



# **Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Condover Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**HRA including Appropriate Assessment to  
accompany the Regulation 14 version of the  
Condover Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**March 2026**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Shropshire Council, at the request of Condover Parish Council, has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to inform the Condover Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 14 Draft, March 2026 (hereafter 'the draft CNDP'). The purpose of this HRA is to inform the draft CNDP Steering Group and Condover Parish Council if any draft NDP policies and/or allocations have the potential to cause an adverse effect on the integrity of internationally designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation, (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to determine whether site-specific or policy mitigation measures are required.
- 1.2. Throughout this report the term 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' HRA is used for the overall process set out in the Habitats Regulations and restricts the use of 'Appropriate Assessment' to the specific stage.

### Legislative context

- 1.3. The requirement to undertake HRA derives from Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) which obliges competent authorities to assess any plan or project that is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, but which may have a significant effect on it, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Although the UK left the European Union on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, this duty continues to apply in domestic law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). These regulations remain the primary legal mechanism governing the protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites.
- 1.4. In the neighbourhood planning context, the responsibility for compliance sits with the 'competent authority', usually the local planning authority, rather than the qualifying body preparing the plan. Under Regulations 105 and 106 of the 2017 Regulations, the authority must first screen a Neighbourhood Plan to determine whether it is likely to result in significant effects on a European site. Where likely significant effects cannot be ruled out, an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken to consider the implications of the plan for the site's conservation objectives and integrity. Regulation 106 of the 2017 Regulations requires that the qualifying body must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purpose of the assessment.
- 1.5. Neighbourhood plans may draw on higher-tier HRAs (such as those for Local Plans), but only where the scope and assumptions remain valid and no new or different effects arise.

### Local planning policy context

- 1.6. Shropshire Council has utilised the 2020 HRA of the Regulation 19 Pre-submission Draft Shropshire Local Plan 2016-2038 when assessing development impacts on the international designated sites considered within this assessment.

1.7. The withdrawn Shropshire Local Plan (2016-2038) was intended to supersede both the adopted Core Strategy and the adopted SAMDev Plan with a single new local plan document to include both strategic policies and development management policies. This draft was formally withdrawn by Shropshire Council in July 2025. However, the evidence base of the withdrawn Plan continues to carry material weight in planning decisions because it remains the most up-to-date, comprehensive assessment of the county's housing, employment and infrastructure needs. Shropshire Council's Cabinet determined in February 2025 that this evidence base remains a material consideration to support decision-making, particularly while relying on older adopted plans.

## Purpose of the HRA Appropriate Assessment

- 1.8. This report has two purposes:
- to assist Conover Parish Council (the qualifying body) in preparing their plan by recommending (where necessary) any adjustments required to protect internationally designated sites, thus making it more likely their plan will be deemed compliant with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); and
  - on behalf of the qualifying body, to assist Shropshire Council (the Local Planning Authority) to discharge their duty under Regulation 105 (in their role as ‘plan-making authority’ within the meaning of that regulation) and Regulation 106 (in their role as ‘competent authority’).

## Consultation on the scope of the HRA

1.9. The draft CNDP SEA Environmental Report discusses in detail how the statutory bodies were consulted on for the purpose of SEA and HRA scoping. Responses received on the parts of the Scoping Report relevant to the HRA, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

Table 1: Consultation responses received on the proposed scope of the HRA

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<b>Natural England</b>	
The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs (‘candidate SACs’, ‘possible SACs’, ‘potential SPAs’) or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.	Comment noted.

<p><b>Environment Agency</b></p>	
<p><i>Article 6(3) of the European Habitats Directive (1992) requires that any plan (or project), which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site (also known as a “Natura 2000” site), but would be likely to have a significant effect on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an ‘appropriate assessment’ of its implications for the European site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.</i></p> <p>We refer you to previous HRA reports including the ‘<i>Local Plan Review 2016 - 2036 Preferred Strategic Sites Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report Summary</i>’ submitted as part of the local plan review (now withdrawn). We note in the HRA report the Midland Meres &amp; Mosses Ramsar Phase 1 has identified the Bomere and Shomere Pools as a Preferred Site. The Reg 14 Draft Plan (March 2025, figure 11) shows the boundary falls just on the border of the Condover Neighbourhood Plan. We also note that these two pools are considered of a Site of Special Specific Interest.</p> <p>Based on the scale and nature of site allocations within Dorrington, there should not be significant impact on the Ramsar site. However, NP policies may still consider this Ramsar site which is in part connected to the River Count catchment.</p> <p>For information on the WFD please view: <a href="#">Severn River Basin District   Catchment Data Explorer</a>.</p>	<p>The HRA including Appropriate Assessment addresses the potential impact of the allocations and policies in the draft CNDP on the Bomere and Shomere Pools.</p>

## 2. Methodology

### Overview

2.1. Government guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government<sup>1</sup> describes the Habitats Regulations Assessment process as comprising four interrelated stages. These stages are iterative, meaning they may need to be revisited as further evidence becomes available, recommendations are refined, or changes are made to the Plan, until the potential for significant adverse effects has been removed.

2.2. The stages are:

- *Evidence gathering*  
Collation of information relating to relevant European sites, including their qualifying features, conservation objectives and environmental characteristics, together with a review of other relevant plans and projects.
- *Screening for Likely Significant Effects*  
Assessment of whether the Plan has the potential to result in a likely significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- *Appropriate Assessment*  
Appropriate Assessment - Detailed consideration of the implications of the Plan for the integrity of European sites identified at the screening stage, with reference to their conservation objectives.
- *Avoidance and mitigation*  
Where adverse effects on site integrity are identified, the identification and application of mitigation measures or alternative approaches to amend the Plan so that such effects are fully avoided or reduced to a level where no adverse effects remain.

### In-combination effects (within the draft CNDP and with other plans and projects)

2.3. The Habitats Regulations require that a land use plan is assessed not only for its individual effects, but also for its potential effects when considered alongside other relevant plans and projects that could affect the same international site or sites. This approach ensures that any cumulative or interactive impacts are fully identified and taken into account.

2.4. At a regional level, housing growth in particular can give rise to effects associated with population increase, such as greater recreational pressure on designated sites, changes in air quality, and impacts on water quality and water resources. As a result, in-combination assessment is often most pertinent where a plan or policy may otherwise be screened out on the basis that its standalone effects are unlikely to be significant.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>

2.5. The plans and projects considered capable of acting in combination with development proposed in the draft CNDP are identified in the SEA and HRA Scoping Report prepared for the draft CNDP.

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### 3. Internationally Designated Sites

- 3.1. Whilst there are no Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within the neighbourhood area, within a 15km buffer of the neighbourhood area is:
- **The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC** located approximately 8.07km to the southwest of the neighbourhood area.
- 3.2. While there are no RAMSAR/SSSI sites within the neighbourhood area, within a 15km buffer of the neighbourhood area are:
- **Bomere and Shomere and Betton Pools SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 1)) Ramsar network)** - lying directly over the border to Bayston Hill Parish to the north east of Condover Parish.
  - **Berrington Pool SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 1)) Ramsar network)<sup>2</sup>** – approximately 0.65km from the neighbourhood area (Berrington Parish).
  - **Hencott Pool SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 2)) Ramsar network)** – approximately 8.23km from the neighbourhood area (Bomere Heath and District Parish).

