

Habitats Regulations Assessment of Cannock Chase Core Strategy

Task 1: Screening

For
Black Country Local Authorities and Cannock Chase
District Council

October 2007

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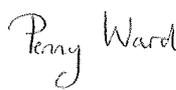
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report is part of a series which have been prepared to provide information to the Black Country Local Authorities and Cannock Chase District Council on the implications of the Black Country Core Strategy and Cannock Chase Core Strategy on Fens Pools SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. It has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994, as the possibility of a significant impact on the European sites has been identified.

1.1 Cannock Chase Core Strategy

1.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Cannock Chase Core Strategy is to set out the development framework for Cannock Chase, supported by a range of other more detailed documents such as Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents.

1.1.2 Description

The following text is taken from the introduction to the Cannock Chase Core Strategy:

“The Cannock Chase Core Strategy provides a statement of:

- *The Council's long-term spatial vision to be used in promoting and controlling development throughout the District, while complementing the vision set out in the Cannock Chase Sustainable Community Strategy.*
- *Clear strategic objectives for the development and improvement of the environment within a set timetable.*
- *A spatial strategy for delivering these objectives.*
- *Core policies to shape development and deliver the strategy, which would then form the basis for development control decision making. The core policies will cover the key issues of sustainable development, sustainable environment, sustainable living, site selection, housing, economic development, transport, design and Green Belt, Cannock Chase AONB and nature conservation issues.*
- *The broad location of new housing and employment land requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy. Site specific land use allocations are not included in the Core Strategy, as these will be contained within the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.*
- *A monitoring and implementation framework.”*

1.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Process

1.2.1 Requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment

EU Directive 92/43/EC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, known more commonly as the Habitats Directive, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. Natura 2000 sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive establish a requirement for competent authorities to undertake Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project likely to have a significant effect upon Natura 2000 sites. The assessment is termed 'Appropriate Assessment' because the assessment should be appropriate to its purpose under the Habitats Directive

prescribed in Articles 6(3) and (4); to assess the implications of the plan in respect of the site's 'conservation objectives'.

In the light of the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment the competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and where the plan cannot pass further stringent tests described in Article 6(4).

The Habitats Directive is implemented in the UK via the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. Amendments to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 are currently being finalised. These include a requirement for Appropriate Assessments to be undertaken for land use plans when such plans are likely to have a significant effect on a European site and are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site in accordance with its conservation objectives.

1.2.2 *Habitats Regulations Assessment at the Plan Level*

Habitats Regulations Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed plan on one or more Natura 2000 sites. The process of investigating the potential effects of a plan or project on European Sites is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment, to distinguish it from the term Appropriate Assessment as referred to in the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, which actually means a statement from the competent authority (in this case the relevant local authority) which identifies whether the plan does, or does not affect the integrity of Natura 2000 site(s).

The purpose of Habitats Regulations Assessment of plans is to ensure that the protection of European sites is part of the planning process at both a regional and local level.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. Firstly the plan should aim to *avoid* any negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making process and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Secondly *mitigation measures* should be applied during the process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain.

If the plan is still likely to result in adverse effects and no further practicable mitigation is possible then it should not be taken forward. Under such a scenario the plan may have to undergo an assessment of alternative solutions. Then *compensatory measures* are required for any remaining adverse effects but they are permitted only if (a) there are no alternative solutions and (b) the plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

1.2.3 *Habitats Regulations Assessment Guidance*

The Habitats Regulations Assessment process undertaken by WYGE has been developed in accordance with the following guidance:

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994
- EU Directive 92/43/EC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora
- DEFRA (2006) The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 Consultation Document
- DCLG (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment (Consultation Document)
- EC (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC
- Scott Wilson, Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants and Land Use Consultants (2006) Appropriate Assessment of Plans.

1.2.4 *Habitats Regulations Assessment Stages*

The Habitats Regulations Assessment process involves the following tasks split according to the DCLG (2006) guidance stages. Tasks 2 and 3 are not always required, as they are dependent on the outcome of Task 1.

Task 1	Likely significant effects (Screening)
	Collect information on Natura 2000 sites Consult with Natural England Determine whether the plan has potential to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites Identify plans and projects likely to have in-combination effects
Task 2	Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity
	Determine whether, in view of the sites' nature conservation objectives, the plan would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the sites Take account of the plan's effects "in combination" with other plans and projects
Task 3	Mitigation measures and alternative solutions
	Identify mitigation measures and/or alternatives to ensure that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the sites

1.3 Relationship with Habitats Regulations Assessment of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) is the umbrella document covering regional policies and issues for the West Midlands. The Cannock Chase Core Strategy is effectively a subsidiary document of the WMRSS and draws directly on it to provide guidance as to how the regional policies are to be implemented in Cannock Chase District, in the same way that the Cannock Chase Core Strategy provides district-wide guidance which is then implemented in more detailed sub-documents for specific issues.

