), 3.6% of the population of <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa), 1.6% of the population of <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>(Iceland – breeding), 1.1% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Numenius arquata</i> (Europe – breeding), 2.3% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>(Eastern Atlantic – wintering), 1.4% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (North-western Europe – wintering), 2.2% of the population of <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>(North-western Europe), 2.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering), 0.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (Europe – breeding).</p> <p>On passage the area regularly supports:</p> <p>1.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>(Europe/Northern Africa – wintering), 3.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering).</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidal rivers • Estuaries • Mud flats • Sand flats • Lagoons <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The estuary is subject to multiple uses; it is heavily industrialised, a substantial urban conurbation, has multiple transport requirements and increasing recreational activities. • The site is vulnerable to physical loss through land-claim and development, physical damage caused by navigation capital and maintenance dredging, agricultural requirements, non-physical loss, toxic and non-toxic contamination and biological disturbance by wildfowling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| | <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | | | |
| <p>Mersey Estuary (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 89576 waterfowl.</p> <p>Presence of qualifying species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <p>12676 individuals of common <input type="checkbox"/>helduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) representing an average of 4.2% of the population.</p> <p>2011 individuals of black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> representing an average of 5.7% of the population.</p> <p>6651 individuals of common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, representing an average of 2.6% of the population.</p> <p>Qualifying Species with peak counts in winter:</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>The Mersey is a large, sheltered estuary, which comprises large areas of saltmarsh and extensive intertidal sand and mudflats, with limited areas of brackish marsh, rocky shoreline and boulder clay cliffs, within a rural and industrial environment. The intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large and internationally important populations of waterfowl. During the winter, the site is of major importance for duck and waders. The site is also important during spring and autumn migration periods, particularly for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>As above for Mersey Estuary SPA</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

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|---|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| | <p>10613 individuals of Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> representing an average of 2.6% of the population. 565 individuals of northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> representing an average of 2% of the GB population. 48364 individuals of dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) representing an average of 3.6% of the population.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | | | |
| <p>Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 (Ramsar site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora & fauna.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets, which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support internationally important flora & fauna.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| | <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Site is vulnerable to eutrophication and invasion from non-native species.</p> | | |
| <p>Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Description as above; containing nationally scarce cowbane <i>Cicuta virosa</i> and, elongated sedge <i>Carex elongata</i>. Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes <i>Dicranum affine</i> and <i>Sphagnum pulchrum</i>. Also supports an assemblage of invertebrates including several rare species. There are 16 species of British Red Data Book insect listed for this site including the following endangered species: the moth <i>Glyphipteryx lathamella</i>, the caddisfly <i>Hagenella clathrata</i> and the sawfly <i>Trichiosoma vitellinae</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>As above for Phase 1.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>As above for Phase 1</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |
| <p>Rostherne Mere (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Rostherne Mere is one of the deepest and largest of the meres of the Shropshire-Cheshire Plain. Its shoreline is fringed with common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Rostherne Mere is the deepest, one of the largest and the most northerly of the meres of the Cheshire Plain. It lies in a hollow surrounded by thick deposits of glacial drift overlying triassic marls and salt-beds.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Site is vulnerable to eutrophication and invasion from non-native species.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| <p>The Dee Estuary (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Presence of extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. Features as expressed above in Dee Estuary SAC section.</p> <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 74230 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <p>Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe: 9346 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the population. Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>, Europe & NW Africa – wintering: 19174 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population. Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i>, N. arquata Europe (breeding): 4195 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population. Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>: 8281 individuals, representing an average of 3.3% of the population.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i>, NW Europe: 3058 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the GB population. Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, NW Europe 4976 individuals, representing an average of 8.2% of the population. Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, E Atlantic/W Africa –wintering: 603 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>The Dee is a large funnel-shaped sheltered estuary and is one of the top five estuaries in the UK for wintering and passage waterfowl populations. The estuary supports internationally important numbers of waterfowl and waders. The estuary is an accreting system and the extent of saltmarsh continues to expand as the estuary seeks to achieve a new equilibrium situation following large-scale historical land-claim at the head of the estuary, which commenced in the 1730s. Nevertheless, the estuary still supports extensive areas of intertidal sand and mudflats as well as saltmarsh. Where land-claim has not occurred, the saltmarshes grade into transitional brackish and freshwater swamp vegetation, on the upper shore. The site includes the three sandstone islands of Hilbre with their important cliff vegetation and maritime heathland/grassland. The site also includes an assemblage of nationally scarce plants and the sandhill rustic moth <i>Luperina nickerlii gueneei</i>, a British Red Data Book species. The two shorelines of the estuary show a marked contrast between the industrialised usage of the coastal belt in Wales and residential and recreational usage in England.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasion of non-native plant species • Overfishing • Pollution (Industrial waste) • Disturbance from human activities • Transport infrastructure development especially dredging at Mostyn Dock. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|------|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| | <p>Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, W & Southern Africa (wintering): 3729 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population.</p> <p>Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, W Siberia/W Europe: 19157 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the population.</p> <p>Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe: 2791 individuals, representing an average of 7.9% of the population.</p> <p>Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, W Palearctic: 322 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population.</p> <p>Ruddy turnstone , <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, NE Canada, Greenland/W Europe & NW Africa: 291 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | | | |

3 CONCLUSIONS

This screening exercise has established that of the 22 European sites (including 5 Ramsar sites) considered 18 could be screened out of any more detailed assessment but that four should be examined further because of the potential effects that some of the policies (particularly relating to tourism) could have on these sites.

All of these sites will be considered further because applying the precautionary principle it is possible that they could potentially be affected by policies within SMDC's Core Strategy. The information that will be brought together during the next stages and used to carry out the Appropriate Assessment for each of the sites will be:

- Qualifying features and conservation objectives for each site.
- Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity and site vulnerability.
- Possible impacts from policies in the Core Strategy.
- Risk of a significant effect on site integrity.
- Possible impacts from other plans.
- Mitigation that can be used.
- Residual effects.

This will then be used to establish what, if any, revisions to policies will be needed to afford adequate protection for these European sites.

ANNEX A

A1 This annex reports the screening undertaken of the policies within SMDC's Core Strategy against the various European Natura 2000 sites in the general area.

A screening system was developed and used based on the following scale of effects.

| | |
|----|---|
| ✓✓ | Clear strong positive effects |
| ✓ | Broadly supportive |
| 0 | Neutral or no discernible effect |
| × | Likely negative effect |
| ?× | Uncertain possible negative effect |

The screening is summarised in the following table which lists the policies and presents the findings of the screening in relation to each of the Natura 2000 sites.

To carry out the screening process, a set of questions based on key criteria that relate to the qualifying interests and integrity of the sites was established to aid in the decision making process for assessing whether the policies would impact on site integrity. The questions are summarised in the following table.

| Key Questions used in the Screening Process |
|--|
| Will the policy cause physical loss or damage to the European site? |
| Will the policy cause pollution to land, sea or air that might impact upon the qualifying features? |
| Will the policy restrict the capacity to meet conservation objectives? |
| Will the policy disrupt those factors which help maintain the favourable conditions of the site? |
| Will the policy interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key flora and fauna that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site? |
| Will the policy increase disturbance close to the site? |
| Will the policy encourage further access to the site by the public and their pets? |
| Will the policy result in the removal of roosting grounds? |
| Will the policy cause an increase in the scale or nature of development near the site, which could cause an impact on the site and affect site integrity? |
| Will the policy change the type of development currently near the site that could lead to future impacts on the site? |
| Will the policy affect areas utilised by qualifying bird species outside of the SPA? |
| Will the policy encourage the encroachment on bird flight paths or affect their habitat? |
| Will the policy increase developmental creep that could attract other types of development that might be more likely to have an impact on the site? |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
| SS1 – Spatial Strategy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS2 – Future Provision of Development | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS3 – Managing the Release of Housing Land | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS4 – Distribution of Development | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS5 – Towns | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
| SS6 – Rural Areas | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6a – Larger Villages | 0 | ?x | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6b – Smaller Villages | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6c – Other Areas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6d – Major Developed areas in the Countryside | ?x | ?x | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Core Strategy Policies | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
| SS7 – Green Belt | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS8 – Strategic Transport Improvements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS9 – Blythe Bridge Regional Investment Site | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SD1 – Use of Resources | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
| SD2 – Pollution and Flood Control | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| E1 – To Develop the District's Economy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E2 – Existing Employment Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H1 – Range and Type of Housing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Core Strategy Policies | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
| H2 – Affordable Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H3 – Gypsy and Traveller Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TCR1 – Development in the Town Centres | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TCR2 – Retailing Outside Town Centres | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | Core Strategy Policies | DC1 – Design Considerations | DC2 – The Historic Environment | DC3 – Settlement Setting |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| South Pennine Moors SAC | | ✓ | 0 | 0 |
| Peak District Dales SAC | | ✓ | 0 | 0 |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | | ✓ | 0 | 0 |
| West Midlands Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cannock Chase SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oak Mere SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Manchester Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Motley Meadows SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Mease SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | Core Strategy Policies | DC4 – Masterplanning | C1 – Creating Sustainable Communities | TR1 – Tourism and Cultural Facilities |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| South Pennine Moors SAC | | 0 | 0 | ?x |
| Peak District Dales SAC | | 0 | 0 | ?x |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | | 0 | 0 | ?x |
| West Midlands Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cannock Chase SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oak Mere SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Manchester Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Motley Meadows SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Mease SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | Core Strategy Policies | TR2 – Sport, Recreation and Public Spaces | R1 – Rural Diversification | Policy R2 – Rural Housing |
|---|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| South Pennine Moors SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Peak District Dales SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Midlands Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cannock Chase SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oak Mere SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Manchester Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Motley Meadows SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River Mease SAC | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
| NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NE2 – Natural Landscape | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| SPA and SAC Sites | Core Strategy Policies | T2 – Other Sustainable Transport Measures | T3 – Telecoms and ICT |
|--|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| South Pennine Moors SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Peak District Dales SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | | 0 | 0 |
| West Midlands Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Cannock Chase SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Oak Mere SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Manchester Mosses SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | | 0 | 0 |
| Mottey Meadows SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| River Mease SAC | | 0 | 0 |
| Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 |
| Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | | 0 | 0 |

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Report

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Development Framework:
Information to Inform the Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy**

May 2008

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Report

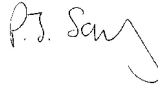
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Development Framework: Information to Inform the Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy

For and on behalf of
Natural Capital Ltd.

Approved by: Dr Phil Say

Signed:



Position: Director

Date: 01.05.08

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STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: INFORMATION TO INFORM THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT OF THE CORE STRATEGY

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

In May 1992, Governments throughout the European Union adopted legislation designed to protect Europe's natural resources. The legislation is called the Habitats Directive and it protects the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. It complements the Birds Directive adopted in 1979.

At the heart of both these Directives is the creation of a network of sites called Natura 2000. The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). SPAs are important for rare and vulnerable birds because they rely on them for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration. The Habitats Directive requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. SACs are classified under the Habitats Directive and provide rare and vulnerable animals, plants and habitats with increased protection and management. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 network. All EU Member States are required to manage and implement Natura 2000.¹

Appropriate Assessment of plans that could affect SPAs or SACs is required by Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive.

In October 2005, the European Court of Justice ruled that land-use plans should be subject to an "Appropriate Assessment" of their implications for European sites. A letter from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in March 2006 communicated this ruling to Chief Planning Officers. In addition as a matter of policy, the Government has chosen to apply the procedures on Ramsar sites and potential SPAs even though these are not classified as European sites as a matter of law.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is in the process of producing the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is the central document of the Local Development Framework, and sets out the spatial vision, objectives, and policies for managing development in Staffordshire Moorlands up to 2026. It is the policies within this Core Strategy that are the subject of this Appropriate Assessment.

2. METHODOLOGY

This Appropriate Assessment was carried out in two stages. Firstly, the plan was screened to ascertain whether it would, alone or in combination with other plans, have a significant effect on any European site. Secondly, the plan was assessed in order to ascertain whether it would, alone or in combination with other plans, have any effect on the integrity of the sites identified during screening. The two stages were carried out in an iterative manner during January and February 2008, and the process involved:

- identification of European Sites that could possibly be affected by SMDC's Core Strategy, qualifying features of those sites, and key environmental conditions to support the sites' integrity;
- identification of possible impacts on the sites arising from SMDC's Core Strategy;
- discussions with adjoining local authorities and other relevant agencies to examine the possibilities of 'in combination effects' of their plans and programmes;
- draft identification of impacts and sites that could be screened out, and those that were likely to require more detailed appropriate assessment.

¹ Natura 2000 Networking Programme: www.natura.org

- discussions with Natural England on the results of the screening report to discuss the findings, the approach adopted, and source information that would be needed to complete the analysis;
- collection of data from relevant sources (these would be listed in a bibliography to be included in the final report);
- conclusions about the likely 'in combination' impacts of SMDC's Core Strategy on the European Sites, and conclusions about the measures needed to avoid these impacts in terms of appropriate policies;
- preparation of an appraisal report to inform the Appropriate Assessment.

Other local Authorities were consulted in order to ascertain the extent to which their respective development policies could impact upon those sites identified in the screening process. The local authorities contacted were:

- Macclesfield Borough Council;
- East Staffordshire District Council;
- Stafford Borough Council;
- High Peak Borough Council;
- Congleton Borough Council;
- Stoke-on-Trent Council;
- Newcastle Borough Council;
- Derbyshire Dales District Council;
- Cannock Chase Council and;
- Peak District National Park Planning Authority.

3. SCREENING

During the screening exercise 22 European sites were considered (including 5 Ramsar sites) of which 18 could be screened out of any more detailed assessment and the four remaining were determined to need further examination because of the potential effects that some of the policies (particularly relating to tourism) could have on these sites. The sites screened in were:

- South Pennine Moors SAC;
- Peak District Dales SAC;
- Peak District Moors SPA and;
- Cannock Chase SAC.

4. ASSESSMENT

Within the core strategy eight policies were found to have an uncertain or potentially negative effect on one or more of the European sites identified in the screening process. These policies were:

- **SS2** (the Future Provision of Development);
- **SS4** (the Distribution of Development);
- **SS6** (Rural Areas);
- **SS6a** (Larger Villages);
- **SS6d** (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside);
- **SD1** (Use of resources);
- **TCR2** (Retailing Outside Town centres) and;
- **TR1** (Tourism and Cultural Facilities).

Mitigation against any potential negative effects of the core strategy was identified within overarching core strategy policies NE1, SS1 and within other, more specific policies within the core strategy. In addition to this, suggested alterations have been made to four core strategy policies, in order that they are more robust and that the necessary protection measures are highlighted where they are most relevant. Core Strategy policies SS1, SD1, R1 and SS6d were altered in this way.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The policies within the Core Strategy generally provide a positive framework for conservation and enhancement of the District's biodiversity, including the Natura 2000 sites.

Core Strategy policy SS6d identifies regeneration and economic growth opportunities on two specific sites: Anzio Camp on Blackshaw Moor and Froghall Copperworks. Redevelopment of the Anzio Camp site could create potential tensions between those draft Core Strategy policies which promote economic prosperity and those which aim to protect the European sites and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Whether the economic re-development of the type envisaged can be accommodated without causing significant adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC and SPA sites can only be determined when detailed masterplans are put forward and they in turn are subject to more detailed EIA and Appropriate Assessment. Some additional wording is recommended for Policy SS6d to sharpen the protection offered to the European and Ramsar sites.

Two other areas of development have been identified which could, either on their own within Staffordshire Moorlands District or cumulatively (in-combination) with similar developments within adjacent local authority areas, potentially impact on the integrity of the SPA and SAC sites identified in this Appropriate Assessment (see *Table 1.1*). These are tourism development and renewable energy schemes (particularly wind turbines). There is insufficient detail on plans and schemes coming forward to make it possible to be specific about possible impacts and quantify them for either of these areas. The issues are discussed in *Table 3.1* and *Sections 4.2.3* and *4.2.4* in the main environmental report. Further assessment may be needed once specific proposals are put forward.

The Core Strategy will have sufficiently robust policies (SS1, NE1) to safeguard against possible negative effects at this high strategic level.

Consultation with Natural England (see Annex B) raised one particular concern and that was in connection with the potential future development of Anzio Camp. This has been covered in Section 4.2.5 of the main report. It is also felt that if suggested modifications to Policies SS1 and SS6d are made then this will provide the necessary mitigation to ensure that the implementation of the Core Strategy would not lead to significant effects on the site integrity of European sites in the area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND TO THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

In May 1992, Governments throughout the European Union adopted legislation designed to protect Europe's natural resources. The legislation is called the Habitats Directive and it protects the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe. It complements the Birds Directive adopted in 1979.

At the heart of both these Directives is the creation of a network of sites called Natura 2000. The Birds Directive requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). SPAs are important for rare and vulnerable birds because they rely on them for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration. The Habitats Directive requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for habitats. SACs are classified under the Habitats Directive and provide rare and vulnerable animals, plants and habitats with increased protection and management. Together, SPAs and SACs make up the Natura 2000 network. All EU Member States are required to manage and implement Natura 2000.²

Appropriate Assessment of plans that could affect SPAs or SACs is required by Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive.

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives....”

Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive goes on to discuss the alternative solutions, the test of 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest,' (IROPI) and compensatory measures.

The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to SPAs and SACs. Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. The interest features of the European Sites must be maintained in “favourable condition”. This means that the abundance, distribution, structure or function of the plants and animals comprising the interest features must not be adversely affected by human activities. Plans and projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and the IROPI test as mentioned above substantiates that they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

1.2 CONTEXT FOR STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

In October 2005, the European Court of Justice ruled that land-use plans should be subject to an “Appropriate Assessment” of their implications for European sites. A letter from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in March 2006 communicated this ruling to Chief Planning Officers. In addition as a matter of policy, the Government has chosen to apply the procedures on Ramsar sites and potential SPAs even though these are not classified as European sites as a matter of law.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) is in the process of producing the Core Strategy setting out the overall vision and spatial strategy for the district until 2026. It is in the process of undertaking a sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment of the Emerging Core Strategy and its policies, and under the new legislation is also carrying out an Appropriate Assessment. This is considered to be of particular importance in view of the presence of several European sites in the near vicinity of the district.

Natural Capital was invited by SMDC to undertake the research and provide the information so that it could, as the competent authority, carry out the Appropriate

² Natura 2000 Networking Programme: www.natura.org

Assessment. The purpose of the Appropriate Assessment is, therefore, to assess the impacts of the policies within the Emerging Core Strategy against the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The assessment must determine whether the plan's policies would adversely affect the integrity of any site in terms of its nature conservation objectives. If any negative effects remain after mitigation has been identified then other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

The first stage in the Appropriate Assessment is called the 'screening' stage (see *Section 1.3*). The screening process aims to be a first sieve of European Sites that the proposed Core Strategy could possibly affect.

1.3 METHODOLOGY USED FOR THIS APPRAISAL

European guidance⁷ on Appropriate Assessment recommends a process of up to four stages:

1. **Screening:** Determining whether the plan 'in combination' is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
2. **Appropriate Assessment:** Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan 'in combination' would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site. If not the plan can proceed.
3. **Assessment of alternative solutions:** Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of alternatives.
4. **Assessment where no alternative solutions exist:** and where adverse impacts remain.

Government guidance⁹ summarises the process into 3 main stages:

1. Establishing the likely significant effects.
2. Carrying out the Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity.
3. Determining mitigation, alternative solutions and considering whether there are "*imperative reasons of overriding public interest*" (see *Section 1.2*).

This appraisal covers stages 1 and 2 of both of the above processes. The two stages were carried out in an iterative manner during January and February 2008, and the process involved:

- identification of European Sites that could possibly be affected by SMDC's Core Strategy, qualifying features of those sites, and key environmental conditions to support the sites' integrity;
- identification of possible impacts on the sites arising from SMDC's Core Strategy;
- discussions with adjoining local authorities and other relevant agencies to examine the possibilities of 'in combination effects' of their plans and programmes;
- draft identification of impacts and sites that could be screened out, and those that were likely to require more detailed appropriate assessment.
- discussions with Natural England on the results of the screening report to discuss the findings, the approach adopted, and source information that would be needed to complete the analysis;
- collection of data from relevant sources (these would be listed in a bibliography to be included in the final report);
- conclusions about the likely 'in combination' impacts of SMDC's Core Strategy on the European Sites, and conclusions about the measures needed to avoid these impacts in terms of appropriate policies;
- preparation of an appraisal report to inform the Appropriate Assessment.

2 SCREENING

2.1 EUROPEAN SITES TO BE SCREENED

Table 2.1 lists the Natura 2000 Sites that are either within Staffordshire Moorlands District or within the general area. *Figures 2.1* and *2.2* show their locations and also those of the surrounding local authorities. *Figure 2.1* shows the location of Staffordshire Moorlands District in the context of European sites in the wider West Midland, East Midland and North West regions of England. *Figure 2.2* shows the location of Staffordshire Moorlands District in the context of the principal European sites in Stoke and Staffordshire and adjacent local authority areas. The SPA sites in particular are designated because of their important breeding birds and visiting migrants. These include an array of wild fowl and wader species. Many of the breeding birds and migrants tend to move around in large flocks to feed and roost, particularly in winter. This can involve the birds moving between coast and inland sites often outside the designated European sites, sometimes to adjacent farmland and uplands. Therefore the protection of these areas will be important for protecting in turn the integrity of the SPAs.