#### The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC<sup>3</sup>

##### Site description

- 3.3. The Stiperstones and the Hollies (601.46ha) represents a Nationally important area of dry heath, showing transitions between lowland and northern upland heaths and also hosts a significant presence of sessile oak woodlands with *Ilex* and *Blechnum*. The tors and boulders of the upper slopes provide important habitat for several species of moss and also support a diverse lichen flora. The most extensive vegetation type present is H12 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Vaccinium myrtillus* dry heath, which is characteristic of the uplands. South-facing slopes support stands of H8 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Ulex gallii* heath, a predominantly lowland vegetation community of south-west Britain.
- 3.4. The northern end of the ridge, known as The Hollies, is an area of ‘holly parkland’ of great antiquity and considered to be unique for both its size and for the age of the holly *Ilex aquifolium* trees. These trees, which have unusually large girths, are at least 250 years old.

##### Conservation objectives

- 3.5. Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;
- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
  - The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
  - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC): The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. [Available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012810>].

3.6. Supplementary Advice to support the Conservation Objectives is not currently available.

### Site vulnerability

3.7. The heathland is dependent on the continuation of traditional heather moorland management with rotational burning or cutting supplemented by light grazing. In the recent past, lack of management on parts of the site has resulted in scrub encroachment, and on other parts high stocking levels has caused overgrazing and a deterioration of the heathland interest. These issues are being addressed by an effective management programme on that part of the site which is managed as a National Nature Reserve and, on land in private ownership, by management agreements and ESA payments.

### Reasons for designation

3.8. Annex I Habitats that are a primary reason for selection of site:

European dry heaths.

3.9. Annex I Habitats present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of site:

Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles.

### Environmental conditions needed to support site integrity

- Control of afforestation.
- Control of grazing pressure.
- Maintain appropriate woodland management.
- Monitor and control invasive species.

### Midland Meres & Mosses (Ramsar Phase 1)<sup>4</sup>

Shropshire/ Clwyd/ Cheshire/ Staffordshire, England.

### Site description

3.10. Site Description: Phase 1 of the Ramsar designation covers 513.25ha and is entirely co-incident with the following 16 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These are Bagmere, **Berrington Pool**, Betley Mere, **Bomere, Shomere & Betton Pools**, Brown Moss, Chartley Moss, Clarepool Moss, Fenemere, Flaxmere, Hatchmere, Marton Pool (Chirbury), Quoisley Mere, Tatton Mere, The Mere (Mere), White Mere and Wybunbury Moss SSSI's.

3.11. NB. Those SSSIs in the Ramsar phase 1 designation indicated in bold above are considered in this document.

3.12. Diverse series of lowland open water and peatland sites supporting habitats such as meres with associated fringing habitats, reed swamp, fen, carr and damp pasture. Peat accumulation has resulted in nutrient poor peat bogs (mosses) forming in some sites on the

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<sup>4</sup> Ramsar Sites Information Service - Midland Meres & Mosses (Phase 1). [Available at:

[https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/653?\\_goaway\\_challenge=meta-refresh&\\_goaway\\_id=8817bf42c25b73464627784404a1dbd2&\\_goaway\\_referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F](https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/653?_goaway_challenge=meta-refresh&_goaway_id=8817bf42c25b73464627784404a1dbd2&_goaway_referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F) E].

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fringes of the meres or completely infilling basins. These habitats support a wide range of nationally important flora and fauna.

## Conservation objectives

- 3.13. Ramsar criterion – peatland.
- 3.14. The conservation objectives for the site are to maintain in favourable condition:
- the habitat types for which the site is designated.

## Site vulnerability

- 3.15. Invasive species: considered a major impact on this site. Water quality: eutrophication is considered a major impact on this site. Land take for development · Recreational pressure and disturbance: in line with other bog and mire habitats, trampling and erosion are likely to be a significant issue where public access occurs. Water quality: declines in water quality through nutrient enrichment and sediment. Land use in surrounding areas: agricultural practices and urban runoff are likely to affect the scattered sites through nutrient enrichment and sedimentation.

## Reasons for designation

- **Criterion 1a.** A particularly good example of a natural or near natural wetland, characteristic of this biogeographical region, The site comprises the full range of habitats from open water to raised bog.
- **Criterion 2a.** Supports a number of rare plants associated with wetlands, including the nationally scarce cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, elongated sedge *Carex elongate* and bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*. Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes *Dicranum undulatum*, *Dicranum affine* and *Sphagnum pulchrum*.
- **Criterion 2a.** Containing an assemblage of invertebrates, including several rare wetland species. There are 16 species of Red Data Book insect listed for the site including the following endangered species: the moth *Glyphipteryx lathamella*, the caddisfly *Hagenella clathrata* and the sawfly *Trichiosoma vitellinae*.

## Environmental conditions needed to support site integrity

- 3.16. Environmental Conditions needed to support site integrity will need to be considered at the full Habitats Regulations Assessment stage since this range of sites is varied and needs consideration in relation to specific plans and policies.

## Midland Meres & Mosses (Ramsar Phase 1) Individual site descriptions

- 3.17. **Site Name:** Bomere, Shomere & Betton Pools SSSI, SJ504078, Shropshire, England
- 3.18. **Site Description:** Bomere, Shomere & Betton Pools (59.08ha), as a group, are particularly important for the variety of water chemistry, and hence flora and fauna, which they display. The site also includes a small basin mire, a more extensive area of peat around Shomere and an area of woodland.
- 3.19. **Definition of Favourable Condition for SSSI:**
- 3.20. **Site Vulnerability:** Bomere, Shomere and Betton Pools – biological disturbance from (trampling/erosion etc) from increased public access – watersports are already popular at the

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site and having an impact – as well as from native and non-native invasive species such as crassula, rhododendron and sycamore, fluctuations in the water table from nearby land drainage or abstractions, eutrophication from surrounding land use, in particular agricultural run-off and potentially sewage outfalls.

3.21. *Site Name:* Berrington Pool SSSI, SJ525072, Shropshire, England

3.22. *Site Description:* Berrington Pool (4.69ha) is a small but deep mere in a steep-sided hollow, with water of comparatively low fertility. There is a rich flora of emergent species, including some which are uncommon, notably slender sedge *Carex lasiocarpa* at one of its most southerly localities in Britain. There are extensive beds of white water lily *Nymphaea alba*. Vegetation dominated by water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and bottle sedge *Carex rostrata* is better represented here than at any other Shropshire mere. Other emergent plants include greater reedmace *Typha latifolia*. The aquatic fauna is of interest, especially for dragonflies, of which ten species are known to breed here. The site includes an area of fen at the western end of the pool, with a flora which includes bladder sedge *Carex vesicaria* and, in a ditch, water violet *Hottonia palustris*.

3.23. *Definition of Favourable Condition for SSSI:*

3.24. *Site Vulnerability:* Biological disturbance (trampling / erosion etc) from increased public access and from native and non-native invasive species such as crassula or scrub, lowering of the water table from abstractions or conversely water-logging, eutrophication and siltation from surrounding land use, in particular agricultural run-off and potentially sewage outfalls.

## Midland Meres & Mosses (Ramsar Phase 2)<sup>5</sup>

Shropshire/ Clwyd/ Cheshire/ Staffordshire, England.

### Site description

3.25. *Site Description:* Phase 2 of the Ramsar sites covers 1740.3ha and is entirely co-incident with the following 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These are: Abbots Moss, Aqualate Mere, Black Firs & Cranberry Bog, Brownheath Moss, Chapel Mere, Cole Mere, Cop Mere, Fenn's, Whixall, Bettisfield, Wem & Cadney Mosses, Hanmer Mere, **Hencott Pool**, Linmer Moss, Llyn Bedydd, Morton Pool & Pasture, Oak Mere, Oakhanger Moss, Oss Mere, Rostherne Mere, Sweat Mere & Crose Mere and Vicarage Moss.