Habitats Regulations Assessments of Phases 1 and 2 of the review of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy have recently been prepared by URSUS and Treweek Environmental Consultants.

Owing to the relationship between the WMRSS and the Cannock Chase Core Strategy, the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Cannock Chase Core Strategy can be considered subsidiary to the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the WMRSS, and the findings of the URSUS/Treweek report will be taken into account in this study.

1.4 Information used in the Assessment

Information used in the assessment is presented in the following baseline reports:

- WYGE (2007) Cannock Extension Canal SAC Baseline Report
- WYGE (2007) Fens Pools SAC Baseline Report

1.5 Professional judgment

Professional judgment has been used throughout this study. This is particularly relevant to decisions made in relation to potential impacts, since the amount of detail available on the construction and operation of the developments proposed in the plan is necessarily limited. Therefore, the approach has been to identify risks as far as practicable.

The reliability of professional judgment can be quantified to some extent by reference to the experience of the professional concerned. This report was authored by Gail Quartly-Bishop with technical direction and review from Duncan Watson.

*Duncan Watson MIEEM CEnv
Associate Director*

Duncan has been a professional ecologist for over 12 years and has extensive experience in directing, managing and undertaking a wide range of ecological projects. He has undertaken a number of projects within and adjacent to European protected sites, several of which have involved Appropriate Assessment under regulation 48 of the Habitats Directive.

*Gail Quartly-Bishop MIEEM CEnv
Senior Ecologist*

Gail has been a professional ecologist since 1998 and has a particular interest in Habitats Regulations Assessment including Appropriate Assessment. She has been involved in assessments of a number of projects and plans with complex technical and legal issues and as such has a good understanding of the legislative framework, prevailing guidance and process of Appropriate Assessment.

1.6 Purpose and scope of this report

This report covers Task 1: Screening, as follows:

- Collect information on Natura 2000 sites by reference to the Baseline Reports
- Consult with Natural England
- Determine whether the plan has potential to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites
- Identify plans and projects likely to have in-combination effects

2 NATURA 2000 SITES

2.1 Introduction

The first task in the Habitats Regulations Assessment process involves *evidence gathering* to enable the potential for significant effects upon Natura 2000 sites to be determined.

2.2 Natura 2000 sites considered in this report

There are two Natura 2000 sites within the Cannock Chase area:

Cannock Extension Canal SAC (SK019044 to SK020069) – a canal supporting floating water-plantain

Cannock Chase SAC (SJ990180) – an area of lowland heath

This report does not cover the potential effects of the Cannock Chase Core Strategy on Cannock Chase SAC, as WYGE have been informed that an assessment of the effects of the Cannock Chase Core Strategy on this site has been commissioned separately.

Several other Natura 2000 sites were identified within approximately 20km of the boundaries of Cannock Chase District:

- Pasturefields Salt Marsh SAC (SJ992248) – an inland saltmarsh
- West Midlands Mosses SAC & Ramsar (Chartley Moss; SK027283) – quaking bog and natural pool
- Motte Meadows SAC (SJ840134) - lowland hay meadow
- River Mease SAC (SK360144 – SK195148) - river habitat and aquatic fauna
- Fens Pools SAC (SO920886) – designated for its great crested newt population
- West Midlands Ramsar¹ (Aqualate Mere; SJ770205) – habitats, invertebrates, breeding and passage birds

The scope of the Habitats Regulations Assessment has been set by Cannock Chase District Council in its tender documentation dated 5th February 2007. The brief clearly states that the scope of the assessment for the Cannock Chase Core Strategy includes Cannock Extension Canal SAC only.

2.3 Evidence gathering

In order to determine the likely effects of the Cannock Chase Core Strategy, information has been collected to determine:

- The characteristics of the Natura 2000 site;
- The reasons why the site has been designated (the qualifying interest features);
- The environmental factors required to sustain the qualifying interest features and site integrity; and
- The nature conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site.

The following data and information has been collected:

- Latest Natural England condition surveys of the site;
- Recent surveys of the site undertaken by or on behalf of the local authorities or other relevant bodies;
- Species and habitat data for the site; and
- Other relevant data held by Natural England including conservation objectives.

¹ In accordance with PPS9, Ramsar sites are treated as Natura 2000 sites for planning purposes, although strictly speaking they are not protected under the Habitats Regulations.