Table 2.1 European Sites that could possibly be adversely affected by SMDC's Core Strategy

| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to District Town | | | Reason for Designation |
|---|--|----------|---------|---|
| | Leek | Biddulph | Cheadle | |
| South Pennine Moors (SAC) | 3.5 | 13 | 14.5 | <p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: European dry heaths, Blanket Bog, Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles.</p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> |
| Peak District Dales (SAC) | 9 | 20 | 10.5 | <p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>), <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines.</p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: European dry heaths, Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>, Alkaline Fens, Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>)</p> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: white-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>.</p> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | 3.5 | 13 | 14.5 | <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.2% of the GB breeding population of <i>Asio flammeus</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.3% of the GB breeding population of <i>Falco columbarius</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 1.9% of the GB breeding population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>.</p> |

| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to Staffordshire Moorlands District Boundary | Reason for Designation |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| West Midlands Mosses (SAC) | 9km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds, Transition mires and quaking bogs. |
| Cannock Chase (SAC) | 14km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: European dry heaths. Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> |
| C1. Pasturefields Salt Marsh (SAC) | 10km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Inland salt meadows. |
| C2. Oak Mere (SAC) | 30km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>), Transition mires and quaking bogs. |
| C3. River Dee and Bala Lake (SAC) | 45km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> , Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> . Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> , Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> , River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> , Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> , Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> . |
| C4. Dee Estuary (SAC) | 60km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Estuaries, Annual vegetation of drift lines, Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts, Embryonic shifting dunes, Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes'), Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes'), Humid dune slacks. |
| C5. Manchester Mosses (SAC) | 35km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. |
| C6. Rixton Clay Pits (SAC) | 33km | Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> . |

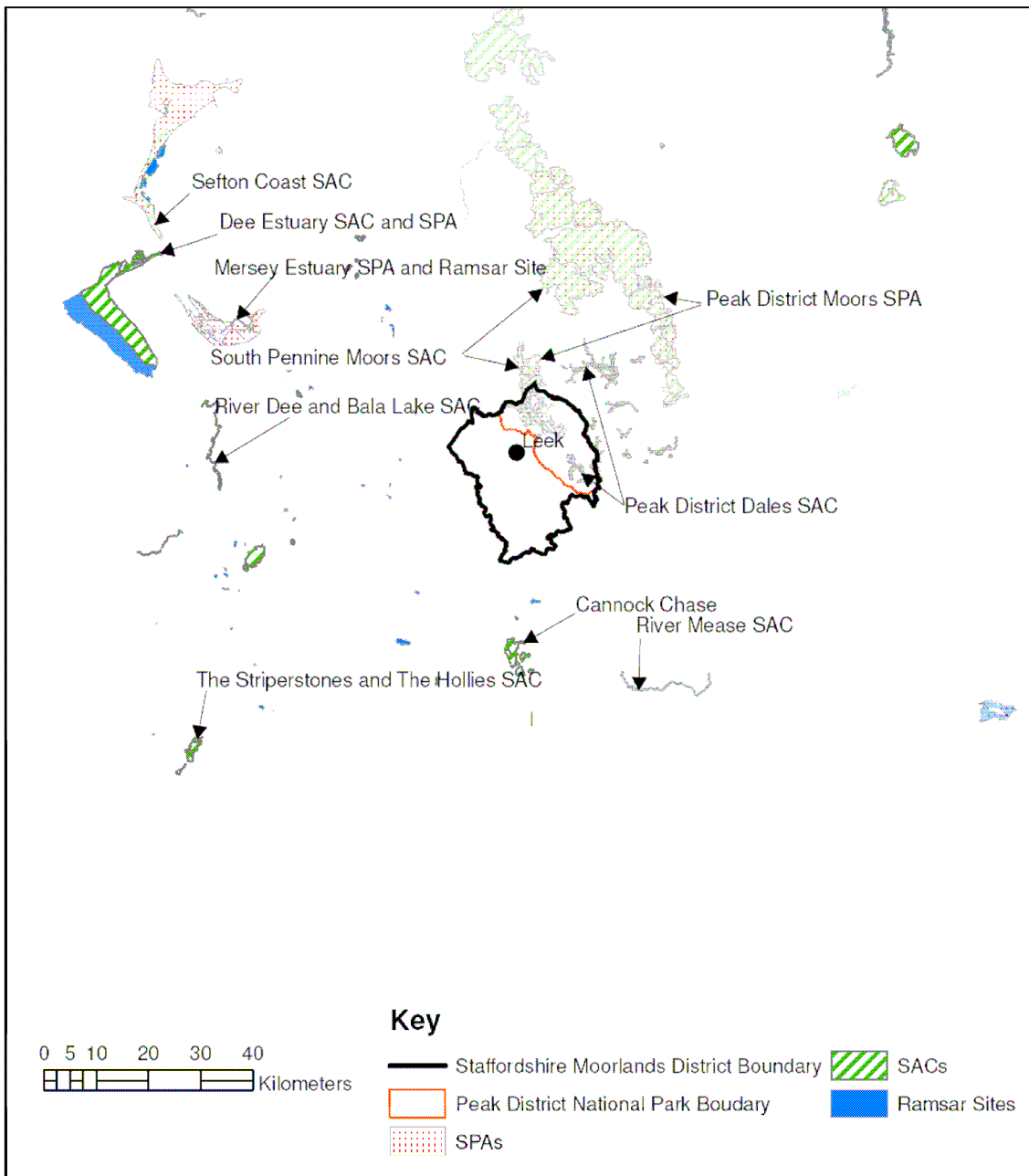
| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to Staffordshire Moorlands District Boundary | Reason for Designation |
|---|--|---|
| C7. Brown Moss (SAC) | 35km | Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> . |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | 40km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Active raised bogs. Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. |
| Mottey Meadows (SAC) | 25km | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>). |
| River Mease (SAC) | 26km | Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculon fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i> , bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> . Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> , Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> . |
| Dee Estuary (SPA) | 60km | As above for Dee Estuary SAC. |
| Mersey Estuary (SPA) | 42km | Area provides over-wintering site for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2% of the GB population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, • 1.9% of the population of <i>Anas acuta</i> (North-western Europe), • 2.9% of the population of <i>Anas crecca</i> (North-western Europe), • 4.2% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Anas Penelope</i> (Western Siberia/North-western/North-eastern Europe), • 3.6% of the population of <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa), • 1.6% of the population of <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>(Iceland – breeding), • 1.1% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Numenius arquata</i> (Europe – breeding), • 2.3% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>(Eastern Atlantic – wintering), • 1.4% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (North-western Europe – wintering), • 2.2% of the population of <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>(North-western Europe), • 2.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering), • 0.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (Europe – breeding). |

| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to Staffordshire Moorlands District Boundary | Reason for Designation |
|--|--|--|
| | | <p>On passage the area regularly supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> (Europe/Northern Africa – wintering), • 3.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering). |
| Mersey Estuary (Ramsar Site) | 42km | <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 89576 waterfowl.</p> <p>Presence of qualifying species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12676 individuals of common <input type="checkbox"/>helduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) representing an average of 4.2% of the population. • 2011 individuals of black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> representing an average of 5.7% of the population. • 6651 individuals of common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, representing an average of • 2.6% of the population. <p>Qualifying Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10613 individuals of Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> representing an average of 2.6% of the population. • 565 individuals of northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> representing an average of 2% of the GB population. • 48364 individuals of dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) representing an average of 3.6% of the population. |
| Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 (Ramsar site) | 11km | <p>The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora & fauna.</p> |

| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to Staffordshire Moorlands District Boundary | Reason for Designation |
|--|--|--|
| Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 (Ramsar Site) | 9km | Description as above; containing nationally scarce cowbane <i>Cicuta virosa</i> and, elongated sedge <i>Carex elongata</i> . Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes <i>Dicranum affine</i> and <i>Sphagnum pulchrum</i> . Also supports an assemblage of invertebrates including several rare species. There are 16 species of British Red Data Book insect listed for this site including the following endangered species: the moth <i>Glyphipteryx lathamella</i> , the caddisfly <i>Hagenella clathrata</i> and the sawfly <i>Trichiosoma vitellinae</i> . |
| Rostherne Mere (Ramsar Site) | 24km | Rostherne Mere is one of the deepest and largest of the meres of the Shropshire-Cheshire Plain. Its shoreline is fringed with common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i> . |
| The Dee Estuary (Ramsar Site) | 60km | <p>Presence of extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. Features as expressed above in Dee Estuary SAC section.</p> <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 74230 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe: 9346 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the population. • Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>, Europe & NW Africa – wintering: 19174 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population. • Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i>, N. arquata Europe (breeding): 4195 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population. • Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>: 8281 individuals, representing an average of 3.3% of the population. <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i>, NW Europe: 3058 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the GB population. • Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, NW Europe 4976 individuals, representing an average of 8.2% of the population. • Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, E Atlantic/W Africa –wintering: 603 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population. • Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, W & Southern Africa (wintering): 3729 individuals, |

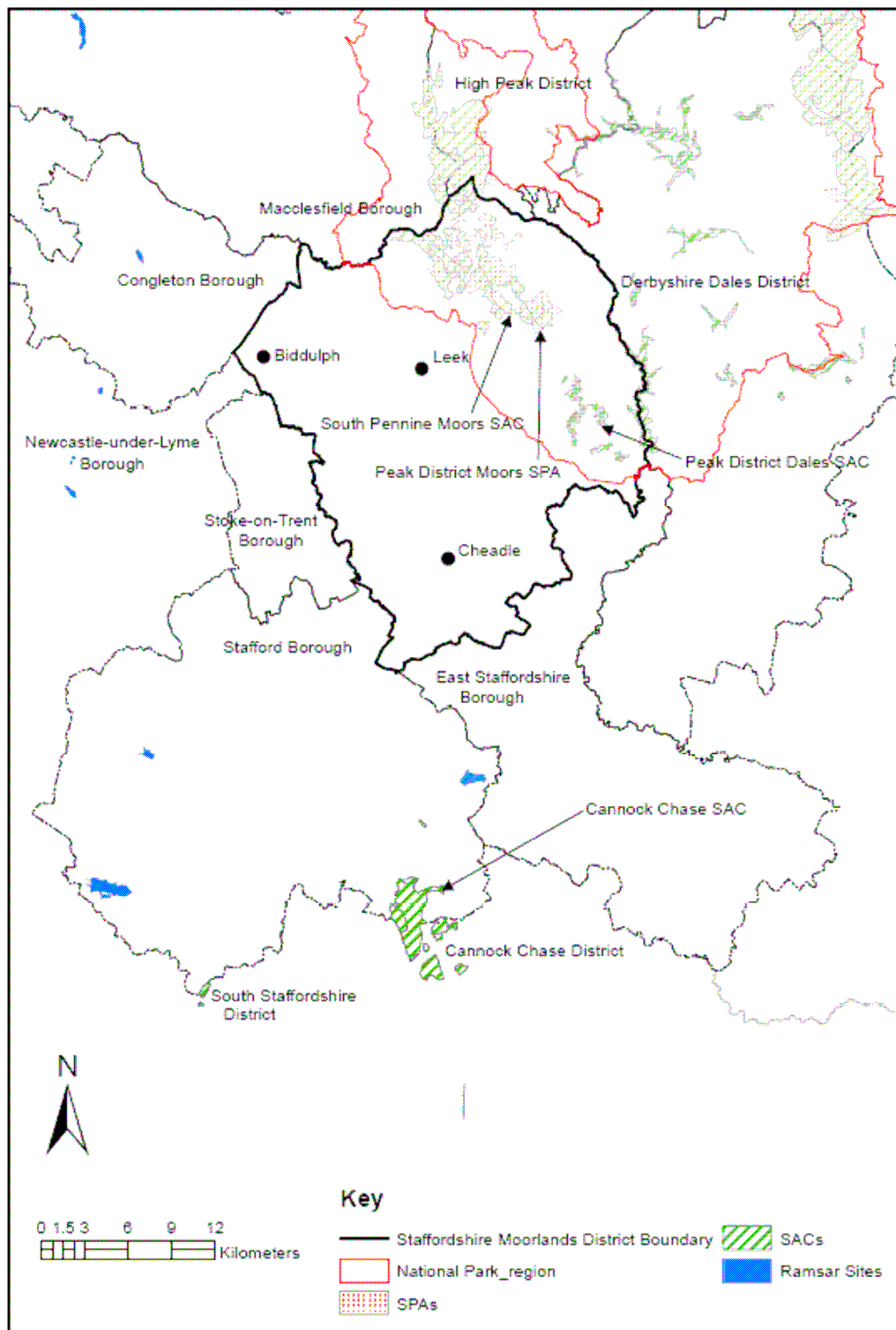
| Name of Site | Approx. Distance (km) to Staffordshire Moorlands District Boundary | Reason for Designation |
|--------------|--|--|
| | | <p>representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, W Siberia/W Europe: 19157 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the population.• Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe: 2791 individuals, representing an average of 7.9% of the population.• Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, W Palearctic: 322 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population.• Ruddy turnstone , <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, NE Canada, Greenland/W Europe & NW Africa: 291 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population. |

Figure 2.1 Location of Staffordshire Moorlands District in the North Midlands and North West of England in the Context of the Key European Sites ³



³ Not all sites necessarily shown and named on this map – see also *Figure 2.2*

Figure 2.2 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council boundary showing more detailed location of key European sites within West Midland, East Midland and North West regions of England.



2.2 THE SMDC LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND POSSIBLE EFFECTS

2.2.1 Core Strategy

In terms of future significant development, SMDC's emerging Core Strategy provides for:

- A preferred development approach that focuses development on the 3 market towns of Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph and the larger villages, but allows for limited development in other settlements to meet local needs.
- A managed rate of housing development rising to 320 dwellings/annum by 2016 and falling to 288 by 2026.
- An increased rate of housing development is proposed for Cheadle, to reflect growth aspirations, and a reduced development rate in Biddulph and rural areas is proposed as this reflects strategic constraints.
- A minimum of 1700 affordable housing units to be provided between 2006 and 2026 distributed between the towns and rural areas.
- Spatial Strategy policies that establish a settlement hierarchy and level and type of development appropriate for each settlement category.
- Major regeneration opportunities at Cornhill, Churnetside Business Park, Leek and Cheadle Town Centres and Biddulph East and in the countryside at Bolton Copperworks, Froghall and Anzio Camp.
- The need for strategic transport improvements on A520 to A53 access road link, Leek; A521, Cheadle; and Alton Towers – Denstone link.

2.2.2 Possible Effects

Whilst some environmental effects can be quite specific and localised to developments that may be either in or very close to the European sites, it should be remembered that certain impacts to sites further a field could be brought about by the "knock-on" effects of development within the area.

The possible effects (direct and indirect) of policies in the Emerging Core Strategy in the context of designated sites are likely to be in the form of:

- **Land take:** There could be the potential to disturb, remove and replace habitats and associated flora and fauna (possibly including qualifying and protected species) at the sites of development (through e.g. site clearance and construction activities) and then depending on their location there could be indirect negative impacts on nearby sites of conservation importance (including disturbance and downstream contamination affecting habitats, flora and fauna). There can also be risks of possible fragmentation of habitats and destruction or interruption of wildlife corridors. In the case of migratory and/or breeding birds that flock in winter to feed and roost and where the flocks can move between sites and sometimes over considerable distances, there can be risks of impacts through land take on the integrity of SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites further a field.
- **Water resources:** Development is likely to lead to an increased demand for water and wastewater treatment in those parts of the District targeted for increases in housing and business premises development. There will be a requirement to make sure that increased water abstraction has no significant impacts on the European sites (e.g. impacts on hydrological regimes that in turn influence habitats and both plant and animal species), either those in the near vicinity or further a field. There will also be a need to ensure that wastewater is treated to acceptable levels in order to safeguard the quality of controlled waters and to make sure that there is no deterioration in amenity value of the District's rivers and lakes especially those associated with European sites both within Staffordshire Moorlands District and those that could be affected further a field.
- **Traffic levels and congestion:** Increases in road traffic (cars, lorries, public transport) will inevitably lead to increases in emissions and associated atmospheric pollution which can affect sensitive plant species (such as lichens). Knock-on increases in congestion or travel time whilst commuting, particularly in the key towns of Leek and Biddulph will lead to further emissions that will only exacerbate the problem. Increased traffic creates noise, vibration and other

nuisances which could disturb bird species. Increases in emissions, noise and vibration are likely to have a negative impact on biodiversity and the wider environment. This could affect sites both within the Staffordshire Moorlands area and further a field.

- **General urbanisation:** more development, more activity, more noise, more clutter, more light and generally more disturbance within the environment. Growth in population and commercial businesses will inevitably lead to increases in waste generation. All of these factors could put pressure on European Sites in particular where there are towns and villages nearby – such as the South Pennine Moors SAC.
- **Increased tourism and recreation:** which could lead to more visits into or near to the European sites with consequential noise, disturbance (vehicles, cycles, people, and dogs) trampling and litter all of which could affect sensitive habitats and bird species. This could apply not only to those sites in or near to Staffordshire Moorlands (e.g. Peak District Dales SAC) but also possibly those further a field (e.g. River Mease (SAC)).
- **Renewable energy schemes:** if wind farm or individual turbine developments are encouraged this could lead to potential cumulative effects of the turbine structures, noise, disturbance etc on wildlife. This could arise from turbines on their own or there could be an “in-combination” effect from wind farms proposed for upland moorland habitats (in adjacent local authority areas) which could affect roosting or feeding sites of certain waders and wildfowl. This can also affect flight patterns and bird movements in general. There will be effects not only during the operation of wind farms but also from the construction and decommissioning phases. These can have impacts on ground conditions, hydrology, soils, habitats and vegetation. There can also be impacts associated with the construction and operation of sub-stations and power lines (pylons) needed for onwards transmission. All can cause destruction of habitats and disturbance to breeding/feeding bird species.

Table 2.2 provides a brief summary of the more “generic” operations and actions that would be likely to cause an effect on a European site and would therefore need to be considered within the Appropriate Assessment.

Table 2.2 Generic actions that can cause effects on European Sites

| Operations likely to cause deterioration or disturbance | Actions that can cause the effect |
|---|---|
| Physical loss | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal • Smothering |
| Physical damage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Prevention of natural erosion as in coastal defences, flood defences • Mineral extraction • Water abstraction • Recreational pressure – trampling, erosion etc • Drainage – increased run-off and land form disturbance can affect hydrology and groundwater of wetland sites |
| Non-physical disturbance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise/ visual presence – recreational or industrial • Transport/navigation |
| Toxic (and non-toxic) contamination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient enrichment • Changes in turbidity (e.g. flood defence) • Changes in water level (e.g. water abstraction) • Changes in salinity (e.g. water abstraction) • Agricultural run-off |
| Biological disturbance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of non-native species • Selective extraction of species |

It should be emphasised that the lists in *Section 2.2.2* and *Table 2.2* are examples of the possible effects and more specific actions and operations are assessed against the interest features and conservation objectives in *Table 2.4*.

2.3 POSSIBLE IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

The guidance^{4, 5} indicates that it is essential to consider possible developments in adjoining local authority areas in order to assess whether there could be any “in-combination” effects caused by the cumulative effects of additional development plans and programmes. *Table 2.3* indicates some possible developments in adjoining local authority areas that would need to be taken into consideration. This information has been sourced from either discussions with respective planning officers or from reviews of relevant local authority Core Strategies and Local Plans or a combination of both.

⁴ *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*, Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, Department for Communities and Local Government, August 2006.

⁵ *Appropriate Assessment of Plans: Discussion Paper*, Scott Wilson et al, June 2006

Table 2.3 Developments in Nearby Districts and Other Relevant Strategies/Plans – In-Combination Effects

| Local Authority or Agency/Organisation | House Construction Proposed (where relevant) | Other Development or relevant plan | Sources of Information |
|--|--|--|--|
| Macclesfield Borough Council | Houses planned to be built at a rate of 300 per year until 2026, 10% of which will be affordable. The majority will be regeneration and therefore will not need additional land. | No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites. | Graham Chiles: 01625504673 |
| East Staffordshire District Council | 6,000 houses planned, up to 2026. Mostly concentrated around currently developed areas especially in the town of Burton upon Trent. | Encouragement of tourism focused mainly on the market town of Uttoxeter (town lies approximately 6 km from Midland Meres and Mosses phase 1 Ramsar Site) Growth of employment land is expected to stay focused around towns. | Sandra Ford: 01283508362 |
| Stafford Borough Council | 10,300 houses planned, up to 2026. | Further development of the Blyth Bridge Industrial estate. Possible change of use to more heavy industry. | Ben Williscroft/ Naomi Perry: 01785619538 |
| High Peak Borough Council | Houses planned to be built at a rate of 300 per year until 2026, 10% of which will be affordable. The majority will be regeneration and therefore will not need additional land. | No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites. | Mark James |
| Congleton Borough Council | Houses planned to be built at a rate of 300 per year until 2026. Estimated number of new dwellings to 2014: Alsager – 300 Congleton – 415 Middlewich – 120 Sandbatch – 470 Rural – 380 Borough Total – 1585 | Estimated Additional Employment Land (ha) to 2014 Alsager – 10.5 Congleton – 30.6 Middlewich – 59 Sandbatch – 5 Rural – 22 Borough Total – 127.1 | Richard House 01270 529 767 |
| Stoke-on-Trent Council | Stoke on Trent 11400 net additional dwellings of which broadly – City Centre – 500 Inner urban areas – 5700 Stoke outer urban – 4600 The phasing of housing development within the plan area will be approximately 400 – 500 dwellings per annum throughout the plan period. | Two major employment land developments will be delivered in the plan period – The 28 hectare extension to Keele University and Science Park (should be completed by approx 2015) The Regional Investment Site at Chatterley Valley (approximately 70 hectares), which spans the boundary of both authorities (should be completed by 2015). Will promote low impact rural tourism - use of existing parks, waterways, | David Goode David.Goode@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk 01782 742475 |

| Local Authority or Agency/Organisation | House Construction Proposed (where relevant) | Other Development or relevant plan | Sources of Information |
|---|--|--|---|
| Newcastle Borough Council | <p>Newcastle under Lyme 5700 net additional dwellings of which broadly –</p> <p>Town centre – 1400 Silverdale – 600 Chesterton – 300 Knutton and Cross Heath – 600 Other urban Newcastle – 1600 Kidsgrove - 300 Rural Areas – 900</p> <p>The phasing of housing development within the plan area will be approximately 400 – 500 dwellings per annum throughout the plan period.</p> | <p>small scale developments, diversification of agricultural activities etc. It is not anticipated that there will be any large scale tourism development in the rural areas.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the area's industrial/cultural heritage -in particular the ceramics industry, will continue to be the primary attraction for most visitors and a key aim is to promote Burslem as a cultural/tourist destination.</p> | <p>David Goode</p> <p>David.Goode@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk</p> <p>01782 742475</p> |
| Derbyshire Dales District Council | <p>Houses planned to be built at a rate of 200 per year until 2026, 10% of which will be affordable. The majority will be regeneration and therefore will not need additional land.</p> | <p>No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites.</p> <p>Growth of tourism to be encouraged and increased at a measured and sustainable rate. The natural landscape is a draw to tourists and this is to be managed carefully. Ashborne is to be developed as a market town attraction to tourists.</p> | <p>Mike Hase: 016297611251</p> |
| Cannock Chase Council | <p>Forecasted housing development for the district expected to follow recommendations of the regional spatial strategy at 290 houses per year and to be concentrated around the towns of Cannock, Rugeley and North Canes . Pye Green Valley, located next to Cannock Chase SAC, is an area recently released from greenbelt and is now a potential housing site. The Sports stadium on Pye Green Road is also now to be allocates as space for housing.</p> | <p>The three main employment sites in the district are; Kingswood (in Cannock), Lakeside (in Rugeley and The Towers Business Park (located in Rugeley). These areas are expected to remain at the same capacity for the foreseeable future. The Autoelectronics industrial site in Rugeley will undergo a change of use towards housing and this business will be relocated within the district.</p> <p>Tourism is expected to focus on encouraging people to Cannock Chase SAC, but this will be done in a controlled way, under the Cannock Chase Management Plan.</p> | <p>Tony Lancaster: 01543 464481</p> |
| Peak District National Park Planning Authority | <p>Housing completions in the Peak District National Park were 121 in 2007 and this is expected to stay at a similar level until 2026.</p> | <p>There are five main employment sites in the Peak District National Park and these are based around light industry and office based employment. Sites at Warslow and Longnor are former advance factory sites (English Partnerships) and are now vacant or significantly underused. There may be future plans to change their use.</p> <p>There were more than 10m leisure visits to the National Park by people over 16 living in England in 2005. The Peak District National Park</p> | <p>Brain Taylor on 01629816303.</p> |

| Local Authority or Agency/Organisation | House Construction Proposed (where relevant) | Other Development or relevant plan | Sources of Information |
|--|--|---|------------------------|
| | | closely monitors tourist activity and manages the area in accordance with demand and footfall. Future development or focus of visitor activity is currently considered in relation to Recreation Zone policy in the PDNP Structure and Local Plans. The approach is expected to remain the same in the Local Development Framework. | |

2.4 SCREENING AND POTENTIAL EFFECTS

2.4.1 Screening the European Sites

Annex A shows the rapid screening table used for assessing the potential for impact of the 32 draft Core Strategy Policies on the various SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites within Staffordshire Moorlands District or in the near vicinity (within neighbouring authority areas).