NB. The SSSI in the Ramsar phase 2 designation indicated in bold above is considered in this document.

### Conservation objectives

3.26. Ramsar criterion – peatland.

3.27. The conservation objectives for the site are to maintain in favourable condition:

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<sup>5</sup> Ramsar Sites Information Service - Midland Meres & Mosses (Phase 2). [Available at: <https://rsis.ramsar.org/ris/891>].

- the habitat types for which the site is designated.

### Site vulnerability

3.28. Invasive species: considered a major impact on this site. Water quality: eutrophication is considered a major impact on this site. Land take for development · Recreational pressure and disturbance: in line with other bog and mire habitats, trampling and erosion are likely to be a significant issue where public access occurs. Water quality: declines in water quality through nutrient enrichment and sediment. Land use in surrounding areas: agricultural practices and urban runoff are likely to affect the scattered sites through nutrient enrichment and sedimentation.

### Reasons for designation

- **Criterion 1a.** A particularly good example of a natural or near natural wetland, characteristic of this biogeographical region, the site comprises the full range of habitats from open water to raised bog.
- **Criterion 2a.** Supports a number of rare plants associated with wetlands, including the nationally scarce cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, elongated sedge *Carex elongata* and bog rosemary *Andromeda polifolia*. Also present are the nationally scarce bryophytes *Dicranum undulatum*, *Dicranum affine* and *Sphagnum pulchrum*.
- **Criterion 2a.** Containing an assemblage of invertebrates, including several rare wetland species. There are 16 species of Red Data Book insect listed for the site including the following endangered species: the moth *Glyphipteryx lathamella*, the caddisfly *Hagenella clathrata* and the sawfly *Trichiosoma vitellinae*.

### Environmental conditions needed to support site integrity

3.29. Environmental Conditions needed to support site integrity will need to be considered at the full Habitats Regulations Assessment stage since this range of sites is varied and needs consideration in relation to specific plans and policies.

### Midland Meres & Mosses (Ramsar Phase 2) Individual site descriptions

3.30. **Site Name:** Hencott Pool SSSI, SJ490160, Shropshire

3.31. **Site Description:** Most of Hencott Pool (11.5ha) is swamp carr on very wet peat dominated by alder *Alnus glutinosa* and common sallow *Salix cinerea* with frequent crack willow *Salix fragilis*. Although there are considerable areas of bare peat beneath the trees, there is a rich flora of fen plants. The site is notable for the size of its population of elongated sedge *Carex elongata*. Other uncommon species include purple smallreed *Calamagrostis canescens*, cyperus sedge *Carex pseudocyperus*, cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, great spearwort *Ranunculus lingua* and fine-leaved water dropwort *Oenanthe aquatica*. There are locally extensive moss carpets of *Calliigon cordifolium*, *C. cuspidatum* and *Sphagnum squarrosum*.

3.32. **Definition of Favourable Condition for SSSI:** Stand loss due to natural processes e.g. in minimum intervention stands is acceptable eg due to wind blow or Phytopthera disease.

- 3.33. Stand destruction may occur if the understorey and ground flora are irretrievably damaged even if the canopy remains intact, eg by pollution. As a guideline, loss can be defined as at least 0.5 ha or 0.5% of the stand area, whichever is the smaller.
- 3.34. Targets for extent may be modified where a target has been set to increase the extent of other habitat features on the site at the expense of woodland.
- 3.35. This site is a former pool and is now entirely scrubbed over with willow and alder carr (Lockton and Whild, 2003). It was in this late stage of succession at notification (Walker, 1984) and the whole site has to be considered as woodland at the moment. Standing water is usually present under the woodland and fen vegetation survives in certain places under the trees and scrub.
- 3.36. The site is important as an example of the succession from open water to basin bog to alder carr (Walker, 1984), and therefore it would be beneficial to retain and restore some of the other features of interest that demonstrate the transition from open water to alder carr.
- 3.37. Therefore some loss in extent of the successional woodland, providing it was restored to open water or open fen vegetation would be acceptable. Although it is too early give estimates of extent for restored vegetation it should be no more than 5.7ha which was the total of fen and open water on the 1881 Edition OS Map.
- 3.38. There should be no loss in extent of the area covered by semi natural vegetation.
- 3.39. *Site Vulnerability:* Eutrophication mainly from surrounding agricultural run-off, lowering of the water table from surrounding activities, invasive species, in particular Canadian geese that graze, trample and enrich the vegetation.

## 4. Test of Likely Significant Effects

- 4.1. Condover Parish has a population of 2228 (904 households) (2021 census), which is located approximately 5-7 miles south of the county town of Shrewsbury in Shropshire. There are four villages in the Parish: Dorrington, Condover, Stapleton and Ryton.
- 4.2. The amount of new housing required to be delivered through the Condover Parish NDP takes account of housing already in the pipeline or completed and results in a residual requirement of 55 houses (at December 2025).
- 4.3. Draft Policy CON 4 allocates approximately 0.6 hectares of land off Limes Paddock for residential development of around 15 dwellings. Draft Policy CON 5 allocates approximately 1.37 hectares of land off Station Road (North) for the development of around 40 dwellings. The process by which these allocations were selected is detailed in the Site Assessment Report produced by AECOM (2019).

### Scope of the Test of Likely Significant Effects

- 4.4. The following internationally designated sites have been identified as requiring consideration within this HRA:
  - **The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC** (located approximately 8.85km to the southwest of the neighbourhood area)
  - **Bomere, Shomere and Betton Pools SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 1)) Ramsar network)** lying directly over the border to Bayston Hill Parish to the northeast of Condover Parish.
  - **Berrington Pool SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 1)) Ramsar network)** – approximately 0.65km from the neighbourhood area (Berrington Parish).
  - **Hencott Pool SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 2)) Ramsar network)** – approximately 8.23km from the neighbourhood area (Bomere Heath and District Parish).
- 2.49. Based upon Natural England's Site Improvement Plan for these designated sites and the 2020 HRA for the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan (withdrawn), the following impact pathways require analysis. These impact pathways are:
  - Air quality (in relation to The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC)
  - Recreational pressure (in relation to The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC, )
- 2.50. Context on these impact pathways is provided in Table 2 below.

- 2.51. The Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Shropshire Local Plan 2016 to 2038 HRA (2020) identified the potential recreation impact pathways to The Stiperstones & the Hollies SAC and Bomere and Shomere Pools (Ramsar). Table 4 on page 41 of that report analysed the residential land allocations from the (withdrawn) Draft Shropshire Local Plan and the Likely Significant Effect on these international sites.
- 2.52. For the Stiperstones & the Hollies SAC, Shropshire Council concluded that: *‘The evidence suggests increased housing proposed in the [the (withdrawn) Draft Shropshire Local Plan] is not a significant issue at present, but specific policy wording is required for the life of the plan.* This was considered a Likely Significant Effect.