The compiled information for the site is presented in the following report and summarised below.

- WYGE (2007) Cannock Extension Canal SAC Baseline Report

Cannock Extension Canal SAC is designated for one qualifying feature, its population of floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*, an aquatic plant. Floating water-plantain is protected across Europe and in the UK via the Habitats Regulations (it is a “European protected species”).

3 SCREENING METHODOLOGY FOR LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

3.1 Introduction

Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process identifies whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

3.2 Review of the Habitats Regulations Assessments of the Phase 1 and 2 revisions to the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The reports of the above assessments were reviewed to determine whether any potential impacts on Cannock Extension Canal SAC had been screened out at regional level.

3.3 Detailed Screening Methodology

The Cannock Chase Core Strategy Issues and Options have been screened in detail to determine the potential impact of the Core Strategy on Cannock Extension Canal SAC, since the SAC is within the Cannock Chase District boundary.

For each option it has been determined whether the option will have a positive, neutral (no effect) or adverse effect upon the SAC. This is illustrated through the use of symbols in the tables in Appendix A. Commentary has been provided in each table to explain the likely effects that have been identified.

The assessment considers the following impacts:

Direct impacts – represent a straight route between an action or event and a resultant effect on the ecological interest feature. For example, development that removes habitat for which the SAC was designated.

Indirect impacts – Do not arise directly from the plan but instead occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway. For example, development which alters the hydrology of a catchment area, which in turn affects the movement of groundwater to a site and the qualifying features which rely on the maintenance of water levels.

Induced impacts – are secondary actions which may result from the actions set out in the plan, so those impacts arising from development which promotes further development or change which, in turn, affects the integrity of European sites. These are non ecological impacts in the first instance but will result in ecological impacts later in the pathway of effects. For example, the building of a ring road around a town which may encourage infilling with new homes between the existing town and the road and increase the size of the town with consequent impacts on site integrity.

It should be noted that precautionary principles have been used when assessing whether effects may be significant. In cases where information is not available or where there is doubt and further research is needed Stage 2 should be undertaken.

In particular, the following factors identified as having potential to affect Cannock Extension Canal have been considered:

- Boat traffic – too much or too little
- Silt removal/dredging
- Direct loss of habitat supporting floating water-plantain
- Management of vegetation e.g. clearance for fishing access
- Water quality – point sources – including road drains, and runoff from Little Wyrley Common caused by illegal off-road activity
- Bottom feeding fish
- Invasive plants e.g. Azolla
- Routine canal maintenance activities
- Water quality – agricultural runoff – nutrients

- Water quality – agricultural runoff – herbicides etc
- Water quality – agricultural activity – siltation e.g. due to ploughing
- Management of water levels
- Invasive animals e.g. signal crayfish

The above factors are taken from WYGE (2007) Cannock Extension Canal SAC Baseline Report.

4 SCREENING RESULTS

4.1 Review of Habitats Regulations Assessments of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

4.1.1 Phase 1 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The Habitats Regulations Assessment did not identify any possible likely significant effects or in-combination effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC.

4.1.2 Phase 2 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

The Habitats Regulations Assessment considered the following potential effects of the WMRSS on Cannock Extension Canal SAC:

- Recreational pressure and disturbance
- Water quantity
- Water quality
- Air pollution
- Invasive species

Of these, water quantity, air pollution and invasive species were screened out as unlikely to result in significant impact.

Recreational pressure was identified as a likely significant impact of the WMRSS as a result of population growth in Walsall and Cannock in combination with the effects of other plans and policies relating to tourism in the area. An increase in boat traffic would have implications for the qualifying feature due to direct disturbance, effects on water clarity and possible effects on chemical water quality.

A possible likely significant effect was identified in relation to water quality, since road runoff is currently believed to be an issue at the site and the WMRSS could result in increased traffic in the local area, particularly on the A5(T).

The site is to be taken forward for examination in Stage 2 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the WMRSS in relation to recreational pressure and water quality.

As a result of the assessment of the WMRSS, this study will not consider the issues of water quantity, air pollution and invasive species, which have been screened out at regional level. This study will focus on identifying district and local level impacts, with particular reference to recreational pressure and water quality.

4.2 Screening outcome

The tables in Appendix A show the results of the screening process for each policy contained within the Core Strategy. The table overleaf summarises the results.

It can be seen that there are two major areas where likely significant effect has been identified. These are:

- Promotion of canals for recreational and/or transport purposes, leading to acceptance of the long-standing proposal for restoration of the Hatherton Branch Canal, which would have a likely direct effect on floating water-plantain.
- Likely increase in traffic on the A5, M6 Toll and local roads as a result of developments promoted by the Core Strategy, which is likely to have effects on water quality.