Table 2.5 shows the results of the screening process for each of the European sites considered. On the basis of this screening process it was considered that (18) of the (22) European sites (five of which are also classified as Ramsar sites) could be screened out. In other words it was considered that none of the policies within SMDC's Core Strategy would be considered likely to have a significant adverse effect on site integrity and the conservation objectives.

Screening did establish the possibility of effects on four of the sites:

- South Pennine Moors (SAC);
- Peak District Dales (SAC)
- Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA
- Cannock Chase (SAC)

Screening suggested that for all of these four sites there was some uncertainty as to the possible effects of policies in the Emerging Core Strategy that would support tourism (e.g. Draft Policy TR1 'Tourism and Cultural Facilities'). Possible effects on all of these European sites will be examined in more detail in during the next stages of the assessment.

2.4.2 Screening the Potential Environmental Effects

Because of the possibilities of adverse environmental effects on the four European sites arising from tourism-related policies within the Emerging Core Strategy (and possibly in combination with similar policies of adjacent authorities) the potential environmental effects discussed in Section 2.2.2 are considered in the context of the four sites and summarised in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Potential Tourism-related Environmental Effects

| Action likely to cause effect | Activities related to tourism and recreational activity |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Physical loss of plants and habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal |
| Physical damage to habitat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in land management practices • Recreational pressure – trampling, erosion, water sports • Drainage – increased run-off and land form disturbance can affect hydrology and groundwater of wetland sites • Construction of gates, fences, footpaths |
| Disturbance to birds and animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise/ visual presence • Traffic • Cycling • Walking • Dogs • Horse riding • Game sports • Water sports |
| Biological disturbance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of non-native species |

Table 2.5 Screening Process for Each of the European Sites Considered

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| <p>South Pennine Moors (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>European dry heaths, Blanket Bog, Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>. European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Blanket bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Transition mires and quaking bogs. Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large numbers of people use the area for recreational activities as around two-thirds is within the Peak District National Park. Therefore access management is a key issue. Accidental fires Maintenance of the ecosystems relies primarily on appropriate grazing levels and burning regimes. Atmospheric pollution over the last few hundred years has depleted the lichen and bryophyte flora and may be affecting dwarf-shrubs. The impact has arguably been greatest on blanket bog, wet heath and transition mire where the bog-building <i>Sphagnum</i> mosses have been largely lost. The former extensive cover of woodland is now fragmented, relatively small-scale and largely restricted to steeper valley sides. Woods are often unfenced and open to grazing which restricts tree regeneration. In some <i>Rhododendron</i> has invaded, choking out native flora. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SAC. The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but again this has not been measured and is uncertain. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of these would be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity but applying the precautionary principle this site taken forward for more detailed appraisal. Screened in. |
| <p>Peak District Dales (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>), <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines.</p> <p>European dry heaths, Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>, Alkaline Fens, Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European dry heaths. Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SAC. The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of these would be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity but applying the precautionary |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|------|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>)</p> <p>white-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>.</p> <p>Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for crayfish and lamprey.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alkaline fens. Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 Hectares. Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Lampetra planeri</i> . <i>Cottus gobio</i> . <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main threat to the limestone grasslands of the Peak District Dales is inappropriate grazing management. This results in either neglect and invasion by scrub, or overgrazing and the loss of the important vegetation communities. Proposed developments have the potential to interfere with drainage patterns within the site. The impact of dust from quarrying needs to be assessed. The woodlands within the SAC occupy very steeply-sloping dalesides, where access is always going to be problematic, and development pressures are therefore limited. Existing permission for limestone or mineral extraction is a potential threat to some of the woodlands on one part of the site. There will be a need to work closely with game fishing interests to ensure that fishery management does not adversely affect the freshwater features of the SAC. The same is true of shooting tenants, who may impact on the overall ecology of the woodland. | <p>facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but again this has not been measured and is uncertain.</p> | <p>principle this site taken forward for more detailed appraisal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screened in. |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.2% of the GB breeding population of <i>Asio flammeus</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.3% of the GB breeding population of <i>Falco columbarius</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 1.9% of the GB breeding population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogs. • Heath and scrubland. • Dry grassland. • Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major urban and industrial centers near to the Peak District Moors provide significant visitor pressure and approximately two-thirds of the moorlands are open to public access. • Habitat damage through physical erosion or fire, combined with disturbance of breeding birds, can be significant. Initiatives for sustainable recreation are being necessary. • Many habitats are sub-optimal (in vegetation terms) as a consequence of historic air pollution, high grazing pressure and wildfire burns. • Breeding birds in the south-west of the area may be declining on both open moorland and enclosed rough grazing land, possibly due to general agricultural improvement of the surrounding areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SPA. • The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. • The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but this has not been measured and is uncertain. | <p>None of these would be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity but applying the precautionary principle this site taken forward for more detailed appraisal.</p> <p>Screened in.</p> |
| <p>West Midlands Mosses (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Transition mires and quaking bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonisation of open schwingmoors or <i>Sphagnum</i> lawns and rafts in the West Midland Mosses by birch and Pine. • Several sources of nutrient enrichment, including atmospheric deposition of nutrients, pose a potential threat at these sites. • All parts of Abbots Moss are vulnerable to recreational disturbance, particularly the northern portion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMDC policies unlikely to have direct effect. • Although there is a possibility that policies which support tourism in the Emerging Core Strategy together with those of other local authorities could increase the number of visitors and associated footfall in the general Staffordshire area, this in itself would not be expected to significantly adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity of this SAC. | <p>Screened out</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Cannock Chase (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>European dry heaths.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>. European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of Cannock Chase falls within a popular and well-used Country Park. Visitor pressures include dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering, all of which cause disturbance and result in erosion, new track creation and vegetation damage. Bracken invasion is significant, but is being controlled. Birch and pine scrub, much of the latter from surrounding commercial plantations, is continually invading the site and has to be controlled. Cannock Chase overlies coal measures which have been deep-mined. Mining fissures continue to appear across the site even though mining has ceased and this is thought to detrimentally affect site hydrology. The underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer with water abstracted for public and industrial uses and the effects of this on the wetland features of the Chase are not fully understood. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct impacts from policies predicted for this SPA. The impacts of increased tourism, recreational activities and footfall that may follow from some of the Emerging Core Strategy policies are uncertain but may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance in the general area. The policies of other local authorities in the area to promote tourism could possibly have cumulative effects in terms of additional tourism facilities, visitor activity and potential disturbance but this has not been measured and is uncertain. As this SAC is vulnerable to visitor pressures and disturbance from tourists there may be a risk of in-combination effects. | Screened in |
| Pasturefields Salt Marsh (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Inland salt meadows.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Inland salt meadows for which this is the only known outstanding locality in the United Kingdom and which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 10 hectares.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This inland saltmarsh is dependent upon traditional agricultural management, with livestock grazing and no, or minimal use, of agricultural chemicals. Dependent upon the brine source being maintained and, whilst the hydrogeology of the site is not fully understood, it would be likely to be vulnerable to any abstractions of water from the underground aquifer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Windfarms could conceivably pose a risk but there are no feasibility studies for sites in the near vicinity, and none that would relate to SMDC policies. The Core Strategy would not be expected to adversely affect the qualifying features and site integrity of this SAC. | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------------|
| Oak Mere (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>), Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom and which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. Transition mires and quaking bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nutrient-poor water of Oak Mere is highly sensitive to enrichment and there is a potential risk from chemical pollution, especially when the water table is high. The local water table is restricted, and has undergone natural lowering following successive drought years, this has led to a reduction in the size of the Mere. There is a continual possibility of accidents and spillages on the busy road network on the sides of the Mere. The Mere's natural topographic setting is being modified by numerous commercial sand extractions in the vicinity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology of this site so there should be no threats to the site integrity. | Screened out |
| River Dee And Bala Lake (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation.</p> <p>Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>, Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>.</p> <p>Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>, Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>, Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> Vegetation, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>. <i>Lampetra planeri</i>. <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>. <i>Salmo salar</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Cottus gobio</i>. <i>Lutra lutra</i>. <i>Luronium natans</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Screening of Policy Effects on European Sites | Site screened in or out? |
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| | <p>to Atlantic salmon, Floating water-plantain, Sea lamprey, Brook lamprey, River lamprey, Bullhead and Otter.</p> | <p>Site Vulnerability The site and its features are threatened by practices which have an adverse effect on the quality, quantity and pattern of water flows, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate flow regulation; • excessive abstraction (for industry, agriculture and domestic purposes); • threats to water quality from direct and diffuse pollution; • eutrophication and siltation. • Degradation of riparian habitats due to engineering works, • agricultural practices and invasive plant species may also have an adverse effect. <p>The Atlantic salmon population is threatened by excessive exploitation by high sea, estuarine and recreational fisheries.</p> <p>Introduction of non-indigenous species could also threaten both fish and plant species.</p> | | |
| <p>Dee Estuary (SAC)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>)</p> <p>Estuaries, Annual vegetation of drift lines, Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts, Embryonic shifting dunes, Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes'), Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes'), Humid dune slacks.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries. • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Annual vegetation of drift lines, which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 100 hectares. • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts. • <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) and for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. • Embryonic shifting dunes, which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity | <p>Screened out</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes"). • Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"). • Humid dune slacks. • <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>. • <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> • <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sizeable areas of saltmarsh in the Dee remain ungrazed and therefore plant species that are susceptible to grazing are widespread. This distinctive flora would therefore be sensitive to increase in grazing pressure. • The intertidal and subtidal habitats of the estuary are broadly subject to natural successional change, although shellfisheries and dredging are a current concern. • Threats to the estuary's conservation come from its industrialised shorelines on the Welsh side and the impact of adjacent historic industrial use. These include land contamination from chemical and steel manufacture and localised water quality problems. | | |
| Manchester Mosses (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage natural regeneration of bogs.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three sites have suffered from drainage in the past and are affected by continued, if reduced, drainage, particularly from boundary ditches. • Agricultural land forms a significant part of the adjacent land on all three sites, which will have implications for restoration, particularly as re-wetting is one of the key requirements. • All three sites are affected by scrub invasion, which is being controlled in some areas but will need further attention. • The sites are located close to heavy industry (Greater Manchester and Merseyside). Air quality may therefore have an impact on <i>Sphagnum</i> regeneration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity | Screened out |

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| Rixton Clay Pits (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To encourage conditions favourable the conservation and growth of Great Crested Newt populations.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p><i>Triturus cristatus</i> (Great Crested Newt), for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>A possible conflict between grassland management and great crested newts has been identified.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |
| Brown Moss (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p><i>Luronium natans</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Colonisation by trees is being addressed but continues to be of concern due to the shading, nutrient and hydrological effects on the open water and heathland.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main pressures will not be triggered by policies within the Emerging Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology and water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |
| Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Active raised bogs.</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage natural regeneration of bogs.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active raised bogs, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the site is subject to mineral planning consents for peat extractions which are currently being reviewed. Part of the site has been subject to large-scale commercial extraction, involving drainage over much of the peat body. Afforestation and agricultural improvement on marginal areas of the peat body have accelerated the lowering of water levels, resulting in encroachment by scrub and a decline in the extent of peat-forming communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

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| Mottey Meadows (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>).</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above conditions.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>), for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meadows are dependent upon traditional agricultural management - hay-cutting and aftermath grazing with no use of agrochemicals. The site is therefore vulnerable to nutrient run-off from adjacent agricultural land. The site is also vulnerable to a lowering of both ground and surface water levels, because the floristic composition is dependent on a high water table in autumn and winter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |
| River Mease (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculon fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation.</p> <p>Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i>, bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> <p>White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>, Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable to Spined loach, bullhead, White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish and Otter.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculon fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation. <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> <i>Cobitis taenia</i> for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom. <i>Cottus gobio</i>, for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Lutra lutra</i> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Diffuse pollution and excessive sedimentation are catchment-wide issues which have the potential to affect the site.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

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| Dee Estuary (SPA) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>As above for Dee Estuary SAC.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidal rivers • Estuaries • Mud flats • Sand flats • Lagoons <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall the estuary would benefit from improvements in water quality. Investment by water companies is being undertaken and existing consents are being reviewed. • Wildfowling occurs but at lower levels than in the recent past. An estuary-wide study of wildfowling activities has been prepared which will be followed by a more detailed management plan. • Cockle beds have suffered from over-exploitation. New bylaws and code of practice have been introduced to control this. • There have been some small scale developments (e.g. port infrastructure at Mostyn). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |
| Mersey Estuary (SPA) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Area provides over-wintering site for:</p> <p>1.2% of the GB population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>, 1.9% of the population of <i>Anas acuta</i> (North-western Europe), 2.9% of the population of <i>Anas crecca</i> (North-western Europe), 4.2% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Anas Penelope</i> (Western Siberia/North-western/North-eastern Europe), 3.6% of the population of <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa), 1.6% of the population of <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>(Iceland – breeding), 1.1% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Numenius arquata</i> (Europe – breeding), 2.3% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>(Eastern Atlantic – wintering), 1.4% of the population in Great Britain of</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidal rivers • Estuaries • Mud flats • Sand flats • Lagoons <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The estuary is subject to multiple uses; it is heavily industrialised, a substantial urban conurbation, has multiple transport requirements and increasing recreational activities. • The site is vulnerable to physical loss through land-claim and development, physical damage caused by navigation capital and maintenance dredging, agricultural requirements, non-physical loss, toxic and non-toxic contamination and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime or water quality of this European site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | Screened out |

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| | <p><i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (North-western Europe – wintering), 2.2% of the population of <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>(North-western Europe), 2.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering), 0.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (Europe – breeding).</p> <p>On passage the area regularly supports:</p> <p>1.7% of the population in Great Britain of <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>(Europe/Northern Africa – wintering), 3.8% of the population of <i>Tringa totanus</i> (Eastern Atlantic – wintering).</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>biological disturbance by wildfowling.</p> | | |
| <p>Mersey Estuary (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 89576 waterfowl.</p> <p>Presence of qualifying species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <p>12676 individuals of common <input type="checkbox"/>helduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) representing an average of 4.2% of the population. 2011 individuals of black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> representing an average of 5.7% of the population. 6651 individuals of common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>, representing an average of 2.6% of the population.</p> <p>Qualifying Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>10613 individuals of Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> representing an average of 2.6% of the population.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>The Mersey is a large, sheltered estuary, which comprises large areas of saltmarsh and extensive intertidal sand and mudflats, with limited areas of brackish marsh, rocky shoreline and boulder clay cliffs, within a rural and industrial environment. The intertidal flats and saltmarshes provide feeding and roosting sites for large and internationally important populations of waterfowl. During the winter, the site is of major importance for duck and waders. The site is also important during spring and autumn migration periods, particularly for wader populations moving along the west coast of Britain.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>As above for Mersey Estuary SPA</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

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| | <p>565 individuals of northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> representing an average of 2% of the GB population. 48364 individuals of dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) representing an average of 3.6% of the population.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | | | |
| <p>Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 (Ramsar site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora & fauna.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>The Meres & Mosses form a geographically discrete series of lowland open water and peatland sites in the north-west Midlands of England. These have developed in natural depressions in the glacial drift left by receding ice sheets, which formerly covered the Cheshire/Shropshire Plain. The 16 component sites include open water bodies (meres), the majority of which are nutrient-rich with associated fringing habitats; reed swamps, fen, carr & damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites in the fringes of meres or completely infilling basins. In a few cases the result is a floating quaking bog or schwingmoor. The wide range of resulting habitats support internationally important flora & fauna.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Site is vulnerable to eutrophication and invasion from non-native species.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

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| <p>Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Description as above; containing nationally scarce cowbane <i>Cicuta virosa</i> and, elongated sedge <i>Carex elongata</i>. Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes <i>Dicranum affine</i> and <i>Sphagnum pulchrum</i>. Also supports an assemblage of invertebrates including several rare species. There are 16 species of British Red Data Book insect listed for this site including the following endangered species: the moth <i>Glyphipteryx lathamella</i>, the caddisfly <i>Hagenella clathrata</i> and the sawfly <i>Trichiosoma vitellinae</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>As above for Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>As above for Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |
| <p>Rostherne Mere (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Rostherne Mere is one of the deepest and largest of the meres of the Shropshire-Cheshire Plain. Its shoreline is fringed with common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Rostherne Mere is the deepest, one of the largest and the most northerly of the meres of the Cheshire Plain. It lies in a hollow surrounded by thick deposits of glacial drift overlying triassic marls and salt-beds.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <p>Site is vulnerable to eutrophication and invasion from non-native species.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrology or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

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| <p>The Dee Estuary (Ramsar Site)</p> | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Presence of extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. Features as expressed above in Dee Estuary SAC section.</p> <p>Bird assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter include 74230 waterfowl.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:</p> <p>Common shelduck , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, NW Europe: 9346 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the population. Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus</i>, Europe & NW Africa –wintering: 19174 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population. Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata arquata</i>, N. arquata Europe (breeding): 4195 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population. Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>: 8281 individuals, representing an average of 3.3% of the population.</p> <p>Species with peak counts in winter:</p> <p>Eurasian teal , <i>Anas crecca</i>, NW Europe: 3058 individuals, representing an average of 1.5% of the GB population. Northern pintail , <i>Anas acuta</i>, NW Europe 4976 individuals, representing an average of 8.2% of the population. Grey plover , <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, E Atlantic/W Africa –wintering: 603 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the GB population. Red knot , <i>Calidris canutus islandica</i>, W & Southern Africa (wintering): 3729 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population. Dunlin , <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, W Siberia/W Europe: 19157 individuals, representing an</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>The Dee is a large funnel-shaped sheltered estuary and is one of the top five estuaries in the UK for wintering and passage waterfowl populations. The estuary supports internationally important numbers of waterfowl and waders. The estuary is an accreting system and the extent of saltmarsh continues to expand as the estuary seeks to achieve a new equilibrium situation following large-scale historical land-claim at the head of the estuary, which commenced in the 1730s. Nevertheless, the estuary still supports extensive areas of intertidal sand and mudflats as well as saltmarsh. Where land-claim has not occurred, the saltmarshes grade into transitional brackish and freshwater swamp vegetation, on the upper shore. The site includes the three sandstone islands of Hilbre with their important cliff vegetation and maritime heathland/grassland. The site also includes an assemblage of nationally scarce plants and the sandhill rustic moth <i>Luperina nickerlii gueneei</i>, a British Red Data Book species. The two shorelines of the estuary show a marked contrast between the industrialised usage of the coastal belt in Wales and residential and recreational usage in England.</p> <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasion of non-native plant species • Overfishing • Pollution (Industrial waste) • Disturbance from human activities • Transport infrastructure development especially dredging at Mostyn Dock. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main site vulnerability pressures will not be triggered by policies within the SMDC Core Strategy. • Policies should not affect conditions such as the hydrological regime or water quality of this Ramsar site so there should be no threats to site integrity. | <p>Screened out</p> |

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|------|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| | <p>average of 1.4% of the population. Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe: 2791 individuals, representing an average of 7.9% of the population. Bar-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, W Palearctic: 322 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population. Ruddy turnstone , <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, NE Canada, Greenland/W Europe & NW Africa: 291 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of the GB population.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | | | |

3 APPRAISAL

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The screening exercise (*Chapter 2*) has established that of the 22 European sites (including 5 Ramsar sites) considered 18 could be screened out of any more detailed assessment but that four should be examined further because of the potential effects that some of the policies (particularly relating to tourism) could have on these sites.

All of these sites will be considered further because applying the precautionary principle it is possible that they could potentially be affected by policies within Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's (SMDC) emerging Core Strategy. The information that will be brought together during this stage and used to carry out the Appropriate Assessment for each of the sites will be:

- Qualifying features and conservation objectives for each site.
- Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity and site vulnerability.
- Possible impacts from policies in the Core Strategy.
- Risk of a significant effect on site integrity.
- Possible impacts from other plans.
- Mitigation that can be used.
- Residual effects.

This will then be used to establish what, if any, revisions to policies will be needed to afford adequate protection for these European sites. A summary of the full appraisal can be seen in *Table 3.1* overleaf.

3.2 SPA SITE INTEGRITY – MOVEMENT OF BREEDING BIRDS AND REGULARLY OCCURRING MIGRATORY SPECIES

Information gathered during the Appropriate Assessment indicates that the Peak District Moors are of international importance for their breeding bird communities.

It is also clear that major urban and industrial centers near to the Peak District Moors provide significant visitor pressure (approximately two-thirds of the moorlands are open to public access). Habitat damage through physical erosion or fire, combined with disturbance of breeding birds, can be significant.⁶

The Peak District Moors SPA is designated for its wild populations of golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*) and short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*). The golden plover is easily disturbed by human activity and is particularly wary on its breeding grounds, therefore this species may be particularly vulnerable to increased visitor pressure. The Merlin shares its time between upland and coastal areas and so, during the winter, is reliant on the lowland areas that surround the moorland, as well as the moorland SPA itself. The merlin may, therefore, be sensitive to development on open greenspaces that lie out side of the SPA. Short-eared Owl is also reliant on the coastal areas and upland fringes as well as the main SPA site and so may suffer in the same way.

3.3 SAC SITE INTEGRITY – PROTECTED HABITATS AND THEIR VULNERABILITIES

Information gathered during the Appropriate Assessment indicates that the South Pennine Moors, Peak District Dales and Cannock Chase are of international importance for their rare habitats and species.

The South Pennine Moors SAC is designated for its blanket bogs, European dry heaths and old sessile oak woods (*see Table 1.1*). The SAC is fringed by Manchester and Sheffield, both large industrial urban areas, which means that large numbers of people use the area for recreational activities. Around two-thirds of the SAC is within the Peak District

⁶ JNCC (1996) Natura 2000 standard data form for special protection areas (SPA) for sites eligible for identification as sites of community importance (SCI) and for special areas of conservation (SAC) - Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) JNCC, Peterborough, UK.

National Park (PDNP). There are a number of key pressures upon the site; these include overgrazing by sheep, burning as a tool for grouse moor management and inappropriate drainage.

The Peak District Dales SAC is designated for its dry grasslands and scrub lands and *Tilio-Acerion* forests. The area is sensitive to any effects that developments may have on drainage and the main pressures on the site originate from limestone quarrying, specifically dust.