**Table 2: Description of potential impact pathways from new development near to The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC**

Impact pathway	Description
Air quality	<p>An increase in development within the NDP area is likely to result in higher levels of vehicular traffic on roads within, and linking to, the plan area. Compared to a scenario with no growth, this may give rise to increased levels of air pollution. Emissions generated by road traffic can be transported by prevailing winds and deposited within designated sites, either directly as airborne pollutants or indirectly when pollutants dissolve and are deposited through rainfall.</p> <p>Two principal indicators are relevant when considering air quality effects associated with vehicle exhaust emissions. The first is the concentration of nitrogen oxides (NOx) in the atmosphere. At elevated levels, NOx can be directly harmful to vegetation; however, its primary significance lies in its role as a source of nitrogen deposition to surrounding habitats. Government guidance identifies a critical atmospheric concentration for the protection of vegetation of 30 micrograms per cubic metre (<math>\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3</math>) the ‘Critical Level’, above which adverse growth effects may occur.</p> <p>The second key consideration is the rate of nitrogen deposition. Nitrogen enrichment acts as a form of fertilisation and, over time, can adversely affect sensitive habitats such as heathlands and woodlands by favouring more competitive plant species, thereby displacing characteristic species adapted to nutrient-poor conditions. Unlike atmospheric NOx concentrations, acceptable nitrogen deposition rate varies by habitat type. This rate, referred to as the ‘Critical Load’, is published through the Air Pollution Information System (APIS).</p> <p>A further potential impact pathway relates to nitrogen-driven acidification. In this process, increased nitrogen inputs can reduce soil pH to levels</p>

unsuitable for specialist plant communities, resulting in reduced species richness<sup>6</sup>. Acidification effects are typically more pronounced on acidic soils with limited buffering capacity, such as those associated with heathland habitats, than on neutral or calcareous substrates.

Guidance issued by the Institute of Air Quality Management and Highways England identifies a zone of up to 200 metres from the edge of a road within which significant air quality effects on vegetation from traffic emissions may occur. In addition, evidence from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey (2018) indicates that the average length of a car journey is approximately 10.6 kilometres<sup>7</sup>.

**Recreational pressure**

Additional development within the NDP area may result in an increase in the number of people visiting nearby internationally designated sites, which could in turn give rise to greater recreational pressure. The nature and sensitivity of recreational impacts vary between designated sites, as different habitats and species respond differently to visitor activity. Evidence from studies covering a wide range of species indicates that recreational effects are often complex and context-specific. As a result, HRAs of plans typically focus on recreational disturbance associated with population growth arising from new residential development.

Increased recreational use can affect woodland and heathland habitats in a number of ways, including soil erosion and compaction, damage to tree root systems, nutrient enrichment associated with dog fouling linked to higher levels of dog walking, and the loss of dead wood.

Research and visitor surveys undertaken at a range of inland European sites suggest that recreational impacts are most likely to be significant where new development is located within approximately 5–6 kilometres of such sites. Studies of locations including Burnham Beeches SAC, Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC and Epping Forest SAC indicate that, aside from large regional destinations such as the New Forest SAC/SPA, around 75% of regular visitors to inland designated sites live within this distance.

It is important to recognise, however, that recreational use does not automatically result in harm. Many internationally designated sites include nature reserves that are actively managed to balance conservation objectives with public enjoyment of the natural environment. At such sites, access is encouraged and supported by management measures designed to

<sup>6</sup> Maskell, L.C., Smart, S.M., Bullock, J.M., Thompson, K.E.N. and Stevens, C.J., (2010). Nitrogen deposition causes widespread loss of species richness in British habitats. *Global Change Biology*, 16(2), pp.671-679.

<sup>7</sup> GOV.UK. (2019) *Average number of trips made and distance travelled*. [Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts01-average-number-of-trips-made-and-distance-travelled> - accessed 13/03/2020].

ensure recreational activity is compatible with site conservation. The HRA of the emerging Local Plan identifies the preferred approach to access at these sites as being open, rather than managed, restricted or excluded.

## Results of the test of Likely Significant Effects

2.53. Screening of policies and allocations within the draft NDP with the potential for likely significant effects on internationally designated sites (either in isolation, or in combination with other development) is detailed in 3 below. For full wording of each policy please refer to the draft CNDP.

2.54. In Table X below, the shading of the ‘screening outcome’ column indicates the following:

Screening outcomes	
	The draft CNDP policy has been determined not to lead to a likely significant effect on any internationally designated sites.
	A likely significant effect on one or more internationally designated sites cannot be screened out at this stage of HRA, in which case further examination is therefore required.

Table 3: Test of Likely Significant Effects of policies in the draft CNDP

Draft CNDP Policy	Summary of policy	Screening outcome
<b>CON 1 – Local Community Facilities</b>	Policy CON 1 protects identified local community facilities by resisting development that would result in their loss or significant harm. Proposals that improve or enhance local community facilities, including shops, are supported in principle.	<b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications
<b>CON 2 - Development Boundaries</b>	Policy CON 2 defines development boundaries for Condover, Stapleton and Dorrington, within which housing and community uses on allocated sites are supported in principle, subject to compliance with other neighbourhood plan policies. Infill development and redevelopment within these boundaries are also supported in principle, provided	<b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b>  This policy supports infill development and redevelopment at a small scale which is unlikely to have HRA implications.

	<p>that site-specific design, heritage and amenity impacts are satisfactorily addressed.</p>	
<p><b>CON 3 – Exceptions Housing Development Outside Development Boundaries</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 3 supports small-scale exceptions housing development adjacent to the development boundaries of Condover, Stapleton and Dorrington. Very limited exceptions housing is also considered at Ryton, while the remaining parts of the parish are open countryside.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b></p> <p>This policy supports exceptions housing development at a small scale which is unlikely to have HRA implications.</p>
<p><b>CON 4 – Land off Limes Paddock</b></p>	<p>Draft Policy CON 4 allocates approximately 0.6 hectares of land off Limes Paddock for residential development of around 15 dwellings.</p>	<p><b>Likely Significant Effect. Screened in.</b></p> <p>This allocation is also approximately 8.07km south of The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. There is therefore potential for recreational impacts on this designated site. As such, Appropriate Assessment is required.</p> <p>Based on the quantity of development (55 new dwellings) and the distance between the allocation and The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC (approximately 8.07km), and the fact that there are no affected roads within 200m of the SAC, there is no potential for air quality impacts on this designated site alone or in combination with other development. This impact pathway can therefore be screened out.</p>
<p><b>CON 5 – Land off Station Road (North)</b></p>	<p>Draft Policy CON 5 allocates approximately 1.37 hectares of land off Station Road (North) for the development of around 40 dwellings.</p>	<p><b>Likely Significant Effect. Screened in.</b></p> <p>This allocation is also approximately 8.07km south of The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. There is therefore potential for recreational impacts on this</p>

		<p>designated site. As such, Appropriate Assessment is required.</p> <p>Based on the quantity of development (55 new dwellings) and the distance between the allocation and The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC (approximately 8.07km), and the fact that there are no affected roads within 200m of the SAC, there is no potential for air quality impacts on this designated site alone or in combination with other development. This impact pathway can therefore be screened out.</p>
<p><b>CON 6 – Affordable Housing Tenure</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 6 requires affordable housing within market schemes to be provided at an indicative split of around 70% affordable or social rent and 30% affordable home ownership.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications</p>
<p><b>CON 7 – Housing Mix</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 7 requires developments of more than 10 homes to provide a balanced housing mix that meets identified local needs. Schemes of more than 10 market homes should also include private rented accommodation.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications.</p>
<p><b>CON 8 – Condover Parish NDP Housing Design Guide</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 8 requires all new development to follow the Condover Parish Housing Design Guide, ensuring that proposals respond positively to local character, rural setting and Shropshire’s traditional vernacular. The policy also sets detailed standards for accessibility, amenity space, parking, biodiversity-led landscaping, EV charging and home office space.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications.</p>
<p><b>CON 9 – Sustainable Building Design</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 9 requires new development and alterations to achieve high standards of environmental performance, with particular support for measures that reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and lower running costs, including in</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications.</p>