The remaining issues can be dealt with by amending parts of the document to ensure that an appropriate level of emphasis on nature conservation protection is contained within each relevant policy area (see section 4.3).

Impact pathway	Potential effect of Core Strategy on Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Likely significant effect?
Boat traffic	Canal restoration for recreational or transport purposes would result in increased boat traffic and a direct impact on the population of floating water-plantain.	Yes
Silt removal/dredging	Canal restoration for recreational or transport purposes would be likely to involve silt removal/ dredging, both as part of the restoration process and subsequent maintenance.	Yes
Direct loss of habitat supporting floating water-plantain	Canal restoration for recreational or transport purposes would be likely to result in direct loss of habitat supporting floating water-plantain.	Yes
Management of vegetation e.g. clearance for fishing platforms	Promotion of the canal as a recreational site could result in increased unofficial use of the site by anglers. Increased angling activity could be detrimental to the floating water-plantain through removal of vegetation. However, angling would not be promoted directly by actions arising from the Core Strategy and an increased budget for visitor promotions could be used in part to deter angling here in favour of more suitable sites elsewhere.	No
Water quality from point sources e.g. road drains	<p>The Core Strategy promotes developments of all kinds which are likely to be situated both in the area local to the SAC and throughout the District. The SAC is located close to the A5 and M6 Toll, both major routes. Increases in traffic on these routes could potentially result in deterioration of water quality within the SAC, although it is unclear whether a direct pathway exists between the road drains and the site.</p> <p>Development in the area local to the SAC could result in increased traffic on local roads, particularly the B4154 which runs alongside and over the SAC for most of its length. Again, deterioration of water quality from road run-off could result.</p>	Yes
Bottom feeding fish	Promotion of the canal as a recreational site could result in increased unofficial use of the site by anglers. Increased angling activity could be detrimental to the floating water-plantain through the introduction or promotion of bottom-feeding fish such as carp species, which create conditions unfavourable for floating water-plantain by disturbing the bottom sediments. However, angling would not be promoted directly by actions arising from the Core Strategy and an increased budget for visitor promotions could be used in part to deter angling here in favour of more suitable sites elsewhere.	No
Invasive plants	Canal restoration for recreational or transport purposes would result in increased boat traffic and the potential for invasive plants to be more readily transported into or within the SAC. However, the most likely species to be transported in this manner would be <i>Azolla</i> , which is already present at the site.	No

Impact pathway	Potential effect of Core Strategy on Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Likely significant effect?
Routine canal maintenance	At present, canal maintenance by British Waterways is minimal. Should the canal be restored for recreational and/or transport purposes, this would increase the requirement for maintenance activities (other than dredging). Such activities may include repairs to the canal walls, etc. Whilst British Waterways is fully aware of its responsibilities in relation to nature conservation when planning maintenance activities, it remains possible that restoration of the canal would result in a need for maintenance activities which could have unavoidable adverse effects on the floating water-plantain.	Yes
Agricultural run-off	The Core Strategy promotes the selection of urban and/or brownfield sites over those in the green belt which are most likely to be agricultural. As the SAC is in the green belt, is it unlikely that the Core Strategy would have any effect on agricultural run-off in the local area.	No
Management of water levels	Water levels in the canal are managed by British Waterways. As noted under "Routine canal maintenance", British Waterways are aware that nature conservation is a major consideration in management of canal sites and would be unlikely to undertake water level management to the detriment of the floating water-plantain. However, should canal restoration be undertaken, it is possible that this could require future management of water levels which could have unavoidable adverse effects on floating water-plantain.	Yes
Invasive animal species e.g. signal crayfish	It is most unlikely that developments and/or activities promoted by the Core Strategy would have any effect on the presence or otherwise of invasive animal species in the SAC.	No

In relation to the current draft of the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper, therefore, it is not possible to state without reasonable scientific doubt that the Core Strategy will not result in significant impacts on Cannock Extension Canal SAC.

4.3 Next steps and mitigation

4.3.1 Approach

The Core Strategy sets out principles for development control decisions. It does not set out individual proposals, so there is insufficient detail to decide on a site by site basis whether there may be an impact on Cannock Extension Canal SAC. Subsidiary documents based on the principles in the Core Strategy will provide this level of detail during the course of preparation, for example site allocations, and may require Habitats Regulations Assessment in their own right.

Examining the prevailing guidance, it is not considered appropriate to set buffer zones around the SAC within which development would be restricted, as there is no basis for demonstrating that this would be effective in preventing, for example, indirect and induced impacts. A blanket buffer zone strategy imposed at this stage could also result in the widespread sterilisation of land in terms of its development potential, which is not acceptable. An alternative approach is therefore required.