Cannock Chase is recognised as an internationally important conservation site because of the presence of Northern Atlantic wet heath and European dry heath habitats. Much of Cannock Chase falls within a popular and well-used Country Park and so the main pressure on the site is that of recreational users. Visitor pressures include dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering, all of which cause disturbance and result in erosion, new track creation and vegetation damage.

3.4 HOW CORE STRATEGY POLICIES RELATE TO EUROPEAN PROTECTED SITES

It is clear that the SMDC Core Strategy (and similar strategies of neighbouring authorities) is high level and non-site specific. However, as part of the Core Strategy there are appropriate policies, which are aimed at protecting European Sites. One of the objectives laid out in Draft Core Strategy Policy NE1 is aimed at protecting the integrity of European sites in and near the District in accordance with their conservation objectives. It is possible, however, that a future development scheme (e.g. for a wind farm or farmland development) could emerge within a neighbouring authority's Local Development Framework that could conceivably impact on the movement and roosting/feeding sites of bird species in upland areas including the Peak District Moors SPA. However, SMDC recognises that:

- the precise location of these bird gathering sites is in some cases not that well known or researched;
- it might not be clear at the application stage what the potential impact might be on these birds;
- these roosting/feeding sites should be protected and the movement of the birds unhindered since this is part of the "integrity" of the European site that they belong to.

It is therefore important to apply the precautionary approach and SMDC has recognised this through the development of Policy NE1 in the emerging Core Strategy. The policies and their supporting text indicate that any proposal that might have the potential to affect a European site or Ramsar site must be subject to appropriate assessment itself and it is also assumed that a rigorous environmental impact assessment would be carried out on the development proposals to determine potential effects on ecology (that would include protected sites and protected species).

Table 3.1 Summary of the Appraisal of the SMDC Core Strategy

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| South Pennine Moors (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>European dry heaths, Blanket Bog, Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>, Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>. European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Blanket bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Transition mires and quaking bogs . Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large numbers of people use the area for recreational activities as around two-thirds is within the Peak District National Park. Therefore access management is a key issue. Accidental fires Maintenance of the ecosystems relies primarily on appropriate grazing levels and burning regimes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies SS2 (the Future Provision of Development), SS4 (the Distribution of Development), SS6 (Rural Areas), SS6a (Larger Villages), SS6d (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside) and TCR2 (Retailing Outside Town centres) – all could initiate changes (through, for example, direct land take and/or associated landscaping) that cause damage and destruction of habitat, plus disturbance and displacement of migratory species. Policy TR1 (Tourism and Cultural Facilities) – uncertain but likely to increase activity and footfall generally across the district including in and around the SAC. This could cause disturbance to species and/or degradation of habitat. Increased tourism and recreational activities (that may follow from TR1) may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance. Policies TR1 and T2 include support for developing the cycling | <p>Macclesfield: no major new development outside existing economic centres.</p> <p>Peak District National Park: Sites at Warslow and Longnor to be redeveloped. Warslow is within 1km of the SAC and within 9km of both Leek and Anzio Camp redevelopment site. Longnor lies within 4km of the SAC.</p> <p>Derbyshire Dales: No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites.</p> <p>East Staffordshire District Council: no major new development outside existing economic centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other local authority policies to promote tourism will possibly have cumulative effect | <p>Yes, the core strategy policies identified could generate an adverse effect.</p> | <p>The application of Core Strategy policies:</p> <p>SS1: “protect and enhance the natural and built environment”</p> <p>SS6c: “provision for new renewable energy generation should be of a scale and design appropriate to its location”</p> <p>Note - the strengthening of Policy SD1 will ensure European sites are protected (See Section 4.2.6).</p> <p>SS6d: “[development] shall avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>SD2: “resisting development that would... contribute to significantly increased air, water, light or noise pollution which would be environmentally unacceptable”</p> <p>E1: “Development will not be visually intrusive or harm interests of acknowledged importance... [and] safeguard and enhance</p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atmospheric pollution over the last few hundred years has depleted the lichen and bryophyte flora and may be affecting dwarf-shrubs. The impact has arguably been greatest on blanket bog, wet heath and transition mire where the bog-building <i>Sphagnum</i> mosses have been largely lost. The former extensive cover of woodland is now fragmented, relatively small-scale and largely restricted to steeper valley sides. Woods are often unfenced and open to grazing which restricts tree regeneration. In some <i>Rhododendron</i> has invaded. | <p>network to facilitate access to recreational areas (such as the South Pennine Moors) - this may lead to similar issues to those associated with increased footfall, namely the potential for species disturbance and habitat degradation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy SD1 (Use of resources) – encourages possible new renewable energy schemes which (as wind turbines) could obstruct bird flight paths and ability to move from roosting to feeding sites Policy SS6d –Anzio Camp, identified in SS6d as a site for redevelopment, Lies 2km from SAC – may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance. | <p>in terms of additional visitor activity and potential disturbance.</p> | | <p>natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>TR1: “[Proposals] do not harm interests of acknowledged importance”</p> <p>R1: “development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area” Note - suggested amendments to this policy are made in section 4.2.6 of this report.</p> <p>NE1: “protecting the integrity of European sites in and near the district in accordance with their conservation objectives”</p> | |
| Peak District Dales (SAC) | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>), <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines.</p> <p>European dry heaths, Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>, Alkaline Fens, Calcareous and calcshist screes of the</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> European dry heaths. Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies SS2 (the Future Provision of Development), SS4 (the Distribution of Development), SS6 (Rural Areas), SS6a (Larger Villages), SS6d (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside) and TCR2 (Retailing Outside Town centres) – all could initiate changes (through, for example, direct land take and/or associated landscaping) that cause damage and destruction of habitat, plus | <p>Macclesfield: no major new development.</p> <p>Peak District National Park: Sites at Warslow and Longnor to be redeveloped. Warslow is within 3km of the. Longnor lies within 5km of the SAC.</p> <p>Derbyshire Dales: No major new developments</p> | <p>Yes, the core strategy policies identified could generate an adverse effect.</p> | <p>The application of Core Strategy policies:</p> <p>SS1: “protect and enhance the natural and built environment”</p> <p>SS6c: “provision for new renewable energy generation should be of a scale and design appropriate to its location” Note - the strengthening of Policy SD1 will ensure European sites are protected (See Section 4.2.6).</p> | <p>None, application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|------|---|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| | <p>montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>)</p> <p>white-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>.</p> <p>Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>, Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for crayfish and lamprey.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alkaline fens. Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 Hectares. Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation which is considered to be rare as its total extent in the United Kingdom is estimated to be less than 1000 hectares. <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <i>Lampetra planeri</i> . <i>Cottus gobio</i> . <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main threat to the limestone grasslands of the Peak District Dales is inappropriate grazing management. This results in either neglect and invasion by scrub, or overgrazing and the loss of the important vegetation communities. | <p>disturbance and displacement of migratory species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy TR1 (Tourism and Cultural Facilities) – uncertain but likely to increase activity and footfall generally across the district including in and around the SAC. This could cause disturbance to species and/or degradation of habitat. Increased tourism and recreational activities (that may follow from TR1) may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance. Policies TR1 and T2 include support for developing the cycling network to facilitate access to recreational areas (such as the South Pennine Moors) - this may lead do similar issues to those associated with increased footfall, namely the potential for species disturbance and habitat degradation. Policy SD1 (Use of resources) – encourages possible new renewable energy schemes which (as wind turbines) could obstruct bird flight paths and ability to move from roosting to feeding sites Policy SS6a of the Larger villages, Waterhouses lies within 2 km of the Peak | <p>planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other local authority policies to promote tourism will possibly have cumulative effect in terms of additional visitor activity and potential disturbance. | | <p>SS6d: “[development] shall avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>SD2: “resisting development that would... contribute to significantly increased air, water, light or noise pollution which would be environmentally unacceptable”</p> <p>E1: “Development will not be visually intrusive or harm interests of acknowledged importance... [and] safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>TR1: “[Proposals] do not harm interests of acknowledged importance”</p> <p>R1: “development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area” Note - suggested amendments to this policy are made in section 4.2.6 of this report.</p> | |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed developments have the potential to interfere with drainage patterns within the site. The impact of dust from quarrying needs to be assessed. The woodlands within the SAC occupy very steeply-sloping dalesides, where access is always going to be problematic, and development pressures are therefore limited. Existing permission for limestone or mineral extraction is a potential threat to some of the woodlands on one part of the site. There will be a need to work closely with game fishing interests to ensure that fishery management does not adversely affect the freshwater features of the SAC. The same is true of shooting tenants, who may impact on the overall ecology of the woodland. | <p>District dales SAC and so inappropriate development here could potentially risk damaging the integrity of the site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy SS6d –Anzio Camp, identified in SS6d as a site for redevelopment, Lies 9km from the SAC – redevelopment of this site may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance. Froghall Copperworks, also identified in SS6d, lies within 9km of the SAC and development of this site may also increase in traffic and associated disturbance. | | | <p>NE1: “protecting the integrity of European sites in and near the district in accordance with their conservation objectives”</p> | |
| Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | <p>Qualifying Features</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.2% of the GB breeding population of <i>Asio flammeus</i>.</p> <p>Area provides breeding ground for 2.3% of the GB breeding population of <i>Falco columbarius</i>.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bogs. Heath and scrubland. Dry grassland. Humid grassland, Mesophile grassland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies SS2 (the Future Provision of Development), SS4 (the Distribution of Development), SS6 (Rural Areas), SS6a (Larger Villages), SS6d (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside) and TCR2 (Retailing Outside Town centres) – all could initiate | <p>Macclesfield: no major new development.</p> <p>Peak District National Park: Sites at Warslow and Longnor to be redeveloped. Warslow is within 1km of the SPA and</p> | <p>Yes, the core strategy policies identified could generate an adverse effect.</p> | <p>The application of Core Strategy policies:</p> <p>SS1: “protect and enhance the natural and built environment”</p> <p>SS6c: “provision for new renewable energy generation should be of a scale and design</p> | <p>None, application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|------|---|--|--|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | <p>Area provides breeding ground for 1.9% of the GB breeding population of <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>.</p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features and to encourage conditions favourable for bird communities.</p> | <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major urban and industrial centers near to the Peak District Moors provide significant visitor pressure and approximately two-thirds of the moorlands are open to public access. Habitat damage through physical erosion or fire, combined with disturbance of breeding birds, can be significant. Initiatives for sustainable recreation are being necessary. Many habitats are sub-optimal (in vegetation terms) as a consequence of historic air pollution, high grazing pressure and wildfire burns. Breeding birds in the south-west of the area may be declining on both open moorland and enclosed rough grazing land, possibly due to general agricultural improvement of the surrounding areas. | <p>changes (through, for example, direct land take and/or associated landscaping) that cause damage and destruction of habitat, plus disturbance and displacement of migratory bird species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy TR1 (Tourism and Cultural Facilities) – uncertain but likely to increase activity and footfall generally across the district including in and around the SPA. This could cause disturbance to bird species (especially golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) and/or degradation of habitat. Increased tourism and recreational activities (that may follow from TR1) may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance. Policies TR1 and T2 include support for developing the cycling network to facilitate access to recreational areas (such as the South Pennine Moors) - this may lead to similar issues to those associated with increased footfall, namely the potential for bird species disturbance and habitat degradation. Policy SD1 (Use of resources) – encourages possible new renewable | <p>within 9km of both Leek and Anzio Camp redevelopment site. Longnor lies within 4km of the SPA.</p> <p>Derbyshire Dales: No major new developments planned, any growth is expected to take place on existing sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other local authority policies to promote tourism will possibly have cumulative effect in terms of additional visitor activity and potential disturbance. | | <p>appropriate to its location”</p> <p>Note - the strengthening of Policy SD1 will ensure European sites are protected (See Section 4.2.6).</p> <p>SS6d: “[development] shall avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>SD2: “resisting development that would... contribute to significantly increased air, water, light or noise pollution which would be environmentally unacceptable”</p> <p>E1: “Development will not be visually intrusive or harm interests of acknowledged importance... [and] safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>TR1: “[Proposals] do not harm interests of acknowledged importance”</p> <p>R1: “development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area” Note - suggested amendments</p> | |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>energy schemes which (as wind turbines) could obstruct bird flight paths and ability to move from roosting to feeding sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy SS6d –Anzio Camp, identified in SS6d as a site for redevelopment, Lies 2km from SPA – may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance. | | | <p>to this policy are made in section 4.2.6 of this report.</p> <p>NE1: “protecting the integrity of European sites in and near the district in accordance with their conservation objectives”</p> | |
| Cannock Chase (SAC) | <p>European dry heaths.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <p>Conservation Objectives</p> <p>To maintain in favourable condition the above features.</p> | <p>Key Environmental Conditions</p> <p>Area is considered to support a significant presence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>. European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. <p>Site Vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of Cannock Chase falls within a popular and well-used Country Park. Visitor pressures include dog walking, horse riding, mountain biking and off-track activities such as orienteering, all of which cause disturbance and result in erosion, new track creation and vegetation damage. Bracken invasion is significant, but is being controlled. Birch and pine scrub, much of the latter from surrounding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies SS2 (the Future Provision of Development), SS4 (the Distribution of Development), SS6 (Rural Areas), SS6a (Larger Villages), SS6d (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside) and TCR2 (Retailing Outside Town centres) – all could initiate changes (through, for example, direct land take and/or associated landscaping) that cause damage and destruction of habitat, plus disturbance and displacement of migratory species. Policy TR1 (Tourism and Cultural Facilities) – uncertain but likely to increase activity and footfall generally across the district including in and around the SAC. This could cause disturbance to species and/or degradation of habitat. | <p>East Staffordshire: Growth of employment land is expected to stay focused around towns.</p> <p>Stafford Borough: Further development of the Blyth Bridge Industrial estate. Possible change of use to more heavy industry.</p> <p>Cannock Chase: The three main employment sites in the district are; Kingswood Industrial Estate (in Cannock, within 4km of the SAC) and Lakeside Industrial Estate (in Rugeley and The Towers Business Park (located in Rugeley, within 3km of the SAC). These areas are expected to</p> | <p>Yes, the core strategy policies identified could generate an adverse effect.</p> | <p>The application of Core Strategy policies:</p> <p>SS1: “protect and enhance the natural and built environment”</p> <p>SS6c: “provision for new renewable energy generation should be of a scale and design appropriate to its location”</p> <p>Note - the strengthening of Policy SD1 will ensure European sites are protected (See Section 4.2.6).</p> <p>SS6d: “[development] shall avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>SD2: “resisting development that would... contribute to significantly increased air, water, light</p> | <p>None, application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Site | Qualifying Features and Conservation Objectives | Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity and Site Vulnerability | Possible Impacts from Core Strategy Policies | Possible Impacts from Other Plans | Risk of Significant Effect on Site Integrity? | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|------|---|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| | | <p>commercial plantations, is continually invading the site and has to be controlled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannock Chase overlies coal measures which have been deep-mined. Mining fissures continue to appear across the site even though mining has ceased and this is thought to detrimentally affect site hydrology. • The underlying Sherwood Sandstone is a major aquifer with water abstracted for public and industrial uses and the effects of this on the wetland features of the Chase are not fully understood. | <p>Increased tourism and recreational activities (that may follow from TR1) may result in additional traffic and associated disturbance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies TR1 and T2 include support for developing the cycling network to facilitate access to recreational areas (such as the South Pennine Moors) - this may lead do similar issues to those associated with increased footfall, namely the potential for species disturbance and habitat degradation. • Policy SD1 (Use of resources) – encourages possible new renewable energy schemes which (as wind turbines) could obstruct bird flight paths and ability to move from roosting to feeding sites. | <p>remain at the same capacity for the foreseeable future. The Autoelectronics industrial site in Rugeley will undergo a change of use towards housing and this business will be relocated within the district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other local authority policies to promote tourism will possibly have cumulative effect in terms of additional visitor activity and potential disturbance. | | <p>or noise pollution which would be environmentally unacceptable”</p> <p>E1: “Development will not be visually intrusive or harm interests of acknowledged importance... [and] safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”</p> <p>TR1: “[Proposals] do not harm interests of acknowledged importance”</p> <p>R1: “development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area” Note - suggested amendments to this policy are made in section 4.2.6 of this report.</p> <p>NE1: “protecting the integrity of European sites in and near the district in accordance with their conservation objectives”</p> | |

4 SUMMARY AND REVIEW OF MITIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report evaluated the likely causes of potential environmental effects on the European sites. Of the 22 sites considered (including 5 Ramsar Sites) 18 were screened out and the Appraisal therefore focuses on possible effects on the four remaining sites:

- South Pennine Moors SAC;
- Peak District Dales SAC;
- Cannock Chase SAC;
- Peak District Moors SPA.

Table 3.1 summarises the appraisal and this chapter considers mitigation in more detail.

It is fully recognised within the Core Strategy that it will be essential that development is directed by appropriate policies to areas that will not result in the generation of any direct, indirect or cumulative adverse impacts on the site integrity of internationally important nature conservation sites.

4.2 AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.2.1 General Development and Regeneration

The Core Strategy is a non-site specific policy document that seeks to broadly identify where development should be focussed, and to address some of the key cross-cutting issues that are of relevance (e.g. protection of designated sites, protection of landscape character). Given the non-site specific nature of the document it is clearly difficult to identify, apportion and quantify specific adverse effects on the European sites (if any).

Those policies that may have effects on European sites either within or near to the plan area (i.e. Peak District Dales SAC) or where there are migratory birds which move around a much wider area to feed or roost (e.g. Peak District Moors SPA) relate to development within or close to The Peak District National Park (PDNP) and are principally related to policies SS2 (the Future Provision of Development), SS4 (the Distribution of Development), SS6 (Rural Areas), SS6a (Larger Villages), SS6d (Major Developed Areas in the Countryside) and TCR2 (Retailing Outside Town centres). Policy SD1 is relevant to possible standalone renewable energy schemes.

Policies SS2, SS4 and SS6 triggered an ‘uncertain possible negative effect’ on three of the European sites (see Annex A) during the screening exercise. The uncertainty was triggered because of the proximity of the Natura sites in question to Staffordshire Moorlands District and because the three policies support various forms of development within the District without specifying the precise scale of each individual development or its location in any detail. For example SS2 states “... *Provision will be made for new retail, transport, recreational, community and tourism facilities and services to meet the identified needs of settlements within Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak park) up to 2026.*” These policies are necessarily high-level and non-specific and therefore whilst not automatically triggering an environmental effect do leave a question mark.

Similarly those policies which could conceivably generate an effect on European sites further a field (e.g. Cannock Chase SAC), either on their own or cumulatively with those of other authorities, are recognised as those that relate to the encouragement of tourism in the general area (e.g. TR1 and T2).

SMDC understands the potential risks posed by high-level unspecific development policies (such as SS2) and also the non-specific tourism policies (such as TR1) and so recognises the importance of:

- steering development to the most sustainable locations (preferably previously developed land and buildings) as emphasised in policy SS5;

- making sure that protected areas and in particular the European Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are avoided and that no future developments will have any adverse effects on site integrity;
- protecting and where possible enhancing biodiversity throughout the District.

Several overarching policies have been designed to provide the necessary mitigation and ensure that the site integrity and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites are not compromised. These policies have to be applied before the council will grant planning permission, and would need to be applied together with the policies listed above. Two main policies within the draft Core Strategy (see *Table 3.1*) will provide the necessary mitigation. These are:

- **Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources** – States that: *“The biodiversity and geological resources of the District will be protected and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development”*. Development control would *“[protect] the integrity of European sites in and near the district in accordance with their conservation objectives”* This clause adds a first layer of protection and would encourage avoidance of designated sites.
- **Policy SS1 – Spatial Strategy** – States that *“the council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands District”* and to *“protect and enhance the natural and built environment”*

Given the overall scale of development proposed in the Spatial Strategy Policies (in particular SS2, SS4 and SS6) and their likely locations, together with the application of policies NE1 and SS1, it is expected that there would be no adverse effects on the site integrity of the European sites.

4.2.2 Pollution Prevention and Control

SMDC has recognised the potential for water resource impacts and air quality impacts that could arise from developments supported by some of its policies (such as surface water drainage from construction sites that could introduce pollution into the SPA and SAC sites, or quarrying activities that could introduce dust into the air). The umbrella policies in the Core Strategy (SS1, NE1) are regarded as affording general protection and one specific development control policy (SD2) that deals with drainage and pollution control and has been designed specifically to afford the necessary protection. This issue relates directly to The Peak District Dales SAC as this site is sensitive to any effects developments may have on drainage and the main pressures on the site originate from limestone quarrying, specifically dust.

4.2.3 Tourism, Recreation and Possible In-Combination Effects

Government guidance (Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism⁷) states that developers of tourism projects should consider whether new developments would protect and improve biodiversity (whether it is a statutory requirement or not). It is therefore highly important to reconcile the economic benefits of tourism with the needs of conservation and to enhance the potential for biodiversity when considering any new proposal.

Potential Impacts

The appraisal (see *Table 1.1*) has flagged up the potential that SMDC’s recreation and tourism policy (TR1), together with relevant accessibility and transport policy (T2), could increase visitor and recreation activities and traffic movements across the District, in particular within the Peak District National Park and Cannock Chase, in areas that could be vulnerable to recreational pressure. At present time these effects are likely to be diffuse and cumulative and so the Appropriate Assessment is unable to quantify them with any accuracy. Policies NE1 and SS1 should provide the necessary mitigation in the event of any possible tourism related effects and the policies of neighbouring authorities will help to strengthen these.

⁷ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/151753>

Mitigation

The Peak District National Park

The Peak District National Park Authority monitors visitor numbers closely and manages visitor numbers. For this reason a partnership approach to tourism management between SMDC and the PDNP Authority will help to strengthen mitigation against loss of or damage to habitats and species in European sites. The PDNP Local Plan recognises that in relation to partnership working and management of tourism:

“Management Plans for specific areas or features in the National Park, negotiated and put into practice jointly with our partner organisations, are a crucial part of [the measures used to manage visitor pressure]”⁸

This partnership approach to tourism management is echoed in the PDNP Management plan:

“The National Park Authority works within the Visit Peak District Partnership and the Peak District and Derbyshire Destination Management Partnership and the other Destination Management Partnerships that cover the area. The partnerships recognise the wider Peak District which includes places such as Buxton, Leek and Glossop.”⁹

Cannock Chase

The Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan¹⁰ will also help to strengthen the mitigation implicit within SMDC Core Strategy Policies NE1 and SS1 stating, in recognition of the need to preserve the natural features:

“The dangers of erosion, wildlife disturbance, or loss of peace and tranquillity need to be set against the benefits of relaxation from the pressures of everyday living, improved health from physical activities and even increased income that recreation brings.”

By supporting the Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan and working in partnership with public bodies such as Natural England, SMDC can further strengthen mitigation set out within its own Core Strategy.