	<p>Listed Buildings where heritage significance is preserved. The policy encourages low-carbon design through passive measures, renewable energy generation, future-proofing, provision for heat pumps, solar panels and, where appropriate, community energy schemes.</p>	
<p><b>CON 10 – Community Energy</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 10 supports low-carbon or zero-carbon renewable energy proposals that deliver clear community benefits, such as discounted local energy tariffs or secure energy supplies for identified local businesses.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications.</p>
<p><b>CON 11 - Preserving Local Heritage</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 11 supports development proposals that preserve local heritage or enhance public understanding and engagement with heritage assets, including the Condover Conservation Area, listed and historic buildings, archaeological sites, churches, graveyards, and war memorials.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> There are no HRA implications.</p>
<p><b>CON 12 - Natural Environment</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 12 – Natural Environment supports development that protects, enhances or restores the natural environment of the parish, including hedgerows, woodlands, watercourses, wildlife habitats and corridors, dark skies, and measures that improve biodiversity connectivity within and between villages.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> This is a positive policy designed to protect, enhance and restore the natural environment.  There are no impact pathways to any designated sites.</p>
<p><b>CON 13 - Recreation, Play and Outdoor Facilities</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 13 supports schemes that promote active, healthy lifestyles and mental well-being, particularly where they protect and enhance key recreational spaces. Proposals should address identified gaps in recreational provision, have community support, maximise inclusive access, and minimise impacts on wildlife and the natural environment.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b> This policy sets out areas to be managed as local green spaces. This is therefore a positive policy that has the potential to divert recreational pressure away from The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC.  There are no impact pathways to any designated sites.</p>
<p><b>CON 14 – Travel and Traffic</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 14 supports travel and traffic schemes that improve road safety, manage traffic flow, expand off-street</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b></p>

	<p>parking, and encourage walking, cycling and low-carbon transport while reducing air pollution. All proposals should minimise impacts on wildlife and the environment and include measures such as natural buffers, sustainable materials and the designation of suitable routes as Quiet Lanes.</p>	<p>By definition sustainable transport would not result in a likely significant effect. This is a positive policy that could result in potential air quality improvements/ reduce any potential increase in traffic related atmospheric emissions.</p> <p>There are no impact pathways to any designated sites.</p>
<p><b>CON 15 – Employment and Tourism</b></p>	<p>Policy CON 15 supports new employment and tourism development within or adjoining existing settlements at an appropriate scale, or in the open countryside where it forms part of small-scale farm diversification or existing employment uses. The policy also supports a new Business Hub in Dorrington and seeks to manage the density of holiday lets to avoid negative impacts on rural housing availability.</p>	<p><b>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</b></p> <p>There are no HRA implications.</p>

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## 3. Appropriate assessment

### Introduction

- 3.49. Legislation does not specify a particular methodology or format for undertaking or presenting an appropriate assessment. However, the assessment must address all impact pathways that have been identified at the screening stage, including those arising from the plan's policies on their own as well as those resulting from interactions with other plans and projects. This section therefore provides the necessary analysis of those effects. There is no legal requirement to assess 'alone' and 'in-combination' effects separately, provided that all potential effects are adequately considered and reported.
- 3.50. Two draft CNDP policies could not be screened out during the Test of Likely Significant Effects undertaken in Chapter 2. These policies are as follows:
- *CON 4 – Land off Limes Paddock* allocates approximately 0.6 hectares of land off Limes Paddock for residential development of around 15 dwellings.
  - *CON 5 – Land off Station Road (North)* allocates approximately 1.37 hectares of land off Station Road (North) for the development of around 40 dwellings.
- 3.51. By virtue of the relatively small amount of housing growth specified for the NDP area within the draft NDP, the impact pathways of concern to this HRA are inherently 'in combination' with other growth in the Local Development Plan and neighbouring plans and projects.
- 3.52. The screening for Likely Significant Effects undertaken in Section 4 identified potentially linking impact pathways to one internationally designated site which required Appropriate Assessment in relation to draft CNDP Policy CON 4 and Policy CON 5:
- Potential recreational pressure impacts on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC.

### Appropriate assessment of potential recreational pressure impacts on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC

- 3.53. Background information on the issue of recreational pressure on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC is provided in Section 4.
- 3.54. Draft Policy CON 4 allocates approximately 0.6 hectares of land off Limes Paddock for residential development of around 15 dwellings. This site is approximately 8.85km east of the Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC.
- 3.55. Draft Policy CON 5 allocates approximately 1.37 hectares of land off Station Road (North) for the development of around 40 dwellings. This site is approximately 8.85km east of the Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC.

- 3.56. As stated in Section 4, recreational pressure is generally considered to be of concern where development is proposed within c.5-6km of inland terrestrial internationally designated sites. Development under Policy CON4 and Policy CON5 would therefore exceed the distance at which development typically leads to an increase in visitor numbers. However, it should be noted that, as stated within the withdrawn Local Plan HRA, the Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC has a large recreational ‘draw’ for residents both within Shropshire and further afield, with over 90% of visitors stating they had travelled to the site from outside of local postcode areas during the 2013 Shropshire Hills and Ludlow visitor survey. The Shropshire Local Plan HRA uses a recreational core catchment zone for the Stiperstones & Hollies SAC of 10-15km. This was as derived “*from mountain bike use on Cannock Chase with major settlements within the buffer zone – in the DLP area only half of Shrewsbury lies in the buffer zone of the Stiperstones. Stiperstones is part of a much wider area of Shropshire Hills, much of which are accessible, including the Long Mynd. The evidence suggests increased housing proposed in the LP is not a significant issue at present, but specific policy wording is required for the life of the plan.*”
- 3.57. The Stiperstones and the Hollies Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located entirely within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. The State of the Shropshire Hill Report 2025<sup>8</sup> produced by Craggatak Consulting describes the Shropshire Hills as a regional destination. It states: ‘*The 60 minute catchment for Church Stretton brings in the outskirts of Wrexham to the north, and the outskirts of Birmingham to the east. Hereford and Llandrindod Wells are on the boundary to the south.*’
- 3.58. It is therefore possible that new housing allocated within Policy CON4 and Policy CON5 could lead to increased visitor numbers at The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. Considering the scale of development (around 55 new dwellings), there is considered to be potential for recreational pressure impacts in combination with other development within the new Local Plan and neighbouring plans and projects. The quantity of new housing is considered to be too small for Policy CON4 and Policy CON5 alone to result in recreational pressure impacts on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC in isolation, none the less, in combination assessment is required.
- 3.59. It is recommended that the draft CNDP include a paragraph(s) which states that Policy CON4 and Policy CON5 have the potential to increase recreational pressure on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC and therefore trigger the following relevant policies from the Core Strategy:
- CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
  - CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision
  - CS17: Environmental Networks
  - MD12: The Natural Environment

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<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://www.shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/a-special-place/management-plan/2025-30-management-plan>

3.60. The relevant text of the policies listed above, as well as related text from the Core Strategy's Vision and Strategic Objectives, is included in Appendix A. MD12 is considered particularly relevant to this assessment and is reproduced in part below:

**MD12: The Natural Environment**

*In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the avoidance of harm to Shropshire's natural assets and their conservation, enhancement and restoration will be achieved by:*

*1. Requiring a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment for all proposals where the Local Planning Authority identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site. Permission will be refused where a HRA indicates an adverse effect on the integrity of a designated site which cannot be avoided or fully mitigated. Where mitigation can remove an adverse effect, including that identified by the HRA for the Plan or the Minerals HRA, measures will be required in accordance with; CS6, CS8, CS9, CS17, CS18, MD2; remedial actions identified in the management plan for the designated site and the priorities in the Place Plans, where appropriate.*

**Explanation**

*3.109 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Plan identifies the potential for adverse effects on the integrity of a number of internationally designated sites. It also sets out the settlements where housing, employment uses or in the case of Ellesmere, leisure proposals, may cause such harm. The Plan HRA then also identifies the mitigation measures necessary to remove the harm.*

3.61. The withdrawn Shropshire Local Plan included policies designed to reduce recreational pressure on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC and/or require the avoidance of impacts on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. Overarching Shropshire Local Plan policies designed to provide for its protection were as follows:

- DP12: The Natural Environment
- DP14: Green Infrastructure
- DP15: Open Space and Recreation

3.62. The new Shropshire Local Plan (2025-2045) will also undergo HRA and will be required to contain policies designed to protect The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. The Plan process is likely to commence in 2026.