4.2.4 Renewable Energy

Draft Core Strategy Policy SD1 encourages possible new renewable energy schemes which (as wind turbines) could obstruct bird flight paths and ability to move from roosting to feeding sites. There is insufficient detail on plans and schemes of this nature to make it possible to be specific about possible impacts and quantify them. However, the presence of Policy SS6c and strengthening of Policy SD1 (See section 4.2.6) should ensure that provision for new renewable energy generation is of a scale and design appropriate to its location. Whether individual renewable energy schemes can be accommodated without causing significant adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC and SPA sites can only be determined when detailed proposals are put forward and they in turn are subject to more detailed EIA and Appropriate Assessment.

4.2.5 Anzio Camp Regeneration Site

Along with Froghall Copper Works, Anzio Camp is identified in Core Strategy Policy SS6d as a site for redevelopment. The close proximity of Anzio Camp to the South Pennine Moors SAC and the Peak District Moors SPA raises concern over possible negative impacts that might occur at these sites as a result of any redevelopment. Impacts that may occur depend on the type and extent of the development, and the infrastructure that may be required to service this development.

Potential Impacts

⁸Peak District National Park Authority (2001) *Peak District National Park Local Plan*. Available at: <http://www.peakdistrict.org/chapter7.htm>

⁹Peak District National Park Authority (2006) *National Park Management Plan 2006-2011*. Available at: <http://www.peakdistrict.org/npmppart3.pdf>

¹⁰Natural England (2004) *Cannock Chase AONB Management Plan*. Available at: <http://www.cannock-chase.co.uk/AONBMP.pdf>

Anzio Camp lies 2km West of the Peak District Moors SPA and the South Pennine Moors SAC and is connected with these sites directly, via the A53. The A53 connects with Leek to the South and Buxton to the North and so redevelopment of the site could result in additional traffic and associated disturbance.

In combination with these potential effects, the impact on the designated sites could be felt from other redevelopments, which are planned by the Peak District National Park Authority. The PDNP Authority has identified a potential redevelopment site at Warslow, which lies 1km South East of the SPA, and within 9km West of both Leek and Anzio Camp. Although there is no direct connection between the two sites, these developments could add to the level of industrial activity in the area between Buxton and Leek, bringing more traffic and associated disturbances.

Mitigation

Mitigation against the possible effects of regeneration activities at the Anzio Camp site would be provided by rigorous application of Core Strategy policies that are intended to provide protection for the environment. The following would provide such protection:

- Policy SS6d that states: *“[development] shall avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets”.*
- The additional wording suggested as an addition to Policy SS6d (see Section 4.2.6)
- Policy NE1 which states: *“The biodiversity and geological resources of the District will be protected and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development as follows:*
 - *Protecting the integrity of European sites in and near the District in accordance with their conservation objectives.”*

With the rigorous application of these policies it would be unlikely that any masterplan could come forward that would pose a risk to the site integrity of any European or Ramsar site.

There are no current development plans or masterplans worked up to any detail for these sites so it is not possible to assess them in any more detail at this time. In order to provide an additional ‘layer’ of protection for the European sites that are in the near vicinity of the Anzio Camp site it is suggested that Policy SS6d is modified with some additional wording as set out in the text box below.

4.2.6 Strengthening of Mitigation

Within the Core Strategy there are policies that have implications for protected sites but which need additional wording in order to fully safeguard the conservation objectives of European protected sites. We have made suggestions for minor ‘improvements’ to the following policies in order to strengthen the protection that they would afford to sites designated for their conservation interest. The suggested modifications are highlighted in bold italics.

For **Policy SS1 – the Spatial Strategy**, it is suggested that an additional Point 10 is added to emphasise more clearly that whilst the policy wishes to encourage appropriate development it also wishes to ensure that this takes place with the protection of both the natural and historic environments. The suggested wording is:

“10. Ensure that new development is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations.”

For **Policy SD1** that addresses the ‘Use of Resources’:

Renewable Energy
 In relation to the siting and scale of renewable energy developments, Policy **SD1** states that SMDC will support;

“new stand-alone renewable energy developments subject to design and amenity considerations. The scale and nature of the proposal shall reflect the capacity and sensitivity of the landscape to accept the proposed renewable technology, as well as taking into account any impacts upon the amenity of residents”

Mitigation is already in place elsewhere in the Core Strategy under Policy **SS6c**, which states:

“provision for new renewable energy generation should be of a scale and design appropriate to its location”

However, this wording does not make explicit mention of conservation sites and is not included in Policy **SD1** itself. The wording in **SS6c** should therefore remain but **SD1** be amended to include explicit mention of conservation designations, both environmental and historical. Suggested wording for Policy **SD1** is as follows:

*“new stand-alone renewable energy developments subject to design and amenity considerations. The scale and nature of the proposal shall reflect the capacity and sensitivity of the landscape to accept the proposed renewable technology, as well as taking into account any impacts upon **the natural environment (e.g. biodiversity and designated conservation areas), the historic environment (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monuments) and the amenity of residents”***

For **Policy R1** that addresses ‘Rural Diversification’:

Rural Diversification
 Policy **R1** seeks to support the rural economy while protecting the natural environment:

“Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area by virtue of scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise or pollution.”

However, in order that this policy can provide provides clear guidance specific mention of designated sites should be made. Therefore this policy could be reworded as follows:

*“Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area **or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest** by virtue of scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise or pollution”*

For **Policy SS6d** that addresses major developments in countryside areas:

SS6d – Major Developed Areas in the Countryside

Major regeneration opportunities will be identified for the following major developed areas in the countryside through the site allocations DPD at:

- *Copperwoorks, Froghall*
- *Anzio Camp, Blackshaw Moor*

Development of these areas shall be complimentary to and not undermine the role of the towns and larger villages nor shall it undermine wider strategic objectives. It shall also avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets.

Development that facilitates the appropriate redevelopment of other major developed sites will be supported where the proposed development brings positive benefits to the area and measures are implemented to minimise environmental impacts including traffic generated. Such proposals will be expected to provide supporting information that demonstrates clearly that the redevelopment will complement the overall development strategy for the District.

“Any development proposal that might have the potential to affect a European or Ramsar Site must itself be subject to appropriate assessment and also a rigorous environmental impact assessment to determine potential effects on ecology, protected species and site integrity.”

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- The policies within the Core Strategy generally provide a positive framework for conservation and enhancement of the District's biodiversity, including the Natura 2000 sites.
- Core Strategy policy SS6d identifies regeneration and economic growth opportunities on two specific sites: Anzio Camp, Blackshaw Moor and Froghall Copperworks. Redevelopment of the Anzio Camp site could create potential tensions between those draft Core Strategy policies which promote economic prosperity and those which aim to protect the European sites and conserve and enhance biodiversity. Whether the economic re-development of the type envisaged can be accommodated without causing significant adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC and SPA sites can only be determined when detailed masterplans are put forward and they in turn are subject to more detailed EIA and Appropriate Assessment. Some additional wording is recommended for this policy to sharpen the protection offered to the European and Ramsar sites.
- Two other areas of development have been identified which could, either on their own within Staffordshire Moorlands District or cumulatively (in-combination) with similar developments within adjacent local authority areas, potentially impact on the integrity of the SPA and SAC sites identified in this Appropriate Assessment (see *Table 1.1*). These are tourism development and renewable energy schemes (particularly wind turbines). There is insufficient detail on plans and schemes coming forward to make it possible to be specific about possible impacts and quantify them. The issues are discussed in *Table 3.1* and *Sections 4.2.3* and *4.2.4*. Further assessment may be needed once plans become better defined.
- The Core Strategy should have sufficiently robust policies (SS1, NE1) to safeguard against possible negative effects.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH NATURAL ENGLAND

- Consultation with Natural England (see Annex B) raised one particular concern and that was in connection with the potential future development of Anzio Camp. This has been covered in Section 4.2.5. It is also felt that if suggested modifications to Policies SS1 and SS6d are made then this will provide the necessary mitigation to ensure that the implementation of the Core Strategy would not lead to significant effects on the site integrity of European sites in the area.

ANNEX A
SCREENING TABLE FOR CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

A1 This annex reports the screening undertaken of the policies within SMDC's Core Strategy against the various European Natura 2000 sites in the general area.

A screening system was developed and used based on the following scale of effects.

| | |
|----|---|
| ✓✓ | Clear strong positive effects |
| ✓ | Broadly supportive |
| 0 | Neutral or no discernible effect |
| x | Likely negative effect |
| ?x | Uncertain possible negative effect |

The screening is summarised in the following table which lists the policies and presents the findings of the screening in relation to each of the Natura 2000 sites.

To carry out the screening process, a set of questions based on key criteria that relate to the qualifying interests and integrity of the sites was established to aid in the decision making process for assessing whether the policies would impact on site integrity. The questions are summarised in the following table.

| Key Questions used in the Screening Process |
|--|
| Will the policy cause physical loss or damage to the European site? |
| Will the policy cause pollution to land, sea or air that might impact upon the qualifying features? |
| Will the policy restrict the capacity to meet conservation objectives? |
| Will the policy disrupt those factors which help maintain the favourable conditions of the site? |
| Will the policy interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key flora and fauna that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site? |
| Will the policy increase disturbance close to the site? |
| Will the policy encourage further access to the site by the public and their pets? |
| Will the policy result in the removal of roosting grounds? |
| Will the policy cause an increase in the scale or nature of development near the site, which could cause an impact on the site and affect site integrity? |
| Will the policy change the type of development currently near the site that could lead to future impacts on the site? |
| Will the policy affect areas utilised by qualifying bird species outside of the SPA? |
| Will the policy encourage the encroachment on bird flight paths or affect their habitat? |
| Will the policy increase developmental creep that could attract other types of development that might be more likely to have an impact on the site? |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SS1 – Spatial Strategy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS2 – Future Provision of Development | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS3 – Managing the Release of Housing Land | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS4 – Distribution of Development | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS5 – Towns | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6 – Rural Areas | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6a – Larger Villages | 0 | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6b – Smaller Villages | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6c – Other Areas | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6d – Major Developed areas in the Countryside | ?* | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SS7 – Green Belt | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS8 – Strategic Transport Improvements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS9 – Blythe Bridge Regional Investment Site | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SD1 – Use of Resources | ?x | ?x | ?x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| SD2 – Pollution and Flood Control | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| E1 – To Develop the District's Economy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E2 – Existing Employment Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H1 – Range and Type of Housing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| H2 – Affordable Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H3 – Gypsy and Traveller Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TCR1 – Development in the Town Centres | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TCR2 – Retailing Outside Town Centres | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC1 – Design Considerations | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC2 – The Historic Environment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC3 – Settlement Setting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC4 – Masterplanning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C1 – Creating Sustainable Communities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TR1 – Tourism and Cultural Facilities | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TR2 – Sport, Recreation and Public Spaces | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| SPA and SAC Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | West Midlands Mosses SAC | Cannock Chase SAC | Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC | Oak Mere SAC | River Dee and Bala Lake SAC | Dee Estuary SAC | Manchester Mosses SAC | Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses (SAC) | Mottey Meadows SAC | River Mease SAC | Dee Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) | Mersey Estuary SPA (and Ramsar Site) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| Core Strategy Policies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R1 – Rural Diversification | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Policy R2 – Rural Housing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NE2 – Natural Landscape | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| T2 – Other Sustainable Transport Measures | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T3 – Telecoms and ICT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

ANNEX B

CONSULTATION WITH NATURAL ENGLAND

| Public Body | Office | Name and Contact Details | Method and Date of Communication | Comments | Response/Action |
|-----------------|------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Natural England | Bakewell | Chris H Smith 01629 816640 chris.h.smith@naturalengland.org.uk | Email: 16 th April, 2008 | No comments to make on the general methodological approach to the screening. | Point noted. |
| | | | | Anzio Camp at Blackshaw Moor is identified as a site that has "major regeneration opportunities". Natural England would have concerns about any possible major development on that site and its affects on the Natura 2000 sites identified in the screening report. | The Appropriate Assessment has addressed this issue in Sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6. |
| | | | | We welcome the inclusion of the South Pennine Moors SAC, the Peak District Dales SAC & the Peak District Moors SPA on the list of those sites that will be taken forward for more detailed appraisal & screened in; & would expect that any development proposals for Anzio Camp would be rigorously appraised for their affects on the Natura 2000 sites. | The Appropriate Assessment has addressed this issue in Section 4.2.5 and 4.2.6. |
| Natural England | Shrewsbury | Graham Walker 01743 282000 graham.walker@naturalengland.org.uk | Email: 17 th April 2008. | Concern over the encroachment of housing sites surrounding the SAC but this will be picked up on in the Appropriate Assessment of the Regional Spatial Strategy. | The Appropriate Assessment has addressed this issue in Section 4.2.3. |
| | | | | Visitor pressure is an issue at Cannock Chase as it is a popular recreation destination and any proposed increase in visitor numbers would pose a threat to conservation objectives of the site. | The Appropriate Assessment has addressed this issue in Section 4.2.3. |

ANNEX C
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Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Core Strategy

Habitats Regulations Assessment Update Report

April 2009

Report

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Development Framework:
Update of Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment**

April 2009

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Report

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Development Framework:
Update of Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment**

For and on behalf of
Natural Capital Ltd.

Approved by: Dr Phil Say

Signed: 

Position: Director

Date: 09.04.09

This report has been prepared by Natural Capital Ltd. with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client, incorporating our General Terms and Conditions of Business and taking account of the resources devoted to it by agreement with the client.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND TO THIS UPDATE

The likely effects of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Core Strategy were first appraised in May 2008. Since then there have been a number of revisions and modifications to the document and the effects of these changes must also be assessed in accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (the Habitats Regulations)¹. This update report is intended to fulfil this need and so should be read along-side the previous SMDC Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment Report (May 2008).

1.2 METHODOLOGY USED FOR THIS UPDATE APPRAISAL

1.2.1 Screening

The previous Appropriate Assessment Report (May, 2008) evaluated the likely causes of potential environmental effects on the European sites. Of the 22 sites considered (including 5 Ramsar Sites) 18 were screened out and the Appraisal therefore focuses on possible effects on the four remaining sites:

- South Pennine Moors SAC;
- Peak District Dales SAC;
- Cannock Chase SAC;
- Peak District Moors SPA.

This update appraisal will continue to focus on the sites selected by the screening process. As summarised in Table 2.3, no Core Strategy policy changes have occurred that would require further sites to be included in this appraisal.

1.2.2 Review of Policy Changes

In order to focus this update on those Core Strategy policy changes that have the potential to cause a negative impact on European Sites, it was necessary to review the draft for publication against the draft that was originally scrutinised for the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

1.2.3 Appropriate Assessment of Policies

Where this review process found the potential for a policy change to adversely affect European sites, the policy has been taken forward for further assessment and, where necessary, mitigation measures have been identified and described (See Table 3.1).

¹ For further detail on the Habitats Regulations, see section 1 of the May 2008 SMDC Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment.

2 REVIEW OF CHANGES TO CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

The review of changes to policies is summarised in the following table that lists the policies, summarises those changes likely to have the potential to impact adversely on European sites and presents the findings of the review in relation to each of the Natura 2000 sites. For ease of use, the table is colour-coded such that those policy changes that have the potential to adversely impact on European sites are highlighted in orange and those policy changes which will not have a negative impact on European sites are highlighted in green.

A review system was developed and used based on the following scale of effects. This is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Screening System for the Effects of Changes to Core Strategy Policies

| | |
|----|---|
| ✓✓ | Clear strong positive effects |
| ✓ | Broadly supportive |
| 0 | Neutral or no discernible effect |
| x | Likely negative effect |
| ?x | Uncertain possible negative effect |

To carry out the review process, a set of questions based on key criteria that relate to the qualifying interests and integrity of the sites was established to aid in the decision making process for assessing whether the changes made to policies would impact on site integrity. The questions are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Key Questions used in the Review Process

| |
|---|
| Will the policy change cause physical loss or damage to the European site? |
| Will the policy change cause pollution to land, sea or air that might impact upon the qualifying features? |
| Will the policy change restrict the capacity to meet conservation objectives? |
| Will the policy change disrupt those factors which help maintain the favourable conditions of the site? |
| Will the policy change interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key flora and fauna that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site? |
| Will the policy change increase disturbance close to the site? |
| Will the policy change encourage further access to the site by the public and their pets? |
| Will the policy change result in the removal of roosting grounds? |
| Will the policy change cause an increase in the scale or nature of development near the site, which could cause an impact on the site and affect site integrity? |
| Will the policy change alter the type of development currently near the site that could lead to future impacts on the site? |
| Will the policy change affect areas utilised by qualifying bird species outside of the SPA? |
| Will the policy change encourage the encroachment on bird flight paths or affect their habitat? |
| Will the policy change increase developmental creep that could attract other types of development that might be more likely to have an impact on the site? |

Table 2.3: Review of Core Strategy Policy Changes in Relation to European Protected Sites

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have to potential to adversely impact on European sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS1 – Spatial Strategy (Re-named: Development Principals) | The policy has been altered to include the requirement for new development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas. As such the policy changes will have an overall positive influence on protecting European sites. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |
| SS2 – Future Provision of Development | Contains a change in the phasing of net dwelling completions. A potential impact could arise if these developments are inappropriately situated. | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 |
| SS3 – Managing the Release of Housing Land (Re-numbered SS4) | Text has been included on the management of greenbelt land and a preference to development on previously developed land. These changes will have a generally positive impact on protecting European Sites. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |
| SS4 – Distribution of Development (Re-numbered: SS3) | No changes have been made to the policy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have to potential to adversely impact on European sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS5 – Towns | The employment land figure has been updated to 2026 to reflect the latest findings of the Employment Land Study and the policy has been further defined by another three policies on development in the individual towns. | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 |
| SS5a – Leek Area Strategy (New policy) | New policy giving detail on the range and type of development in the town of Leek | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 |
| SS5b – Biddulph Area Strategy (New policy) | New policy giving detail on the range and type of development in the town of Biddulph | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 |
| SS5c – Cheadle Area Strategy (New policy) | New policy giving detail on the range and type of development in the town of Cheadle | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 |
| SS6 – Rural Areas | The employment land figure has been updated to 2026 to reflect the latest findings of the Employment Land Study and has changed from 5.4 hectares to 7.2 hectares. Makes reference to the Site Allocations DPD. | ?* | ?* | ?* | 0 |
| SS6a – Larger Villages | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6b – Smaller Villages | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have to potential to adversely impact on European sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS6c – Other Areas (Re-named: Other Rural Areas Area Strategy) | Policy changed to include the need for Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European Site. This change will have a positive impact on European sites. | ✓✓ | ✓✓ | ✓✓ | 0 |
| SS6d – Major Developed areas in the Countryside | This policy has been removed and incorporated into the above policy SS6c | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS7 – Green Belt (Replaced with: Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor) | Policy has been incorporated into policy SS6c and replaced with the new policy SS7 – Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor . A large increase in tourism activities in this area could potentially have an impact on sensitive habitats and bird movements and so this policy should be taken forward for further assessment. | ?x | ?x | ?x | ?x |
| SS8 – Strategic Transport Improvements | Policy has been incorporated into policies SS5a, SS5c and SS7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS9 – Blythe Bridge Regional Investment Site (Re-numbered: SS8) | No changes have been made to the policy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SD1 – Use of Resources (Re-named: Achieving Sustainable Development) | Amended to include explicit mention of conservation designations, both environmental and historical. Also includes issues relating to flooding and to pollution included. The policy change will have an overall positive influence on protecting European sites. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have to potential to adversely impact on European sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | | SD2 – Pollution and Flood Control | Policy removed and issues relating to flooding and pollution are incorporated into SD1 | ✓ | ✓ |
| E1 – To Develop the District's Economy (Re-named: New Employment Development) | New wording within the policy will not have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |
| E2 – Existing Employment Sites | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H1 – Range and Type of Housing (Re-named: New Housing Development) | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H2 – Affordable Housing (Re-named: Affordable Housing and Local Needs Housing) | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H3 – Gypsy and Traveller Sites | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TCR1 – Development in the Town Centres | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have to potential to adversely impact on European sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | | TCR2 – Retailing Outside Town Centres | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 |
| DC1 – Design Considerations | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 0 |
| DC2 – The Historic Environment | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC3 – Settlement Setting (Re-named: Landscape and Settlement Setting) | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC4 – Masterplanning | Policy incorporated into SS5a and SS5c | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C1 – Creating Sustainable Communities | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TR1 – Tourism and Cultural Facilities (Re-Numbered E3 – Tourism and Cultural Development) | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TR2 – Sport, Recreation and Public Spaces (Re-numbered C2) | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have to potential to adversely impact on European sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| R1 – Rural Diversification | Policy altered to include specific mention of designated sites. The policy change will have an overall positive influence on protecting European sites. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Policy R2 – Rural Housing | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources | The policy has been re-worded such that potential adverse effects on European Sites are more strongly mitigated against and habitats that support the European sites (grassland and heathland) are protected and enhanced. These changes will have a strongly positive impact on European Sites. | ✓✓ | ✓✓ | ✓✓ | ✓✓ |
| NE2 – Natural Landscape | Policy removed (Incorporated into DC3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T1 – Development and Sustainable Transport | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| T2 – Other Sustainable Transport Measures | None that will have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T3 – Telecoms and ICT | Policy removed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

3 APPRAISAL

3.1 SUMMARY OF THE KEY CHANGES MADE TO THE CORE STRATEGY DOCUMENT

3.1.1 Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle

As can be seen from Table 2.3, the main change in the document is the addition of new policies which deal specifically with development within the three towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. As a result, reference to housing numbers and employment land allocations within the three towns has been reduced throughout the document and drawn in to these specific policies. Of the three policies, those that relate to Leek are most likely to have an adverse impact on European Sites because of the close proximity of developments and the desire to promote links with the Peak District. Table 3.1 shows the potential impacts of each policy on each of the European Sites and Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 show the position of the potential housing and employment sites in relation to European Sites.

3.1.2 Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor

The addition of a policy specifically related to the Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor (SS7) has also been included in the Core Strategy. The policy itself states that forms of development which include measures to “*protect the designated nature conservation sites and river valley as wildlife corridors*” will be supported. This will help to ensure that European sites are not adversely impacted as a result of development in the area.

3.1.3 Biodiversity and Geological Resources

Mitigation contained within policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources – has been expanded to include stronger measures to protect and enhance biodiversity (see Box 3.1 below for the full policy). The policy has been re-worded such that potential adverse effects on European Sites are more strongly mitigated against, stating that:

“proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects [will be resisted]”

In addition to this the policy now includes the requirement for development to actively promote biodiversity and points to the restoration of grassland and heathland habitats, for which the South Pennine Moors SAC and Peak District Dales SAC are designated. This addition will help to encourage and maintain those habitats that support the SACs.

Box 3.1: Full Text of Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources

The biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be protected and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development by:

1. Resisting any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met.
2. Protecting, and enhancing national, regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests including ancient woodland unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
 - all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
 - appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
 - the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented,'
3. Supporting opportunities to improve site management and increase public access to wildlife sites including supporting the objectives of the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
4. Ensuring development where appropriate produces a net gain in biodiversity, and ensuring that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for.
5. Ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/or re-creation of biodiversity through its proposed nature, scale, location and design. The local biodiversity opportunity map, in conjunction with the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, will be used to guide biodiversity enhancement measures to be included in development proposals as appropriate to the nature and scale of development proposed and other environmental interest, in particular supporting opportunities to increase grassland and heathland habitats including supporting the Countdown 2010 – Enhancing Biodiversity in Northeast Staffordshire project objectives, the Weaver Hills Partnership and targets in the UK and Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.
6. Protecting and enhancing habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as identified in legislation, and recognising and implementing appropriate measures to take account of the fact that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change.
7. Recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict.
8. Ensuring the provision and protection of green infrastructure networks in line with policy DC1.

Table 3.1 Summary of the Appraisal of the SMDC Core Strategy Changes

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---|---|-------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| SS2 – Future Provision of Development | <p>Since the previous draft of the Core Strategy, the amount of land indicated for employment development across the district has been increased from 18 hectares to 24 hectares to take the figure to 2026, reflecting the latest findings of the Employment Land Study. This increase, if directly impacting on rural areas could potentially have a negative effect if concentrated within areas of high sensitivity, or those areas in close proximity to European sites.</p> | | | | <p>Core Strategy policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c lay out highly specific criteria on where rural housing and employment development can take place. Specifically, SS6c includes a measure to ensure that development “<i>enhances and conserves the quality of the countryside</i>” and to apply Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European Site.</p> <p>In combination with the mitigation contained within policy NE1 and SS1 any potential negative impact of this policy will be neutralised.</p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |
| SS5a – Leek Area Strategy (New policy) | <p>The policy states that locations for housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocations DPD in the following priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within the Urban Area (Area 8); • extensions to the Urban Area to the north of Leek (Area 3); and • extensions to the Urban | | <p>Proposed housing and employment areas (Indicated in Figure 3.1) are located well away from the SPA itself, however, the movement of golden plover between upland grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by inappropriate development.</p> | <p>No adverse impacts on this site would be anticipated as a result of this policy, as the indicated developments are placed further north and east, and the likely effect of tourism pressure will be focused toward the Peak</p> | <p>The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular:</p> <p>point 1: “<i>any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]</i>”</p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>Area to the north east/ eastern fringes of Leek (Areas 5/6) (Indicated in Figure 3.1).</p> <p>Although these broad areas are not placed within the SAC, they do indicate that the spread of development is towards the SAC and the National Park, rather than away from it.</p> <p>Employment and housing located in the areas indicated will not have a material effect on the qualifying features of the SAC (See 2008 AA report for details of the site's qualifying features) but, in combination with the policy intention to:</p> <p><i>"increase tourist opportunities" and "Promote links with the Peak District"</i></p> <p>the policy could increase footfall and visitor pressure on the heathland and on the blanket bog. It will therefore be necessary to carefully manage access to the Peak District and to limit further development toward the SAC.</p> | | <p>Development in the areas indicated will therefore have to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings.</p> <p>The main issues brought about by this policy the policy intention to:</p> <p><i>"increase tourist opportunities" and "Promote links with the Peak District"</i></p> <p>the policy could increase footfall and visitor pressure on the SPA and in so doing increase the likelihood of disturbing Key Species such as the golden plover. It will therefore be necessary to carefully manage access to the Peak District.</p> | District (see opposite), rather than Cannock Chase. | <p>point 5: <i>"ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity"</i></p> <p>and point 7: <i>"recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring:</p> <p><i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |
| SS5b – Biddulph Area Strategy (New policy) | <p>The policy states that locations for housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocations DPD in the following priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within the Urban Area | <p>The policy states that locations for housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocations DPD in the following priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within the Urban Area | <p>Proposed housing and employment areas (Indicated in Figure 3.1) are located well away from the SPA itself, however, the movement of golden plover between upland</p> | <p>No adverse impacts on this site would be anticipated as a result of this policy, as the indicated developments are placed further</p> | <p>The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular:</p> <p>point 1: <i>"any proposed development that could</i></p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>(including land at Uplands Mill and the current commitment at Newpool Meadows)(Area 8);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extension to the urban area to the west of the bypass (Area 4); and in the event of Newpool Meadows being designated as a Village Green, land in the green belt at Newpool (Area 6) (Indicated in Figure 3.2). <p>These broad areas are not placed within the SAC and are positioned well away from the SAC. No negative impacts would therefore be anticipated as a result of this policy.</p> <p>Employment and housing located in the areas indicated will not have a material effect on the qualifying features of the SAC (See 2008 AA report for details of the site's qualifying features).</p> | <p>(including land at Uplands Mill and the current commitment at Newpool Meadows) (Area 8);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extension to the urban area to the west of the bypass (Area 4); and in the event of Newpool Meadows being designated as a Village Green, land in the green belt at Newpool (Area 6) (Indicated in Figure 3.1) <p>These areas are not placed within the SAC and are positioned well away from the SAC. No negative impacts would therefore be anticipated as a result of this policy.</p> <p>Employment and housing located in the areas indicated will not have a material effect on the qualifying features of the SAC (See 2008 AA report for details of the site's qualifying features).</p> | <p>grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by inappropriate development. Development in the areas indicated will therefore have to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings.</p> | <p>north and west.</p> | <p><i>have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]"</i></p> <p>point 5: <i>"ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity"</i></p> <p>and point 7: <i>"recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring:</p> <p><i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |
| SS5c – Cheadle Area Strategy (New policy) | <p>Sites for new housing development will be identified, consulted on and phased through the Site Allocations DPD within the following broad locations and in the following</p> | <p>Sites for new housing development will be identified, consulted on and phased through the Site Allocations DPD within the following broad locations and in the following</p> | <p>Proposed housing and employment broad areas (Indicated in Figure 3.1) are located well away from the SPA itself, however, the</p> | <p>No adverse impacts on this site would be anticipated as a result of this policy, as the indicated</p> | <p>The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular:</p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|--|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within the Urban Area (Area 8); South West Cheadle Urban Extension (Areas 4/5); and extension to the urban area to the north of Cheadle (Area 1), extension to the urban area to the north east of Cheadle (Area 2) - this location will not be required if capacity is met by the development of the broad locations listed above (Indicated in Figure 3.3). <p>These areas are not placed within the SAC and are positioned well away from the SAC. No negative impacts would therefore be anticipated as a result of this policy.</p> <p>Employment and housing located in the areas indicated will not have a material effect on the qualifying features of the SAC (See 2008 AA report for details of the site's qualifying features).</p> | <p>priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> within the Urban Area (Area 8); South West Cheadle Urban Extension (Areas 4/5); and extension to the urban area to the north of Cheadle (Area 1), extension to the urban area to the north east of Cheadle (Area 2) - this location will not be required if capacity is met by the development of the broad locations listed above (Indicated in Figure 3.3). <p>These areas are not placed within the SAC and are positioned well away from the SAC. No negative impacts would therefore be anticipated as a result of this policy.</p> <p>Employment and housing located in the areas indicated will not have a material effect on the qualifying features of the SAC (See 2008 AA report for details of the site's qualifying features).</p> | <p>movement of golden plover between upland grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by inappropriate development. Development in the areas indicated will therefore have to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings.</p> | <p>developments are placed further north and west.</p> | <p>point 1: <i>"any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]"</i></p> <p>point 5: <i>"ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity"</i></p> <p>and point 7: <i>"recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring:</p> <p><i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|--|--|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| SS6 – Rural Areas | <p>Since the previous draft of the Core Strategy, the amount of land indicated for employment development in rural areas has been updated to reflect the latest Employment Land Study which takes the figure up to 2026. This increase within rural villages and areas could potentially have a negative effect if concentrated within areas of high sensitivity, or those areas in close proximity to European sites.</p> | | | | <p>Core Strategy policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c lay out highly specific criteria on where rural housing and employment development can take place. Specifically, SS6c includes a measure to ensure that development “enhances and conserves the quality of the countryside”</p> <p>In combination with the mitigation contained within policy NE1 and SS1 any potential negative impact of this policy will be neutralised.</p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |
| Policy SS7 – Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor (New Policy) | <p>Since this policy relates to the specific area around the Churnet Valley, specific impacts on the SAC are unlikely. In fact, the promotion of the Churnet Valley as an area for tourism may diffuse the tourism pressure and, potentially, draw it away from the SAC.</p> | | <p>The policy states that the Churnet Valley will be identified as a major sustainable tourism corridor. Although the Churnet Valley is located well away from the SPA itself the movement of golden plover between upland grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by disturbance from tourists.</p> | <p>Since this policy relates to the specific area around the Churnet Valley, specific impacts on the SAC are unlikely. In fact, the promotion of the Churnet Valley as an area for tourism may diffuse the tourism pressure and, potentially, draw it away from the SAC.</p> | <p>The policy itself states that forms of development which include measures to “protect the designated nature conservation sites and river valley as wildlife corridors” will be supported. This will help to ensure that European sites are not adversely impacted as a result of development in the area.</p> <p>In addition, the application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative effects stated, in particular point 7 “recognising the value of the natural environment</p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | | | <p><i>for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring:</p> <p><i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |

Figure 3.1: Location of Proposed Housing and Employment Sites in Leek, in Relation to European Protected Sites

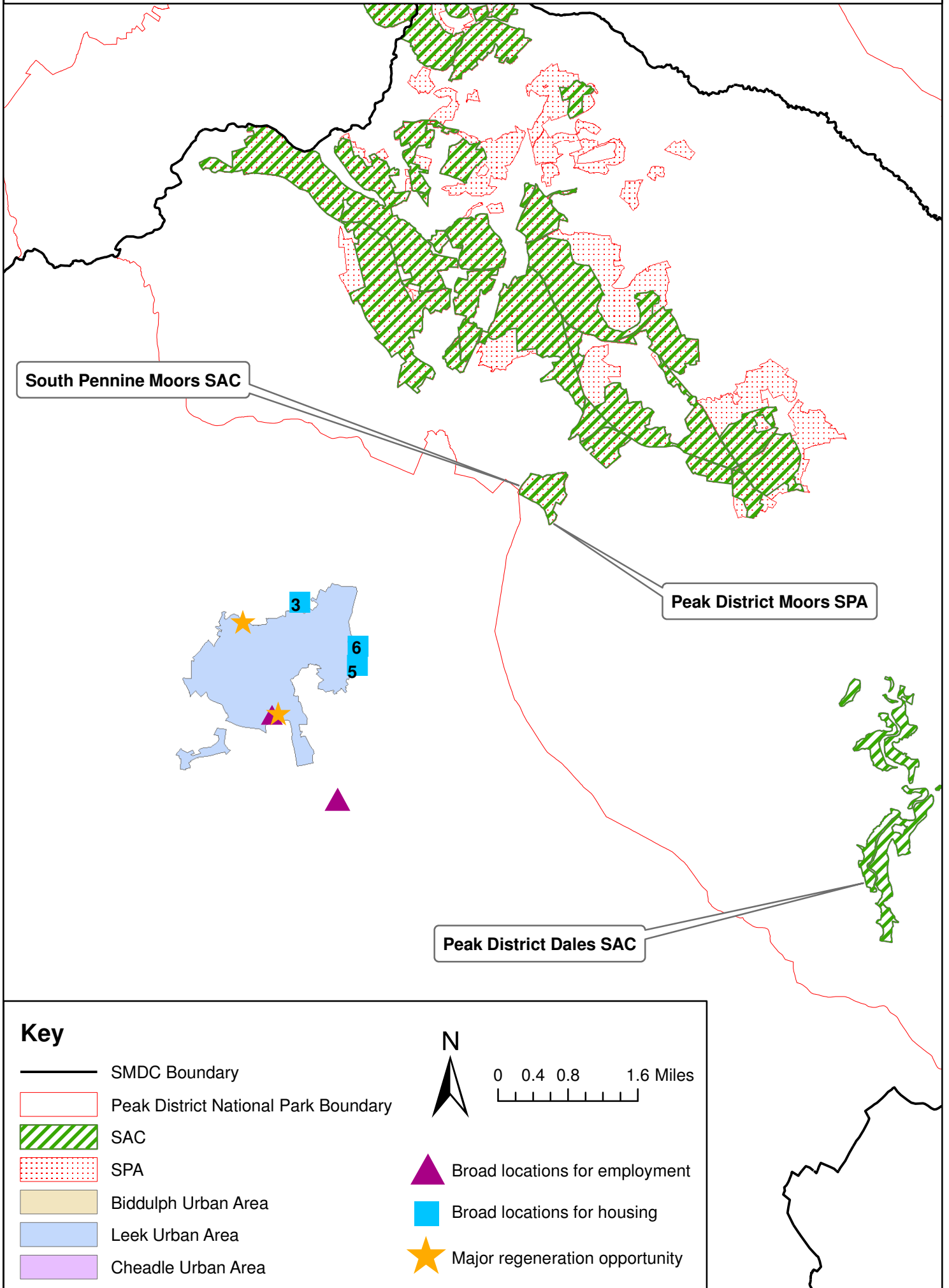
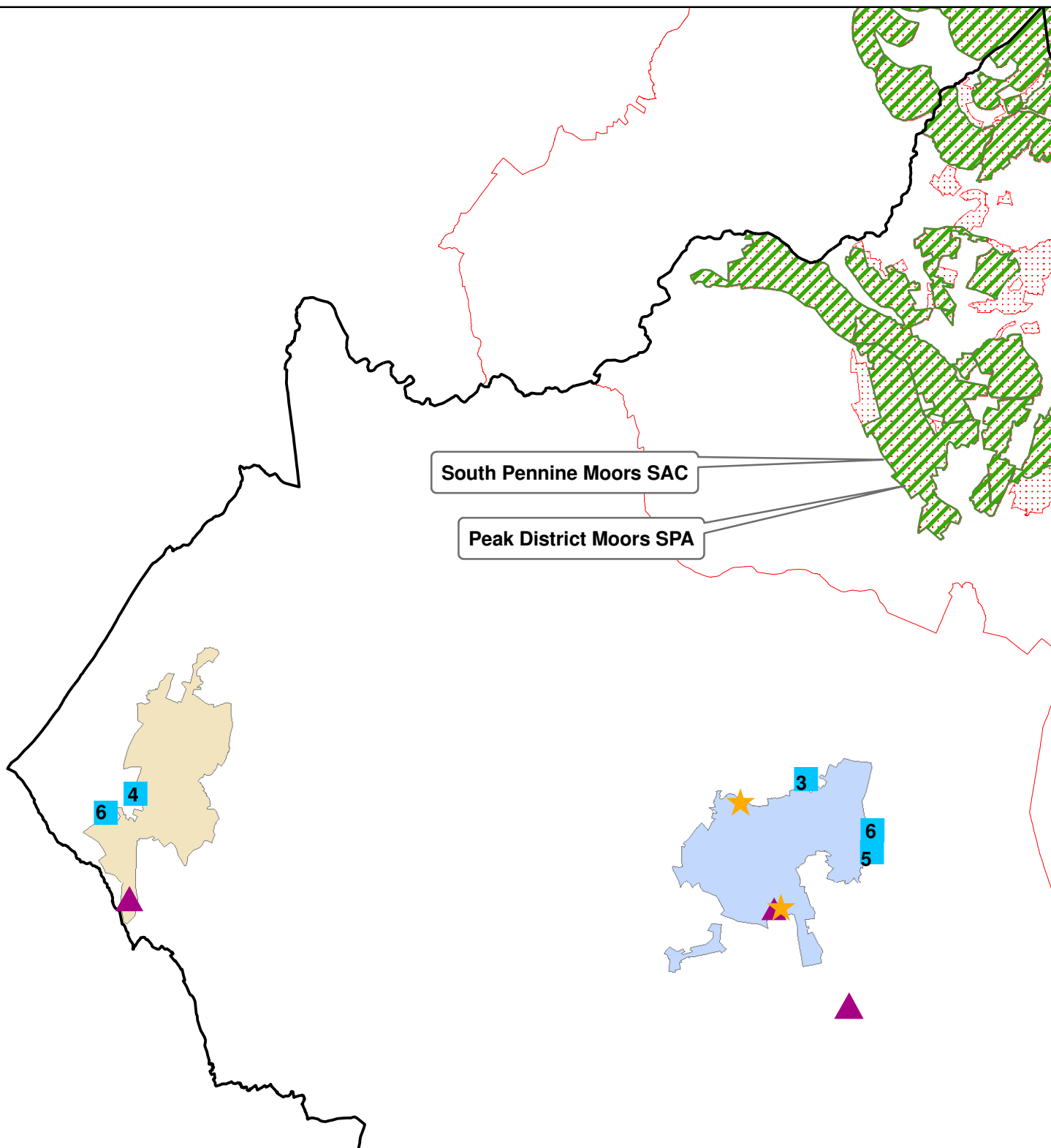


Figure 3.2: Location of Proposed Housing and Employment Sites in Biddulph, in Relation to European Protected Sites



South Pennine Moors SAC


Peak District Moors SPA

Key

-  SMDC Boundary
-  Peak District National Park Boundary
-  SAC
-  SPA
-  Biddulph Urban Area
-  Leek Urban Area
-  Cheadle Urban Area



0 0.4 0.8 1.6 Miles






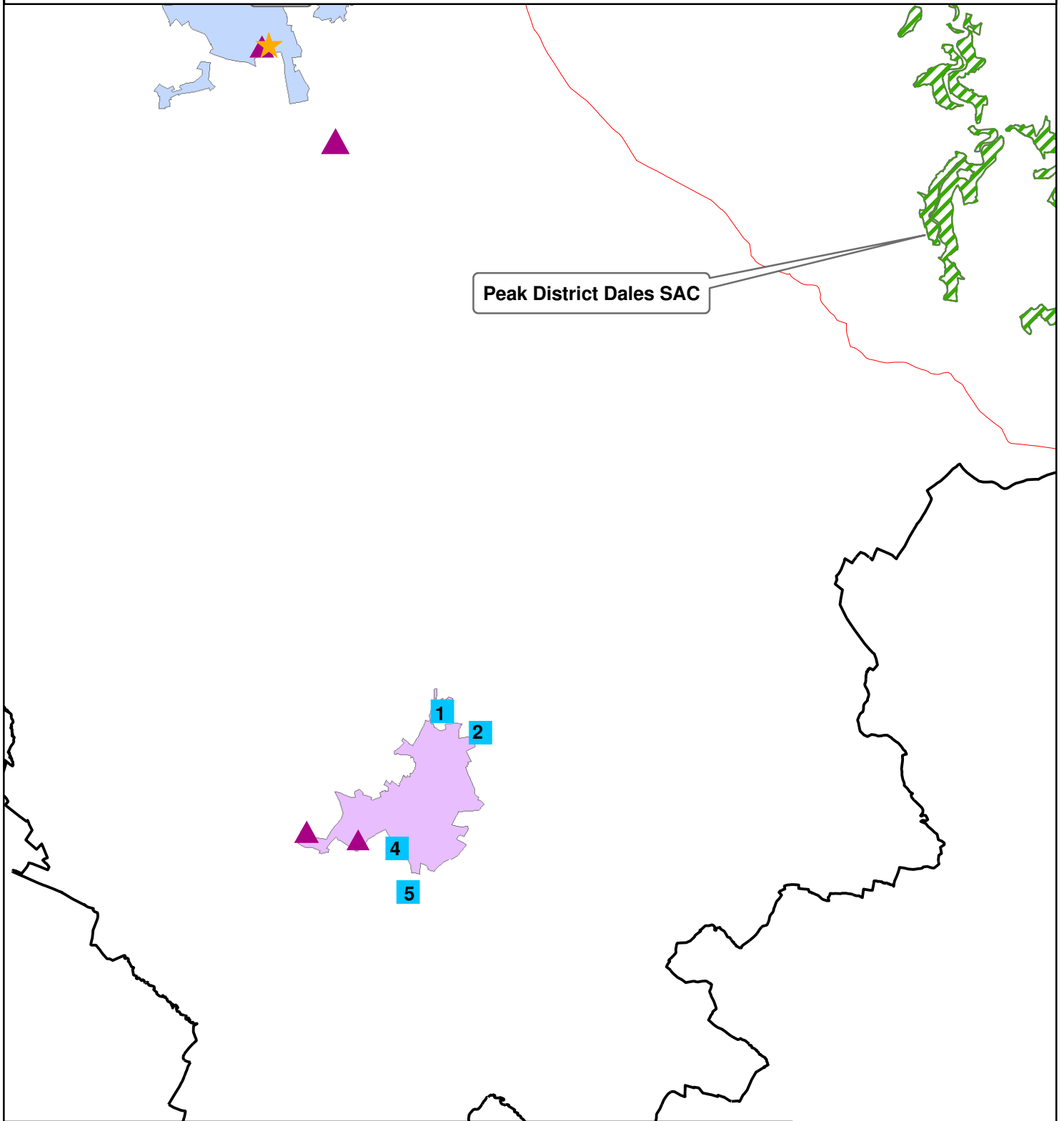




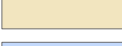
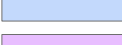




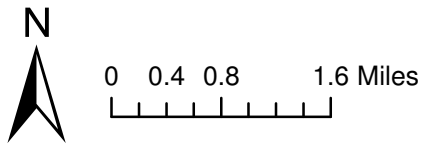
-  Broad locations for employment
-  Broad locations for housing
-  Major regeneration opportunity

Figure 3.3: Location of Proposed Housing and Employment Sites in Cheadle, in Relation to European Protected Sites



Key

-  SMDC Boundary
-  Peak District National Park Boundary
-  SAC
-  SPA
-  Biddulph Urban Area
-  Leek Urban Area
-  Cheadle Urban Area
-  Broad locations for employment
-  Broad locations for housing
-  Major regeneration opportunity



4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The likely effects of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Core Strategy were first appraised in May 2008. Since then there have been a number of revisions and modifications to the document and the possible effects of these changes have been assessed in the present report. The assessment focuses on two main areas where possible policy changes could have triggered an effect on European sites. These are

- tourism-based regeneration; and
- housing and employment land development.

4.2 THE EFFECTS OF TOURISM-BASED REGENERATION

There is mention within policy SS5a of the intention to increase tourism opportunities and to promote links with the Peak District. The policy could therefore increase footfall and visitor pressure on heathland and blanket bog habitats in the area. It will therefore be necessary to carefully manage access to the Peak District and to limit further development in the near vicinity of the SAC.

Point 7 within Core Strategy policy NE1 contains mitigation against the possible negative effects of tourism and recreation on the natural environment. It states that the Council will: *“recognise the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict”*. With measures put in place to ensure that there is no conflict, and that the natural environment is protected against the impacts of sport and leisure activity there should be no negative effects arising from tourism-based regeneration.