3.63. Adequate policy wording will be required within the draft NDP to ensure that there are no impacts on the integrity of The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC as a result of increased recreational pressure stemming from the new housing to be delivered under draft NDP Policy

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CON4 and Policy CON 5 in combination with other housing to be delivered within the Local Development Plan and neighbouring plans and projects. This is consistent with the findings of the HRA for the Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft Shropshire Local Plan 2016 – 2038 (withdrawn). The new Shropshire Local Plan (2025-2045) will be required to contain policies which designed to protect The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. The Plan process is likely to commence in 2026.

## 4. Conclusions

4.49. HRA of the draft CNDP has identified potential for Likely Significant Effects on one internationally designated site. This is a result of two site allocation policies: Policy CON 4, which allocates approximately 0.6 hectares of land off Limes Paddock for residential development of around 15 dwellings and Policy CON 5, which allocates approximately 1.37 hectares of land off Station Road (North) for the development of around 40 dwellings.

4.50. The following impact pathway has been identified:

- Potential recreational pressure impacts on The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC.

4.51. Adequate policy wording will be required within the draft NDP to ensure that there are no impacts on the integrity of The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC as a result of increased recreational pressure stemming from the new housing to be delivered under draft NDP Policy CON4 and Policy CON 5. The new Shropshire Local Plan (2025-2045) will be required to contain policies which designed to protect The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC. The Plan process is likely to commence in 2026.

## Appendix A Extracts from the Local Development Plan for Shropshire

### **Extract from Core Strategy: 'The Spatial Vision – Shropshire in 2026'**

The character, quality and diversity of Shropshire's natural and historic environment, the County's greatest asset, will have been protected, restored and enhanced. The quality of the landscape, geodiversity and core areas of biodiversity such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, Meres and Mosses, and Severn Valley corridor will have been maintained and managed, recognising the role played by the public and private sectors. Both designated and non-designated historic buildings, sites and landscapes will be recognised for their importance to Shropshire's character, communities, economy and sense of place. Shropshire's biodiversity network will connect with similar networks across its borders, maximising potential for wildlife to adapt to climate change. Green infrastructure and areas of recognised environmental quality within towns and villages, with links to the surrounding countryside, will provide enhanced opportunities for recreation, with associated benefits for health and well-being of residents, flood management and improved biodiversity.

### **Strategic Objective 1**

Support the development of sustainable communities which are thriving, inclusive and safe, ensuring that people in all areas of Shropshire have access to decent affordable homes, jobs, education and training, multifunctional open space and the countryside, healthcare, leisure, cultural, shopping and other facilities and services, and the provision of infrastructure, to meet their needs.

### **Strategic Objective 12**

Improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of multifunctional open space, rights of way, and sport, recreation and cultural facilities to provide varied opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy physical activity, cultural activities and lifetime learning, helping to improve health and well-being.

### **CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles**

To create sustainable places, development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles, to achieve an inclusive and accessible environment which respects and enhances local distinctiveness and which mitigates and adapts to climate change. This will be achieved by:

- Requiring all development proposals, including changes to existing buildings, to achieve applicable national standards, or for water use, evidence based local standards as reflected in the minimum criteria set out in the sustainability checklist. This will ensure that sustainable design and construction principles are incorporated within new development, and that resource and energy efficiency and renewable energy generation are adequately addressed and improved where possible. The checklist will be developed as part of a Sustainable Design SPD;

- Requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport can be maximised and the need for car based travel to be reduced;

And ensuring that all development:

- Is designed to be adaptable, safe and accessible to all, to respond to the challenge of climate change and, in relation to housing, adapt to changing lifestyle needs over the lifetime of the development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS11;
- Protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate;
- Contributes to the health and wellbeing of communities, including safeguarding residential and local amenity and the achievement of local standards for the provision and quality of open space, sport and recreational facilities.
- Is designed to a high quality, consistent with national good practice standards, including appropriate landscaping and car parking provision and taking account of site characteristics such as land stability and ground contamination;
- Makes the most effective use of land and safeguards natural resources including high quality agricultural land, geology, minerals, air, soil and water;
- Ensures that there is capacity and availability of infrastructure to serve any new development in accordance with the objectives of Policy CS8.

Proposals resulting in the loss of existing facilities, services or amenities will be resisted unless provision is made for equivalent or improved provision, or it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing facility, service or amenity is not viable over the long term.

#### **Explanation**

4.84 Open spaces can provide a number of functions such as formal and informal recreation or amenity space, they can also have a number of benefits; for example allotments which can improve health and well being, combat obesity and increase opportunities for social inclusion. They also provide a function for food security, reducing air miles, helping to combat climate change and providing habitats for wildlife.

4.85 New developments can make a positive contribution to the level of open spaces in our towns and villages and the connecting links between open spaces. Standards for the provision of open space are set out in the Shropshire Open Space, Sport and Recreation study and new development will be expected to achieve at least a minimum level of this standard, but exploring opportunities for additional provision where appropriate and making provision for future maintenance. Where it can be shown that on-site provision is not appropriate the developer will be expected to make a contribution to provision off-site. Further details of the contributions required are set out under Policy CS9. All new developments will be required to make provision for footpaths and cyclepaths which should be, where possible linked to the existing network of cyclepaths and footpaths.

The development of sustainable places in Shropshire with safe and healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life will be assisted by:

- Protecting and enhancing existing facilities, services and amenities that contribute to the quality of life of residents and visitors;
- Preserving and improving access to facilities and services wherever possible, including access to information and communication technologies (ICT), throughout Shropshire;
- Facilitating the timely provision of additional facilities, services and infrastructure to meet identified needs, as outlined in the LDF Implementation Plan whether arising from new developments or existing community need, in locations that are appropriate and accessible;
- Positively encouraging infrastructure, where this has no significant adverse impact on recognised environmental assets, that mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and working closely with network providers to ensure provision of necessary energy distribution networks.

### **Explanation**

4.107 Facilities, services and infrastructure include schools, pubs, village shops, post offices, village halls, community centres, cultural and youth facilities, police and emergency services, health care, highways, pedestrian and cycling facilities, public transport and environmental infrastructure such as open space and green infrastructure, sport and recreational provision, decentralised renewable or low carbon energy installations, waste management, utilities, surface water drainage and flood alleviation. Policies CS17 and CS18 should be read in relation to green infrastructure and water-related infrastructure, and Policy CS7 in relation to transport infrastructure. Affordable housing is included in the national definition of “infrastructure”, and is referred to in more detail in policies CS9 and CS11. Further policy guidance on infrastructure, including criteria for large scale renewable energy generation and distribution, will be provided in the SAMDev DPD.