4.3 DEVELOPMENT IN THE VICINITY OF EUROPEAN SITES

Of the three policies that deal with housing and employment development in the towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle, those that relate to Leek are most likely to have an adverse impact on European Sites because of the close proximity of developments (See Figure 3.1). The policy states that locations for housing development will be identified and phased through the Site Allocations DPD in the following priority order depending on the need for sites to be brought forward:

- within the Urban Area (Area 8);
- extensions to the Urban Area to the north of Leek (Area 3); and
- extensions to the Urban Area to the north east/ eastern fringes of Leek (Areas 5/6) (See Figure 3.1).

Although these broad areas are not placed within the SAC, they do indicate that the spread of development is towards the SAC and the National Park, rather than away from it.

SMDC understands the potential risks posed by development policies and also the non-specific tourism policies and so recognises the importance of:

- steering development to the most sustainable locations (preferably previously developed land and buildings) as emphasised in policy SS5;
- making sure that protected areas and in particular the European Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are avoided and that no future developments will have any adverse effects on site integrity;
- protecting and where possible enhancing biodiversity throughout the District.

Several overarching policies have been designed to provide the necessary mitigation and ensure that the site integrity and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites are not compromised. These policies have to be applied before the council will grant planning permission, and would need to be applied against plans for housing and employment land development in the vicinity of Leek. Three main policies within the draft Core Strategy will provide the necessary mitigation. These are:

- **Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources** – States that:

“The biodiversity and geological resources of the District will be protected and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development”. Development control would “[resist] any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met”

This clause adds a first layer of protection and would encourage avoidance of designated sites. Further wording within this policy includes the requirement for development to actively promote biodiversity and points to the restoration of grassland and heathland habitats, for which the South Pennine Moors SAC and Peak District Dales SAC are designated. This addition will help to encourage and maintain those habitats that support the SACs (see Box 3.1 for the full text of this policy).

- **Policy SS1 – Development Principals** – States that:

“the council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands District”

...and requires;

“development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations”

- **Policy SS6C – Other Rural Areas Area Strategy** – States that the council will:

“Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity, geological resources and heritage of the District”

and includes the need for Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European Site.

Given the overall scale of development proposed and their likely locations, together with the application of policies NE1, SS1 and SS6C, it is expected that there would be no adverse effects on the site integrity of the European sites.

ANNEX A
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Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Habitats Regulations Assessment – Update Report to Reflect Revised Submission Version Core Strategy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In line with European Union Legislation, Appropriate Assessment of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy has previously taken place. In May 2008, assessment of the Draft Preferred Options was published. An update to this document to reflect changes made in the addendum to the Core Strategy Submission Version, was published in April 2009. This further update examines the impact of changes made in the Revised Submission Version of the Core Strategy. This report should be read alongside both of the previously published reports.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 In terms of screening, the original assessment, published in May 2008, considered 22 sites of which 18 were screened out. The appraisal was focused on possible effects on the 4 remaining sites:

- South Pennine Moors SAC;
- Peak District Dales SAC;
- Cannock Chase SAC;
- Peak District Moors SPA.

- 2.2 Like the previous update appraisal, this update will continue to focus on the sites selected by the screening process. No Core Strategy policy changes have occurred that would require further sites to be included in this appraisal.

- 2.3 In order to identify the Core Strategy policies which have been changed at this stage, to enable any negative impacts on European Sites to be assessed, a policy table (Table 1) identifying the nature of the changes made has been included. This table takes the same form as it did in the previous update so comparisons can be easily made. Note – some of the changes made are of a very minor nature (e.g. typographical errors and references to documents which would clearly have no impact on European Protected Sites) so where such minor changes have occurred, it has been stated that no changes have been made to the policy for the purposes of this exercise.

- 2.4 Where this review process found the potential for a policy change to adversely affect European sites, the policy has been taken forward for further assessment and where necessary, mitigation measures have been identified and described.

3. Review of Changes to Core Strategy Policies

- 3.1 The review of changes to policies is summarised in the following table that lists the policies, summarises those changes likely to have the potential to impact

adversely on European sites and presents the findings of the review in relation to each of the Natura 2000 sites. For ease of use, the table is colour-coded such that those policy changes that have the potential to adversely impact on European sites are highlighted in orange and those policy changes which will not have a negative impact on European sites are highlighted in green.

- 3.2 The same review system which was used in the previous assessments has been used again. This is shown in the table below.

Screening System for the Effects of Changes to Core Strategy Policies

| | |
|----|---|
| √√ | Clear strong positive effects |
| √ | Broadly Supportive |
| 0 | Neutral or no discernible effect |
| X | Likely negative effect |
| ?x | Uncertain possible negative effect |

- 3.3 To carry out the review process, a set of questions based on key criteria that relate to the qualifying interests and integrity of the sites was established to aid in the decision making process for assessing whether the changes made to policies would impact on site integrity. Again, this is the same methodology used in the previous surveys.

Key Questions Used in the Review Process

| |
|---|
| Will the policy change cause physical loss or damage to the European site? |
| Will the policy change cause pollution to land, sea or air that might impact upon the qualifying features? |
| Will the policy change restrict the capacity to meet conservation objectives? |
| Will the policy change disrupt those factors which help maintain the favourable conditions of the site? |
| Will the policy change interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key flora and fauna that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site? |
| Will the policy change increase disturbance close to the site? |
| Will the policy change encourage further access to the site by the public and their pets? |
| Will the policy change result in the removal of roosting grounds? |
| Will the policy change cause an increase in the scale or nature of development near the site, which could cause an impact on the site and affect site integrity? |
| Will the policy change alter the type of development currently near the site that could lead to future impacts on the site? |
| Will the policy change affect areas utilised by qualifying bird species outside of the SPA? |
| Will the policy change encourage the encroachment on bird flight paths or affect their habitat? |

Will the policy change increase developmental creep that could attract other types of development that might be more likely to have an impact on the site?

Table 1 Review of Core Strategy Policy Changes in Relation to European Protected Sites

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS1 Development Principles | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS2 Future Provision of Development | Reduction to overall housing figure from 6000 to 5500 over plan period and a knock-on reduction in the provision of affordable housing. Reduction in the phasing of dwellings in the early part of the plan period with increases later in the plan period. Reduction in housing development from previous policy does not raise any negative impacts. (Location of development covered in other policies). Overall positive impact due to reduction in housing numbers. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| SS3 Distribution of Development | Distribution of housing development in Cheadle and the Rural Areas has been amended. For Cheadle, the proportion has been reduced from 25% to 22%. For the rural areas, the proportion has increased from 25% to 28%. There is a possible negative impact as a result of this change depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites identified. | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |
| SS4 Managing the Release of Housing Land | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS5 Towns | Amendments to net dwelling completions and affordable housing targets in Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph. All have been reduced to take into account the lower overall housing provision figure. Also minor change to wording – substitution of ‘controlled’ to ‘managed’ in the context of phasing. Reduction in net housing completions and affordable housing targets in the towns does not raise any negative impacts. Overall positive impact due to reduction in housing numbers in all 3 towns. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| SS5a Leek Area Strategy | <p>Several changes to policy wording – addition of ‘support its regeneration’ to the end of the first sentence; deletion of Area 3 (north of Leek) and Areas 5/6 (to the north east / eastern fringes of Leek) from the list of broad areas for new housing development; addition of ‘small urban extensions’ to the list of broad areas for new housing development; prioritising broad locations for employment development in Leek – ‘within the urban area’ is first priority, Churnet Works is second priority, Cornhill is third priority and Leekbrook Industrial Estate is fourth priority; also an addition of new bullet point to policy number 2 – stating: “improving accessibility to employment areas, particularly from areas of local deprivation and need.”</p> <p>It is considered that most of the policy wording changes to this policy result in a positive (in the case of deletion of Area 3) or</p> | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | neutral impact. The addition of small urban housing extensions and employment development being prioritised within the urban area does create some uncertainty about impact. As the locations of the small urban housing extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. | | | | |
| SS5b Biddulph Area Strategy | <p>Several changes to wording - addition of 'support its regeneration' to the end of the first sentence, deletion of reference to Newpool Meadows and Area 6 (land in the greenbelt at Newpool) from the list of broad areas for new housing development; addition of 'small urban extensions in the green belt' to the list of broad areas for new housing development; addition of wording to second bullet point to allow for new employment development within the urban area; also an addition of new bullet point to policy number 2 – stating: "improving accessibility to employment areas, particularly from areas of local deprivation and need."</p> <p>The addition of small urban housing extensions and employment development within the urban area does create some uncertainty about impact. As the locations of the small urban housing extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed.</p> | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS5c Cheadle Area Strategy | <p>Several changes to policy wording – deletion of reference to south west Cheadle Urban Extension (Areas 4/5), amendment to references to Areas 1 & 2 to include Area 2 as a broad area for housing development where previously it was stated that this area may not be required; addition of ‘small urban extensions’ to the list of broad areas for housing development; in bullet point 4 reference to the inclusion of a recreation area for younger people to serve Cheadle West and a new primary school to serve east and north Cheadle if required; prioritising broad locations for employment development in Cheadle – ‘within the urban area’ is first priority, New Haden / Brookhouses Industrial Estate is second priority and Draycott Cross Road is third priority; an amendment to Policy 6 relating to the need for and viability of the provision of a bypass and other infrastructure improvements, to include reference to a link from the A50 at Blythe Bridge to Cheadle.</p> <p>The addition of small urban housing extensions does create some uncertainty about impact. As the locations of the small urban housing extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed.</p> | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |
| | Increase of overall figures for new dwellings in rural areas from 1500 to 1540 and affordable housing provision from 300 to 400 in | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS6 Rural Areas | the plan period to reflect distributional changes set out in Policy SS3. There is a possible negative impact as a result of this change depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites identified. | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |
| SS6a Larger Villages | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6b Smaller Villages | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS7 Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor | A minor change has been made to this policy. The last bullet point has been amended to read: "measures to enhance its landscape character <u>and heritage</u> and to protect the designated nature conservation sites and the river valley as wildlife corridors." Previously this policy was the subject of detailed assessment as impacts on the SPA and SAC sites were unknown. It was concluded that the application of the policy itself alongside policies NE1 & SS1 should remove any risk. It is not considered that this minor wording amendment introduces any further risk. It should be noted that the specific wording of policies NE1 & SS1 referred to in the previous analysis remains unchanged. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS8 Blythe Bridge Regional Investment Site | <p>The wording of this policy has been amended and a list of 3 criteria with which development must comply has been included as follows: Development will be strictly controlled to ensure that it:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a high quality site attractive to national and international investors; 2. Supports the diversification and modernisation of the region's economy; 3. Is in accordance with the adopted or any subsequently revised Development Brief as approved by the Council." <p>It is not considered that this additional wording would have any adverse impact on the European sites.</p> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources | <p>This policy has been completely revised and now reads: 'The Council will require all development to make sustainable use of resources, and adapt to climate change. This will be achieved by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giving preference to development on previously developed land in the most sustainable locations in allocating land for development and determining planning applications, except where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a previously developed site performs poorly in sustainability terms and could not be made otherwise | √ | √ | √ | √ |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>acceptable;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development upon a previously developed site would cause harm to some asset of acknowledged importance or if it would create an unacceptable flood risk; the proposal relates to the provision of development on a greenfield site which cannot be accommodated on a previously developed site in the locality, or which would provide overriding benefits e.g. affordable housing, infrastructure benefits. <p>2. Managing housing development to achieve the following previously developed land targets: 2006 - 2016 65% 2016 - 2026 55%</p> <p>3. Supporting or promoting proposals that remediate brownfield sites affected by contamination, where this is consistent with other policies and also ensuring that any legacy from former land uses (such as coalmining) is appropriately addressed so that no future liability for future maintenance or public safety arises.”.</p> <p>4. Requiring that development is located and designed to minimise energy needs and to take advantage of maximised orientation to achieve the energy savings</p> | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>contained in Policy SD2 etc.</p> <p>5. Ensuring all planning applications which require a Design and Access Statement are accompanied by a Sustainability/Energy Statement.</p> <p>6. Ensuring that all new housing developments meet the CABE Building for Life 'good' (silver) standard, and that all substantial developments (greater than 10 residential units or 1000m² floorspace) meet the 'very good' (gold) standard.</p> <p>7. The Council will expect that all developers investigate the potential for re-using construction or construction waste materials, especially those sourced locally (which can include those minerals available on site, as appropriate) and integrates where possible on-site waste management facilities. The Council will require that all new-build schemes achieve 25% of the total minerals used as derived from recycled and reused content unless it can be demonstrated by the developer that it would not be practical or viable to do so. This percentage may alter as future local evidence may dictate.</p> <p>8. Requiring all new development achieves the highest viably possible water conservation standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BREEAM offices scale, including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)</p> | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>in all developments, unless it can be demonstrated that it is not practicable to do so'.</p> <p>Focus on brownfield sites in sustainable locations will have a positive impact on European sites.</p> | | | | |
| SD2 Renewable & Low Carbon Energy | <p>This policy is new. The content was previously part of Policy SD1 and reads:</p> <p>'The District will strive to meet part of its future energy demand through renewable or low-carbon energy sources (which could be through a variety of technologies, for example windpower, solar energy, biomass etc), in line with current evidence which identifies the feasibility of these forms of energy across the District. This will be achieved by:-</p> <p>1. Supporting small- and large- scale stand alone renewable or low-carbon energy schemes, subject to the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the degree to which the scale and nature of a proposal impacts on the landscape, particularly having regard to the Landscape Character Assessment and impact on the Peak District National Park (taking into account both individual and cumulative effects of similar proposals); • the degree to which the developer has demonstrated | √ | √ | √ | √ |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>any environmental/economic/social benefits of a scheme as well as how any environmental or social impacts have been minimised (e.g. visual, noise or smell);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact on designated sites of European, national and local biodiversity and geological importance in accordance with policy NE1; the impact on the amenity of residents and other interests of acknowledged importance, including the historic environment; the degree to which individual proposals reflect current local evidence regarding the feasibility of different types of renewable or low-carbon energy at different locations across the District. In the case of proposals on greenfield sites, the Council will expect that submissions first demonstrate that there were no alternative brownfield sites, which were reasonably feasible and viable, and acceptable in other respects. <p>2. Requiring that all new development is constructed to the highest viably possible renewable energy/energy efficiency levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes and the BREAM office scale (and as a minimum satisfy the</p> | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>levels required by law at the date of approval).</p> <p>3. Requiring that all submissions for substantial residential, non-residential, and mixed use developments (greater than 10 residential units or 1000m² floorspace) consider:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the scheme could contribute to any existing district heating infrastructure in that area, as a supplier of heat, or where there is no existing infrastructure the submission should explore the potential for the establishment of new infrastructure for this purpose; and • whether the scheme could benefit as a significant heat receptor (for example high density residential schemes). In these circumstances the submission should explore whether there is existing connecting infrastructure. Where there is no existing infrastructure the submission should explore the potential for the establishment of new infrastructure for this purpose. • In the case of mixed use schemes, the submission should explore how different uses can be optimally laid out to benefit from co-location as heat suppliers/demanders; including how new connecting infrastructure would assist the transference of low | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>carbon heating.</p> <p>4. The Council will promote the introduction of similar energy-/carbon-saving and water efficiency measures within existing buildings (subject to other planning considerations) – for example during conversions requiring planning permission; or retrofitting schemes. In the case of extensions requiring planning permission, such measures (either within the extension or original building) will be supported.</p> <p>5. The Council will promote the integration of ‘decentralised’ renewable energy/low-carbon energy infrastructure within new development (or as retrofitted within existing development) and will encourage developers to explore how individual schemes can maximise micro-generation opportunities. Where major-scale development is proposed, for example across large-scale site allocations for housing, commercial or mixed uses, there will be an expectation that developers take a view regarding how sustainability standards can be further exceeded across the whole site. For example through the use of communal micro-renewable facilities or district heating schemes’.</p> <p>This policy specifically refers to protection of European sites and cross references to Policy NE1, which will have an overall positive</p> | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | influence. | | | | |
| SD3 Pollution & Flood Risk | This topic area was formerly part of SD1 but is now the subject of a separate policy. Its intention is to avoid or mitigate the effects of pollution and development within the floodplain. It is considered that the contents of this policy are broadly supportive in relation to the designations. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| E1 New Employment Development | New additional wording has been added to this policy as follows: "Large scale office (Class B1a) developments (of 5000m2 gross or more) will only be permitted where a clear need for the proposal has been demonstrated and there would be no adverse impacts on planned and committed office development schemes within other centres." Clearly, large scale office development has the potential to have a negative effect within areas of high sensitivity or those areas in close proximity to European sites. | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |
| E2 Existing Employment Sites | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E3 Tourism & Cultural Development | Part of the policy has now been re-worded with bullet points 3, 4 and 5 being combined into the following new bullet point: "New tourist and visitor accommodation and facilities should be developed in locations that offer good connectivity with other | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. They should normally be located in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available. Outside of these locations, including within the Green Belt, new accommodation and facilities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be of a scale and design which can be easily assimilated into the local area in a sustainable manner; • normally be limited to the conversion of existing buildings; or • exceptionally, may be new build where it is required to support or complement existing accommodation, facilities or attractions and there is a demonstrable need which cannot be met in other ways. Preference will be given to buildings which are non-permanent in nature. Within the Churnet Valley Tourism Corridor permanent new tourism development of an appropriate scale will be supported in accordance with Policy SS7." <p>Previously Policy SS7 was the subject of detailed assessment as impacts on the SPA and SAC sites were unknown as it was considered that a large increase in tourism activities could potentially have an impact on sensitive habitats and bird movements. It was concluded that the application of the policy itself alongside policies NE1 & SS1 should remove any risk. It is</p> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | not considered that the amendment to the wording of this policy including the cross-reference to policy SS7 introduces any further risk. | | | | |
| H1 New Housing Development | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H2 Affordable Housing & Local Needs Housing | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H3 Gypsy & Traveller Sites | One change has been made to the wording of this policy to clarify that more than one gypsy and traveller site could be allocated if required to meet a proven need. It is not considered that this amendment has the potential to adversely impact on European sites. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TCR1 Development in the Town Centres | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TCR2 Retailing Outside Town Centres | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Changes have been made to the policy wording to reflect new | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| DC1 Design Considerations | policy C3 on Green Infrastructure and to ensure consistency with Policy NE1 additional wording has been included in a new bullet point as follows: "promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate, in accordance with policy NE1." This additional wording is considered to be broadly supportive in relation to the designations. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| DC2 The Historic Environment | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DC3 Landscape & Settlement Setting | A change has been made to the policy wording to reflect new policy C3 on Green Infrastructure. It is not considered that this would have an adverse impact on European sites. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C1 Creating Sustainable Communities | A change has been made to the policy wording to make provision for any future Community Infrastructure Levy which the Council may adopt. It is not considered that this would have an adverse impact on European sites. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C2 Sport, Recreation & Open Space | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C3 Green Infrastructure | This is a new policy added to strengthen policies for the provision of green infrastructure and reads as follows: | | | | |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>“The Council will, through partnership working with local communities, organisations, landowners and developers, develop an integrated network of high quality and multi-functional green infrastructure that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and improve the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities for local communities and enhance the settings of neighbourhoods; • Link existing and potential sites of nature conservation value and historic landscape features, create new wildlife habitats, increase biodiversity, and increase tree cover where it is appropriate to the landscape; • Enhance the natural, man-made and cultural features that are crucial to the local landscape and create opportunities for the restoration of degraded landscapes and the enhancement of the urban fringe; • Mitigate the negative effects of climate change and maximise potential climate change benefits including effective flood risk and waterways management; • Create appropriate access for a wide range of users to enjoy the countryside, including improved linkages to and provision of formal and informal recreation opportunities and accessible woodland areas, encouraging walking and cycling; • Contribute to the diversification of the local economy and | √ | √ | √ | √ |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>tourist development through the enhancement of existing, and provision of new facilities.</p> <p>The Council will identify, protect and enhance Green Infrastructure assets through the Site Allocations DPD and the Green Infrastructure Strategy.”</p> <p>It is considered that this policy is broadly supportive in terms of impact on the European sites.</p> | | | | |
| R1 Rural Diversification | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R2 Rural Housing | Changes have been made to the wording of this policy to provide more flexibility for the conversion of rural buildings to residential use. The wording now allows for an alternative approach to marketing the building for a commercial use first with the addition of an option to provide other evidence that the building in question would be unsuitable for a commercial use. The policy also now requires a residential conversion to be in a sustainable location. It is considered that these changes to the wording would not impact on the European sites. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NE1 Biodiversity & | Minor changes have been made to the wording to reflect the production of the Staffordshire Moorlands Biodiversity Opportunity Map and the ending of the Countdown 2010 and Weaver Hills projects; to include reference to landscape scale conservation management to properly reflect government policy and the aims of | √ | √ | √ | √ |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| Geological Resources | the proposed local opportunities mapping initiative; and to make reference to the new policy on green infrastructure. It is considered that these changes (particularly the reference to landscape scale conservation management) are broadly supportive in terms of impact on the European sites. | | | | |
| T1 Development & Sustainable Transport | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| T2 Other Sustainable Transport Measures | No changes have been made to the policy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

4. Appraisal of Core Strategy Changes raising Possible Negative Impacts

- 4.1 There have been a number of policy changes to the Core Strategy (detailed above), most of which have been of a relatively minor nature. The policy areas which have raised issues in terms of 'uncertain possible negative effects' and therefore require further assessment are:

Policy SS3 – Distribution of Development

- 4.2 A possible negative impact has been identified as a result of the increased proportion of housing allocated to the rural areas depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites.

Policy SS5a – Leek Area Strategy

- 4.3 Several amendments have been made to the broad areas identified for housing, which has resulted in the need for further assessment. These are: deletion of Area 3 (north of Leek) and Areas 5/6 (to the north east / eastern fringes of Leek) from the list of broad areas for new housing development; addition of 'small urban extensions' to the list of broad areas for new housing development.

Policy SS5b – Biddulph Area Strategy

- 4.4 Several amendments have been made to the broad areas identified for housing, which has resulted in the need for further assessment. These are: deletion of reference to Newpool Meadows and Area 6 (land in the greenbelt at Newpool) from the list of broad areas for new housing development; and addition of 'small urban extensions in the green belt' to the list of broad areas for new housing development.

Policy SS5c – Cheadle Area Strategy

- 4.5 Several amendments have been made to the broad areas identified for housing, which has resulted in the need for further assessment. These are: deletion of reference to south west Cheadle Urban Extension (Areas 4/5), amendment to references to Areas 1 & 2 to include Area 2 as a broad area for housing development where previously it was stated that this area may not be required; and addition of 'small urban extensions' to the list of broad areas for housing development.

Policy SS6 – Rural Areas

- 4.6 A possible negative impact has been identified as a result of the increased proportion of housing allocated to the rural areas (in conjunction with Policy SS3) depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites.

Policy E1 – New Employment Development

- 4.7 A possible negative impact has been identified as a result of new additional wording to this policy relating to large scale office developments. Clearly, large

scale office development has the potential to have a negative effect within areas of high sensitivity or those areas in close proximity to European sites.

- 4.8 Table 2 (which follows) demonstrates that the risk to European sites is neutralised through the application of relevant Core Strategy policies.

Table 2: Summary of the Appraisal of the Core Strategy Changes

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|--|--|-------------------------|---|-------------------|--|---|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| SS3 – Distribution of Development | <p>Distribution of housing development in Cheadle and the Rural Areas has been amended. For Cheadle, the proportion has been reduced from 25% to 22%. For the rural areas, the proportion has increased from 25% to 28%. There is a possible negative impact as a result of this change depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites.</p> <p>As the precise location of development in the rural area will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.</p> | | | | <p>Core Strategy policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c lay out highly specific criteria on where rural housing development can take place. Specifically, SS6c includes a measure to ensure that development <i>“enhances and conserves the quality of the countryside”</i> and to apply Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European Site.</p> | <p>None – the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | | | In combination with the mitigation contained within policy NE1 and SS1 any potential negative impact of this policy will be neutralised. | |
| SS5a – Leek Area Strategy | <p>The policy proposes deletion of Area 3 (north of Leek) and Areas 5/6 (to the north east / eastern fringes of Leek) from the list of broad areas for new housing development and the addition of ‘small urban extensions’ to the list of broad areas for new housing development.</p> <p>The previous assessment raised concern that the broad areas indicated showed the spread of development in Leek towards the SAC and the National Park rather than away from it. The deletion of the housing sites named above</p> | <p>No additional issues raised by changes to policy at this stage.</p> <p>An issue relating to new development in general and its potential impact on key species raised previously is still applicable: ‘the movement of golden plover between upland</p> | <p>No additional issues raised by changes to policy at this stage.</p> | <p>The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular: point 1: “<i>any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]</i>” point 5: “<i>ensuring development promotes the</i></p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> | |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|-------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>could therefore have a potentially positive impact on European sites.</p> <p>The remaining issue relates to the location of the 'small urban extensions' for housing. As the locations of the small urban extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.</p> | | <p>grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by inappropriate development. The previous assessment stated that development will have to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings.</p> | | <p><i>appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity"</i> and point 7: <i>"recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring: <i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its</i></p> | |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | | | <i>surrounding areas both now and for future generations”</i> | |
| SS5b – Biddulph Area Strategy | <p>The policy proposes deletion of reference to Newpool Meadows and Area 6 (land in the greenbelt at Newpool) from the list of broad areas for new housing development and the addition of ‘small urban extensions in the green belt’ to the list of broad areas for new housing development.</p> <p>The previous assessment did not raise any negative impacts as a result of development in the urban area or Area 4 (which still remain in the policy).</p> <p>The addition of small urban housing extensions within the greenbelt does create some uncertainty about impact on European sites. As the locations of the small urban housing extensions will not be identified in</p> | | <p>No additional issues raised by changes to policy at this stage.</p> <p>An issue relating to new development in general and its potential impact on key species raised previously is still applicable: ‘the movement of golden plover between upland grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by</p> | <p>No additional issues raised by changes to policy at this stage.</p> | <p>The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular: point 1: <i>“any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]”</i> point 5: <i>“ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of</i></p> | <p>None, the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|-------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites. | | inappropriate development. The previous assessment stated that development will have to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings. | | <i>biodiversity” and point 7: “recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict”</i> In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring: <i>“development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations”</i> | |
| SS5c – Cheadle | Several changes have been made | | No additional | No additional | The application of | None, the |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|--|--|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| Area Strategy | <p>to the policy wording – deletion of reference to south west Cheadle Urban Extension (Areas 4/5), amendment to references to Areas 1 & 2 to include Area 2 as a broad area for housing development where previously it was stated that this area may not be required; addition of ‘small urban extensions’ to the list of broad areas for housing development.</p> <p>The previous assessment did not raise any negative impacts as a result of development in the urban area or Areas 1 & 2 (which still remain in the policy).</p> <p>The addition of small urban housing extensions does create some uncertainty about impact on the European sites. As the locations of the small urban housing extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is</p> | <p>issues raised by changes to policy at this stage.</p> <p>An issue relating to new development in general and its potential impact on key species raised previously is still applicable: ‘the movement of golden plover between upland grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by inappropriate development. The previous assessment stated that</p> | <p>issues raised by changes to policy at this stage.</p> | <p>core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular: point 1: “<i>any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]</i>” point 5: “<i>ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity</i>” and point 7: “<i>recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and</i></p> | <p>application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> | |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|-------------------|--|---|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites. | | development will have to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings. | | <p><i>leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring: <i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |
| SS6 – Rural Areas | This policy has been amended resulting in an increase of overall figures for new dwellings in rural areas from 1500 to 1540 and affordable housing provision from 300 to 400 in the plan period to reflect distributional changes set out in Policy SS3. There is a possible negative impact as a | | | | Core Strategy policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c lay out highly | None, the application of these policies |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>result of this change depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to European sites.</p> <p>As the precise location of development in the rural area will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.</p> | | | | <p>specific criteria on where rural housing development can take place. Specifically, SS6c includes a measure to ensure that development “<i>enhances and conserves the quality of the countryside</i>” and to apply Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European Site. In combination with the mitigation contained within policy NE1 and SS1 any potential negative impact of this policy</p> | <p>should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | | | will be neutralised. | |
| E1 – New Employment Development | New additional wording has been added to this policy as follows: “Large scale office (Class B1a) developments (of 5000m2 gross or more) will only be permitted where a clear need for the proposal has been demonstrated and there would be no adverse impacts on planned and committed office development schemes within other centres.” Clearly, large scale office development has the potential to have a negative effect within areas of high sensitivity or those areas in close proximity to European sites. | | | | <p>The application of Core Strategy Policy NE1 will neutralize any potentially negative impacts of employment development. In particular:</p> <p><i>Point 1: ‘any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]’</i></p> <p><i>Point 5: ‘ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and / recreation of biodiversity’</i></p> | None, the application of these policies should remove the risk. |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | | | <p><i>and point 7: 'recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure that there is no conflict'</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy, SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring: <i>'development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations'</i>.</p> | |

5. Summary & Conclusions

- 5.1 The likely effects of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy on European sites were first appraised in May 2008, with an update undertaken in April 2009, prior to this latest update which reflects a number of policy revisions to the Submission Version of the plan.
- 5.2 Assessment at this stage has focussed on 2 main areas where possible policy changes could have triggered an effect on European sites. These are:
- Housing development in the 3 towns and rural areas; and
 - Employment development

Development in the Vicinity of European Sites

District Wide Housing Requirements

- 5.3 The reduction in overall housing numbers (from 6000 dwellings to 5500 dwellings over the plan period) is likely to result in a more positive impact on the European sites compared with previous proposals as less development will now take place.

Rural Areas

- 5.4 The shift in distribution of housing development between Cheadle (reduced from 25% to 22%) and the rural areas (increased from 25% to 28%) raises a possible negative impact depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites.
- 5.5 As the precise location of development in the rural area will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.
- 5.6 There are policy measures within the Core Strategy to remove the risk to European sites, namely Policies SS6a, SS6b, SS6c, NE1 & SS1 (detailed below).

Towns

- 5.7 Previously, it was concluded that policies relating to Leek were most likely to have an adverse impact on European sites due to the close proximity of the development to the Peak District SACs and SPA. However, the sites in question have now been deleted from the list of broad areas for housing development, creating a more positive outcome than previously. Deletions of broad areas for housing development have also been made in Biddulph and Cheadle. The areas which remain did not raise any specific concerns in the previous assessment.

- 5.8 As a result of policy changes, the remaining issue which is common to Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle is the impact of ‘small urban extensions’ on the European sites. These have been introduced as broad areas for development in all 3 of the towns. As the locations of the small urban extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.
- 5.9 Policy measures exist in the Core Strategy to remove the risk to European sites, namely, Policies NE1 & SS1 (detailed below).

Employment

- 5.10 Additional policy wording relating to large scale office development has been added to the Core Strategy. Clearly, large scale office development has the potential to have a negative effect within areas of high sensitivity or those areas in close proximity to European sites.
- 5.11 The application of Core Strategy Policies NE1 & SS1 (detailed below) will neutralize any potentially negative impacts of employment development.

Core Strategy Policy Measures

- 5.12 The Core Strategy recognises the risks of development having an adverse impact on European sites. Relevant policy measures are:
- Steering development to the most sustainable locations (preferably previously developed land and buildings) as emphasised in Policy SS5;
 - Ensuring that protected areas and in particular the European Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are avoided and that no future developments will have any adverse effects on site integrity (Policy NE1);
 - Protecting and where possible enhancing biodiversity throughout the District (Policy NE1).
- 5.13 Several overarching policies exist in the Core Strategy to provide the necessary mitigation and ensure that the site integrity and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites are not compromised. These policies will be applied to all relevant planning applications in the towns and rural areas. The policies are:

Policy NE1 Biodiversity & Geological Resources

- 5.14 States that: “The biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be protected and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development.” This includes:

“resisting any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site alone or in combination with other plans or projects unless it can be demonstrated that the legislative provisions to protect such sites can be fully met.”

- 5.15 This clause adds a first layer of protection and would encourage avoidance of designated sites. Further wording within this policy includes the requirement for development to actively promote biodiversity and points to the restoration of grassland and heathland habitats, for which the South Pennine Moors SAC and Peak District Dales SAC are designated. This addition will help to encourage and maintain those habitats that support the SACs.

Policy SS1 Development Principles

- 5.16 States that: “The Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands District” and requires:

“development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations”.

SS6a Larger Villages Area Strategy & SS6b Smaller Villages Area Strategy

- 5.17 Both policies lay out specific criteria on where rural housing development can take place.

SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

- 5.18 States that the Council will: “enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity, geological resources and heritage of the District”
- 5.19 Includes the need for Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European site.

Conclusion

- 5.20 Given the reduced scale of housing development proposed in the Revised Core Strategy and its likely locations, together with the application of the policy measures within the Core Strategy (set out above), it is expected that there would be no adverse effects on the site integrity of the European sites as a result of the changes.
- 5.21 Precise locations for small urban extensions in the towns and sites for development in rural areas will be determined in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and will be appropriately assessed at that time.



HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT OF MAIN MODIFICATIONS TO CORE STRATEGY

JUNE 2013

- 1.1 In line with European Union Legislation, Appropriate Assessment of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy has previously taken place. In May 2008, assessment of the Draft Preferred Options was published. Updates to the Appropriate Assessment to reflect changes made in the addendum to the Core Strategy Submission Version and the Revised Submission Version of the Core Strategy have since taken place. This current update has been produced to look at any impacts of the main modifications on European sites. This report should be read alongside all previously published reports (Documents I(2), I(3), I(5) and I(8) in the Examination Library) as these explain the methodology used in detail.
- 1.2 Table 1 (below) reviews the main modifications to the Core Strategy in relation to European protected sites using the same screening system as the previous assessments:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| √√ | Clear strong positive effects |
| √ | Broadly Supportive |
| 0 | Neutral or no discernible effect |
| X | Likely negative effect |
| ?x | Uncertain possible negative effect |

- 1.3 This table takes the same form as it did in the previous update so comparisons can be easily made. The table excludes Core Strategy policies that are not part of the main modifications. Refer to the previous document for assessment of these (Document I(8)). Please note that the assessment has been undertaken on the main modification alone and not the policy as a whole so refer back to the previous document for the whole policy assessment.

Table 1 Review of Core Strategy Main Modifications in Relation to European Protected Sites

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development | New policy reflecting presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF. This policy will have an overall positive influence on protecting European Sites. | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| SS2 Future Provision of Development | <p>The changes to this policy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in housing provision from 5500 to 6000 additional dwellings to be completed in the Staffordshire Moorlands during the period 2006 to 2026. • Reference to the affordable housing target as part of the overall housing provision has been removed. • A commitment to an early review of the Core Strategy which will be rolled into a single Local Plan combined with the Site Allocations DPD. • Changes to the development rates post 2016 (supported by additional evidence). <p>A potential impact could arise if these additional dwellings are inappropriately situated.</p> | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |
| SS4 Managing the Release of Housing Land | New paragraph added to confirm that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will identify specific deliverable sites sufficient for 5 years supply of housing and an additional | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | buffer of 5% or 20% where appropriate. | | | | |
| SS5 Towns | The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development is reflected in increased figures for the three towns. A potential impact could arise if these additional dwellings are inappropriately situated, particularly around Leek. | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |
| SS5a Leek Area Strategy | Minor amendment to reflect changes to Policy SS7: Churnet Valley Area Strategy. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS5b Biddulph Area Strategy | An amendment has been made to this policy to clarify that the small urban extensions in the green belt will be identified as part of a review of the green belt boundary through the Site Allocations DPD and the review of the Core Strategy. This is just a point of clarification. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS5c Cheadle Area Strategy | The extension to the urban area to the north east of Cheadle (Area 2) has been deleted. The policy states that the Council will assess the need for other broad locations through the review of the Core Strategy. References to the need for a bypass and other infrastructure improvements have been moved to the supporting text. This change has not been classified as having a positive effect as it does not change the original situation i.e. that new housing sites need to be identified in Cheadle. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6 Rural Areas | The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development is reflected in increased figures for the rural area. A potential impact could arise if these additional | ?x | ?x | ?x | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | dwellings are inappropriately situated. | | | | |
| SS6a Larger Villages | A minor change has been made to the text to refer to 'built-up' area rather than 'urban' area to provide a clearer description. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6b Smaller Villages | An amendment has been made to this policy so that new housing in smaller villages no longer has to meet an 'essential local need' as required in the countryside, but there is still a need to meet a 'local need'. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy | Amendments to this policy include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarification to include the types of housing development that would be acceptable in the countryside and green belt. Deletion of the reference to Blythe Business Park as expansion and redevelopment of existing businesses are covered by general guidance under Policy E1: New Employment Development. Amendment to text in part 5 relating to the Churnet Valley which reflects changes to Policy SS7: Churnet Valley Area Strategy. Amendment to clarify the process for undertaking a review of the green belt boundaries. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Amendments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the title of the policy to exclude the term 'tourism corridor'; Changes to clarify the aims of the strategic policy for the | √ | √ | √ | √ |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| SS7 Churnet Valley Area Strategy | <p>Churnet Valley;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on the broad principles of development which the Council would support; and Stronger emphasis on the considerations regarding impact on the natural environment etc. | | | | |
| SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources | <p>This policy has been amended so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously developed land targets have been deleted; It has clarified circumstances for development on previously developed land and greenfield sites; Only major-scale planning applications will need to provide a Sustainability/Energy Statement (originally most applications needed this); It is no longer required that the 'Building for Life' tool standards are applied to new developments, although the benefits will be incorporated into the supporting text. The target of 25% of minerals used from recycled / reused content in new-build schemes has been deleted and replaced with the need for developers to investigate the potential; The reference to site waste management plans has been removed as these are covered by separate legislation; There is no longer a requirement that all new development achieves the highest viably possible water conservation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| | <p>standards; however the Council's support for elevated water conservation standards remains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to how all new development should consider Sustainable Drainage Systems has been removed. <p>Although this policy has been diluted by these amendments, it is not considered that their impact is likely to have a negative impact on habitats.</p> | | | | |
| SD2 Renewable & Low Carbon Energy | <p>In order to improve clarity, the previous Policy SD2 has been subdivided into two separate policies: the first Policy 'Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy' is the new SD2 Policy – this carries forward the Policy about stand-alone renewables from Part (1) of the original Policy. This is unchanged apart from the removal of the requirement for considering brownfield sites first by demonstrating that there are no viable brownfield sites where renewables (e.g. wind turbines) could be located. In reality such development tends to be located on greenfield sites where the natural resource (e.g. wind) is available rather than on brownfield sites so the impact of this amendment is considered to be negligible. The second Policy (new "SD3") 'Carbon-Saving Measures in New Development' is set out below.</p> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SD3 Carbon-Saving Measures in | <p>This Policy consolidates Parts (2-5) of original Policy SD2; but the original requirements from these Parts have been substantially reworded to:</p> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| New Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove requirements/expectations upon developers that were considered over-onerous, not justified by evidence, unclear/imprecise, or not required because of other legislation (i.e.: the elevating of thermal efficiency standards in new development; elevating sustainability standards even further upon major-scale sites; and the investigation of District Heating opportunities off-site for major-scale sites;); and More clearly give an indication of those measures that the Council will support. | | | | |
| E1 New Employment Development | Policy amended to include general guidance for the redevelopment, intensification or improvement of existing employment sites. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| E3 Tourism & Cultural Development | Policy amended to provide greater clarity on those forms of tourism and cultural development which are appropriate and to reflect modifications to Policy SS7 (Churnet Valley). | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H2 Affordable Housing & Local Needs Housing | This policy has been amended to reflect a reduced scale of 33% affordable housing obligations to 2016 to be consistent with the current evidence of viability. This was previously 40% in the towns and 50% in the larger villages. This target will be reviewed from 2016. Removed requirement for all housing in rest of rural areas to be either affordable or meet a local need which cannot be met elsewhere. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Summary impact of the change on SPA and SAC Sites | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Core Strategy Policy | Policy alterations that have the potential to adversely impact on European Sites | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC |
| H3 Gypsy & Traveller Sites | The requirement for applicants to first prove a 'need' when determining planning applications for gypsy and traveller sites has been deleted. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R2 Rural Housing | The removal of the requirement for conversions to be affordable or meet an identified local need. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Appraisal of Core Strategy Changes raising Possible Negative Impacts

- 1.4 The main modifications have resulted in a number of policy changes to the Core Strategy (detailed above), most of which have been deemed to have no impact on European sites. The policy areas which have raised issues in terms of 'uncertain possible negative effects' and therefore require further assessment are:

Policy SS2 Future Provision of Development

- 1.5 A possible negative impact has been identified as a result of the increased amount of housing development proposed in this policy as a result of the main modifications. A potential impact could arise if these additional dwellings are inappropriately situated in relation to the European sites.

Policy SS5 - Towns

- 1.6 The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development is reflected in higher housing figures for the three towns. A potential impact could arise if these additional dwellings are inappropriately situated in relation to the European sites, particularly around Leek.

Policy SS6 – Rural Areas

- 1.7 A possible negative impact has been identified as a result of the increased amount of housing allocated to the rural areas depending on where additional developments in the rural areas are situated in relation to the European sites.
- 1.8 Table 2 (which follows) appraises potential mitigation measures within Core Strategy policy and demonstrates that the risk to European sites is neutralised through these policy measures.

Table 2: Summary of the Appraisal of the Core Strategy Changes

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|---|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| <p>SS2 – Future Provision of Development</p> | <p>Increasing the housing provision for the District from 5500 to 6000 may result in a negative impact depending on where additional developments in the District are situated in relation to the European sites.</p> <p>As the precise location of these additional dwellings will not be identified in the Core Strategy, this uncertainty will remain until the Site Allocations DPD is progressed. At that point, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.</p> | | | | <p>The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the potentially negative impacts stated, in particular:</p> <p>point 1: <i>“any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]”</i></p> <p>point 5: <i>“ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity”</i> and point 7: <i>“recognising</i></p> | <p>None – the application of these policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | | | <p><i>the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring: <i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |
| SS5 - Towns | The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development has | No additional issues raised by changes to | No additional issues raised by changes to | The application of core strategy policy NE1 will neutralise the | None, the application of these | |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity | |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>resulted in a higher number of dwellings being needed in the towns. A potential impact could arise if these additional dwellings are inappropriately situated, particularly around Leek. However it is Biddulph which will be most affected in terms of the need to find new housing land due to a lower level of housing completions over the plan period so far.</p> <p>Uncertainty of the impact of this change on European Sites remains as the locations of the small urban housing extensions will not be identified in the Core Strategy. At the time site allocations are being progressed, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.</p> | | <p>policy at this stage.</p> <p>An issue relating to new development in general and its potential impact on key species raised previously is still applicable: 'the movement of golden plover between upland grasslands and coastal feeding areas could potentially be disrupted by inappropriate development. The previous assessment stated that development will have to be of a</p> | <p>policy at this stage.</p> | <p>potentially negative impacts stated, in particular:</p> <p>point 1: <i>“any proposed development that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site [will be resisted]”</i></p> <p>point 5: <i>“ensuring development promotes the appropriate maintenance, enhancement, restoration and/recreation of biodiversity”</i> and point 7: <i>“recognising the value of the natural environment for sport and leisure activities and the need to manage such</i></p> | <p>policies should remove the risk.</p> |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity | |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | | | scale and nature appropriate to the surroundings. | | <p><i>activities to ensure there is no conflict"</i></p> <p>In addition to this policy SS1 provides overarching mitigation by requiring:</p> <p><i>"development to be undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations"</i></p> | |
| SS6 – Rural Areas | <p>The increase in the housing requirement in Policy SS2: Future Provision of Development has resulted in a higher number of dwellings being needed in the rural areas i.e. outside the 3 towns. A potential impact could arise if these additional dwellings are inappropriately situated particularly in villages close to the Peak Park.</p> <p>Uncertainty of the impact of this change on European Sites remains as the location of any housing in the rural areas will not be identified in the Core</p> | | | Core Strategy policies SS6a, SS6b and SS6c lay out highly specific criteria on where rural housing development can take place. Specifically, | None, the application of these policies should remove the risk. | |

| Core Strategy Policy | Potential Impact of Policy on Integrity of European Sites | | | | Mitigation | Residual Effect on Site Integrity |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | South Pennine Moors SAC | Peak District Dales SAC | Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) SPA | Cannock Chase SAC | | |
| | <p>Strategy. At the time site allocations are being progressed, further assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any adverse impacts on European sites.</p> | | | | <p>SS6c includes a measure to ensure that development “<i>enhances and conserves the quality of the countryside</i>” and to apply Appropriate Assessment and rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment on any development that could potentially affect a European Site. In combination with the mitigation contained within policy NE1 and SS1 any potential negative impact of this policy will be neutralised.</p> | |

2. CONCLUSIONS

- 2.1 Assessment at this stage has focussed on one main area where possible policy changes could have triggered an effect on European sites, namely increasing the future provision of development in the District from 5500 dwellings to 6000 dwellings.
- 2.2 In terms of changes to the District wide housing requirements, the 6000 figure was the original figure used in the earlier Submission Core Strategy (published in May 2009). At that time, the broad conclusion reached was that it is the precise location of this development which is the most important factor in determining impact on European sites and that Core Strategy policy provided necessary mitigation to avoid harm to these sites, though further analysis would be required at the site allocations stage to ensure appropriate sites are allocated.
- 2.3 Similarly at this stage, despite the increased scale of housing development proposed in the main modifications to the Core Strategy, the application of the policy measures within the Core Strategy (set out above), is likely to create no adverse effects on the site integrity of the European sites.
- 2.4 Precise locations for small urban extensions in the towns and sites for development in rural areas will be determined in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and will be appropriately assessed at that time.