### **CS17 : Environmental Networks**

Development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire’s environmental assets, to create a multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development:

- Protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire’s natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors;
- Contributes to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of Shropshire’s environment, including landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets, such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, the Meres and Mosses and the World Heritage Sites at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal and Ironbridge Gorge;

- Does not have a significant adverse impact on Shropshire's environmental assets and does not create barriers or sever links between dependant sites;
- Secures financial contributions, in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS9, towards the creation of new, and improvement to existing, environmental sites and corridors, the removal of barriers between sites, and provision for long term management and maintenance. Sites and corridors are identified in the LDF evidence base and will be regularly monitored and updated.

### **Explanation**

7.5 Shropshire has a wealth of environmental assets which make it locally distinct. The local geology is diverse, with a wide range of mineral resources and rocks representing most of the major divisions of geological time. The area includes large, more natural areas such as the Shropshire Hills AONB, and the Meres and Mosses in North Shropshire, as well as areas of open space throughout the range of urban settlements from larger towns such as Shrewsbury and Oswestry to local centres and rural villages. Shropshire also contains many important heritage assets including parts of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage and the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Sites. The Council will seek protection of not only the World Heritage sites but also their setting, including any buffer zones.

7.9 Shropshire Council has produced an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study which provides an audit of public and private open space areas and identifies local needs and aspirations through consultation with the public. A series of standards of provision have been established and will be monitored and regularly updated. To be of importance, an area of open space need not have a formal use or be accessible to the general public, as long as it contributes to the character and appearance of its locality. Contributions from developers will be directed towards identified infrastructure needs that help achieve Policy CS8.

7.10 Appropriate Assessment (as required by the European Habitats Directive) will be necessary for any development proposals that may have a negative impact on the integrity of SPA, SAC and Ramsar designations within and adjoining Shropshire (such as the meres and mosses of northern Shropshire and Stiperstones in southern Shropshire).

### **MD12: The Natural Environment**

In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the avoidance of harm to Shropshire's natural assets and their conservation, enhancement and restoration will be achieved by:

1. Requiring a project-level Habitats Regulations Assessment for all proposals where the Local Planning Authority identifies a likely significant effect on an internationally designated site. Permission will be refused where a HRA indicates an adverse effect on the integrity of a designated site which cannot be avoided or fully mitigated. Where mitigation can remove an adverse effect, including that identified by the HRA for the Plan or the Minerals HRA, measures will be required in accordance with; CS6, CS8, CS9, CS17, CS18, MD2; remedial actions identified in the management plan for the designated site and the priorities in the Place Plans, where appropriate.

### **Explanation**

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3.109 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Plan identifies the potential for adverse effects on the integrity of a number of internationally designated sites. It also sets out the settlements where housing, employment uses or in the case of Ellesmere, leisure proposals, may cause such harm. The Plan HRA then also identifies the mitigation measures necessary to remove the harm.

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## Appendix B Impact pathways identified in the HRA for the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan (withdrawn) 2016 to 2038

The HRA for the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan (withdrawn) identified the broad mechanisms by which the elements of the draft Local Plan might affect international sites. These broad mechanisms, or impact pathways, may apply during construction or through long-term after-use of the development and include, but are not limited to those listed in Table 1 below. Impacts may be direct or indirect, temporary or permanent, continuous or intermittent, positive, neutral or negative and reversible or irreversible.

*Table 1: Potential impact pathways resulting from elements of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (withdrawn) 2016 to 2038*

General impact pathway	Specific potential impacts resulting from development	Potential Effects
Air pollution	From increased traffic during construction and occupation.	Mainly nitrogen and acid deposition causing eutrophication and soil acidification leading to habitat change and species loss.
	Increased nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide particulate matter and other pollutants from residential but particularly industrial combustion processes.	Direct damage through airborne pollutants and nitrogen and acid deposition, causing eutrophication and soil acidification, leading to habitat change and species loss.
	Increased airborne ammonia from intensive and non-intensive livestock units, manure storage and spreading, anaerobic digesters etc.	Direct damage through airborne ammonia and indirect via nitrogen and acid deposition causing eutrophication and soil acidification, leading to habitat change and species loss.
Hydrological impacts	Changes to groundwater quantity through abstraction.	Habitat loss or change through drying or flooding
	Changes to groundwater quality through infiltration of pollution.	Habitat loss or change through eutrophication or pollution.
	Changes to surface water quantity through abstraction, increased runoff from hard surfaces and flooding.	Habitat loss or change through drying or flooding

	Changes to surface water quality through pollution from new urban run-off and infiltration from non-mains foul water drainage.	Habitat loss or change through eutrophication or pollution.
	Overloading of wastewater infrastructure through additional dwellings.	Eutrophication of water bodies causing damage to, or loss of, populations of aquatic species and wetland habitats.
	Increased pollution during flooding events.	Eutrophication or toxic effects on water bodies causing damage to, or loss of, populations of aquatic species and wetland habitats.
	Increased silt from development, during and post construction.	Eutrophication and smothering of aquatic species and habitats.
<b>Recreational impacts and other disturbance</b>	Increased trampling and physical damage to international site by additional residents and visitors.	Erosion and mechanical damage to habitats.
	New or increased disturbance by people, dogs and other pets from new housing.	Disturbance preventing foraging, commuting, migrating, resting or breeding of qualifying species.
	Swimming by people and dogs.	Physical damage and disturbance to aquatic species and habitats.
	Increased hunting pressure from domestic animals.	Disturbance of species, damage to or loss of populations of species.
	Increased deposition of dog faeces as a result of new or increased numbers of dwellings or visitor attractions. .	Eutrophication causing habitat change and species loss.
	Increased fishing and leisure boat use.	Physical damage to habitats, and disturbance or smothering of aquatic species.

	Damage from increased bikes and other vehicles.	Disturbance of wildlife and erosion of habitats.
	New or increasing visitor numbers causing interference with grazing and other management designed to maintain the features of the international sites.	Prevention of maintenance or restoration of qualifying habitats and species
	'Induced development' – development in some form required on international sites to counteract demand from visitors.	Damage to, or prevention of maintenance or restoration of qualifying habitats and species
	Disturbance caused by construction or use of industrial sites e.g. noise caused by development during construction or use/occupation.	Disturbance preventing foraging, commuting, migrating, resting or breeding of qualifying species.
<b>Introduction of invasive species or diseases</b>	Introduction or spreading of invasive species or diseases e.g. through vehicle movements, by boats, people or dogs, or introduction of fish or non-native plants.	Damage to habitats or damage to, or loss of, populations of qualifying species by highly competitive non-native species or disease.
<b>Light pollution</b>	New or increased lighting from development during construction or during occupation or use.	Disturbance or loss of nocturnal species preventing foraging, commuting, migrating, resting or breeding.

## Appendix C References to the SSSI/Ramsar sites in the 2020 HRA of the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Shropshire Local Plan 2016 to 2038 (withdrawn)

### Bomere, Shomere and Betton Pools SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 1)) Ramsar network)

#### *Local sources of air pollution*

2.32. As part of Phase 1 of the methodology in the Traffic Report, the following international sites have been screened out for traffic-derived damaging effects as they lie more than 200m at their nearest point, from an A road or busy B road: Bomere and Shomere Pools.

#### *Hydrological impacts*

2.49. The Water Cycle Study and wetland catchment data have been used to screen international sites. The following international sites have been screened out as no water quality or quantity impact pathways from allocated sites have been identified. Shropshire is either outside of the catchment of the river concerned or there is no development proposed by the DLP within the water catchment of wetland sites: Bomere and Shomere Pools.

#### *Recreation and other disturbance pathways*

2.58. The remaining sites are mostly privately owned, but have some form of public access, often limited to a public footpath either crossing or following the edge of the site: Bomere and Shomere Pools.

*Extract from Table 4: Recreation impact pathways to international sites (pg 41)*

<b>International Site</b>	<b>Residential Land Allocation (numbers of dwellings in bold, w = windfall)</b>	<b>Comment/Suggested Mitigation</b>	<b>LSE?</b>
Bomere and Shomere Pools Ramsar	Bayston Hill w <b>14</b> , BAY039 <b>100</b> . BAY050 <b>47</b> , CON006 <b>5-10</b> saved, CON005 <b>5-10</b> saved, SHREW002, 035, 083, and 128/ELR64, 67 and 68 <b>750</b> saved <b>TOTAL 931 max</b>	Privately owned land with no public access other than a footpath which runs north-west to south-east across the site. A 2km ANGst distance has been applied as access is linear, not an area. 2.2km of FP extend from BAY050 and 2.6km from BAY039, including crossing the A49. Screen out. Saved Condover allocations are for a total of 10-20 houses and are 2.2 and 2.4 km from the international site, accessible by only narrow roads with no verge and then public footpath. Screen out.  Saved Southern Urban Extension is already partly built and 2.5km from the international site. There are extensive footpath links to centre of Shrewsbury heading north from the allocation along the Rea Brook Local Nature Reserve and	No

		circular walk around Bayston Hill Quarry. Screen out.	
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2.62. Having looked at the remaining international sites, Berrington Pool Ramsar and Bomere and Shomere Pools Ramsar sites have been screened out as there will be no likely significant effect, alone or in combination as a result of recreation generated by the DLP.

2.86. The detailed screening results are provided in Appendix 4 for international sites. Of the 24 international sites which have been identified for consideration in this HRA Screening Report the following have been screened out, as they will not be affected, or there will be no significant effects alone or in combination, as a result of the DLP, without recourse to mitigation measures: Bomere and Shomere Pools

*Additional Development Policies screened into the appropriate assessment*

3.176. DPSP14. Strategic Corridors: This policy seeks to focus major development, particularly economic/employment development, along the principal rail network and strategic and principal road networks in Shropshire. Hence sites are not specifically allocated by the policy, but a general location is provided.

3.177. ‘Strategic Corridors’ are broadly defined in the Explanation text at 4.91. Depending on the location and level of emissions or other impact pathways of the development, the following international sites are those most likely to be affected (within a 5km buffer of the network).

c) Central Shropshire

Bomere and Shomere Pools Ramsar Site

**Berrington Pool SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 1)) Ramsar network)**

*Local sources of air pollution*

2.32. As part of Phase 1 of the methodology in the Traffic Report, the following international sites have been screened out for traffic-derived damaging effects as they lie more than 200m at their nearest point, from an A road or busy B road: Berrington Pool

*Hydrological impacts*

2.49. The Water Cycle Study and wetland catchment data have been used to screen international sites. The following international sites have been screened out as no water quality or quantity impact pathways from allocated sites have been identified. Shropshire is either outside of the catchment of the river concerned or there is no development proposed by the DLP within the water catchment of wetland sites: Berrington Pool

*Recreation and other disturbance pathways*

2.58. The remaining sites are mostly privately owned, but have some form of public access, often limited to a public footpath either crossing or following the edge of the site: Berrington Pool

International Site	Residential Land Allocation (numbers of dwellings in bold, w = windfall)	Comment/Suggested Mitigation	LSE?
Berrington Pool Ramsar	Cross Houses w.9	Privately owned land with a fishing club. Low numbers of houses (9 windfalls only) are proposed on the edge of the village. On foot it is 1.4km from the village to the Ramsar Site via 2 separate footpaths and roads through the village of Berrington. Screen out.	No

2.62. Having looked at the remaining international sites, Berrington Pool Ramsar and Bomere and Shomere Pools Ramsar sites have been screened out as there will be no likely significant effect, alone or in combination as a result of recreation generated by the DLP.

2.86. The detailed screening results are provided in Appendix 4 for international sites. Of the 24 international sites which have been identified for consideration in this HRA Screening Report the following have been screened out, as they will not be affected, or there will be no significant effects alone or in combination, as a result of the DLP, without recourse to mitigation measures: Berrington Pool

3.177. 'Strategic Corridors' are broadly defined in the Explanation text at 4.91. Depending on the location and level of emissions or other impact pathways of the development, the following international sites are those most likely to be affected (within a 5km buffer of the network).

a) Eastern Belt M54/A5, A41/A464 and A4169/A458/A454

Berrington Pool Ramsar Site (A458)

c) Central Shropshire

Berrington Pool Ramsar Site

### **Hencott Pool SSSI (also part of the Midland Meres and Mosses ((Phase 2)) Ramsar network)**

#### *Local sources of air pollution*

2.33. The following sites are within 200m from an A road or busy B road and required further consideration: Hencott Pool

*Extract from Table 2: Summary of screening of international sites within 200m of busy roads for impacts from increased air pollution.*

International Site	Closest distance from road	Distance from Shropshire border	Site sensitivities.	Nearest Shropshire site allocation. Nearest other LPA site allocation and HRA conclusions.	LSE
				The proposed North West Relief Road is now planned to be just	

<b>Hencott Pool</b>				over 200m from Hencott Pool. At planning application stage, the project requires its own HRA to be carried out, based on more detailed investigations. Hencott Pool is considered further in the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.	Yes
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2.40. Based on the above assessment there will be no likely significant effect on international sites other than Hencott Pool, alone or in combination with other plans or projects as a result of airborne emissions from increased traffic derived from the policies and site allocations in the DLP. Hencott Pool and traffic emissions are considered further in the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

*Hydrological impacts*

2.49. The Water Cycle Study and wetland catchment data have been used to screen international sites. The following international sites have been screened out as no water quality or quantity impact pathways from allocated sites have been identified. Shropshire is either outside of the catchment of the river concerned or there is no development proposed by the DLP within the water catchment of wetland sites: Hencott Pool.

*Recreation and other disturbance pathways*

2.57. The following international sites have been screened out for recreation pathways on the basis that there is no public access, even by public footpath or, in the case of the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites, they are so far away there will be no impact from Shropshire growth: Hencott Pool.

*International sites requiring further consideration*

*Extract from Table 7: International sites and DLP policies screened into the Appropriate Assessment with likely significant impacts*

<b>International site</b>	<b>Identified impact</b>	<b>Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Policies (Housing numbers in bold)</b>	<b>Section number</b>
Hencott Pool, M&M Ramsar Phase 1	Air Pollution, Hydrological impacts.	DP.28 Communications and Transport.	3.96

3.103. Conclusions for the Hencott Pool, Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar Phase 2

Through adding the recommended policy wording and the statutory requirement for a project level HRA for development, there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the Hencott Pool, Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar Phase 2 as a result of the Draft Local Plan.

HRA inc. Appropriate Assessment Draft Conover Neighbourhood Development Plan March 2026  
3.177. 'Strategic Corridors' are broadly defined in the Explanation text at 4.91. Depending on the location and level of emissions or other impact pathways of the development, the following international sites are those most likely to be affected (within a 5km buffer of the network).

c) Central Shropshire

Hencott Pool Ramsar Site

DRAFT