The relationship of the Core Strategy to subsidiary documents such as the site allocations paper is important in demonstrating how the Core Strategy will comply with the Habitats Regulations. Current guidance on Habitats Regulations Assessment of plans indicates that all plans are to be considered independently; that is, it is not acceptable for the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Core Strategy to refer the issue downwards by stating, for instance, that the assessment would be dealt with at site allocations stage. A clear statement of effects on Natura 2000 sites, if any, must be produced for each plan assessed.

Since all of the subsidiary documents in the LDF need to be produced in accordance with the Core Strategy, the key issue in terms of compliance with the Regulations is to ensure that the principles set out in the Core Strategy, particularly those relating to nature conservation and site selection criteria, are worded such that it is not possible for subsidiary documents complying with these principles to result in significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

This is likely to result in a degree of overlap between the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies document in the area of protection of Natura 2000 sites. However, because they are treated independently in terms of Habitats Regulations Assessment, a clear statement of how protection of Natura 2000 sites will be achieved is required in both documents.

The sections below provide suggestions for amendments to the Core Strategy which could potentially avoid some of the adverse effects identified in the current Issues and Options paper. These are intended as a starting point for discussion and agreement between Cannock Chase District Council and Natural England.

4.3.2 Sustainable development/environment (sections 3.8, 6.4 and 6.8)

These sections deal with many principles of sustainable development including a number of environmental factors, but make no mention of the need to comply with environmental protection legislation, specifically the Habitats Regulations, during the process of developing the LDF and assessing future development proposals based upon it. However, it could also be argued that sustainability *sensu stricto* does not have a direct relationship with environmental protection via legal means. Section 6.8 in particular offers an opportunity to state clearly how the requirements of the Habitats Regulations will be implemented as part of the sustainable environment aims set out in section 6.7.

4.3.3 Strategic objectives for effective protection of the environment (section 4.3)

This section would benefit from a specific reference to compliance with the Habitats Directive as a strategic objective, indeed, requirement, for the LDF going forward.

4.3.4 Spatial strategy (section 5)

This section largely relates to statements and options for the generic nature and distribution of development. However, section 5.22 specifically mentions assessment of potential sites for housing allocation. In section 5.27, the paper states that consideration will be given to the release of further employment land along the M6 Toll corridor. A cross-reference here to the suggested site selection criteria is recommended.

4.3.5 Sequential approach to site selection (section 6.12 et seq)

This issue is key in determining whether the Core Strategy is likely to have significant or indeed any adverse impact on Cannock Extension Canal SAC. At present, there are mentions of what might broadly be called site selection criteria scattered throughout the Core Strategy. Some policies relating to development proposals provide no information on how the suitability of sites will be assessed. Other policies describe a sequential process for selecting sites, but do not have any emphasis on legal/sustainability/environmental/nature conservation considerations.

If the Core Strategy is to pass the Habitats Regulations test, it will be essential to clearly state the basis upon which all site selections will be made. A robust set of site selection criteria is needed for application throughout the Core Strategy and subsidiary documents.

The current wording in the section entitled “Sequential approach to site selection” is as follows:

“The policy will set out the main criteria that will be used to assess whether a housing, employment, retail and town centre development proposal would comply with prevailing national, regional and strategic policy on the need, to follow a sequential approach to site selection and development.

In particular, town centre development proposals, would need to:

- *Demonstrate that a thorough assessment of options has been carried out.*
- *Only consider alternative sites where no suitable sites of buildings for conversion were or likely to become available.*
- *Only consider such alternative locations firstly at edge of centre locations, followed by out-of-centre sites.*

Residential development would need to give priority:

- *To developable brownfield land and buildings within urban areas identified in the urban capacity study,*
- *Followed by urban extensions*
- *And finally by new development based on public transport nodes.”*

Although it is true that most Natura 2000 sites are in rural areas, and it might be argued that the probability of a significant impact arising from the above criteria is low, this is unhelpful in terms of the Regulations. In order to comply with the Regulations, the Core Strategy must demonstrate that there is no reasonable scientific doubt that there will not be a significant adverse impact.

In order to achieve this, it is essential that the requirements of the Regulations are taken into account in the principles for choosing and prioritising sites for development. An explicit commitment to meeting the requirements is needed, as distinct from the guidance set out in the above criteria. An example of potentially suitable text is given below. In this context, site allocations means all types of development given spatial expression in the subsidiary documents of the LDF, which includes but is not limited to employment, housing, retail, leisure/tourism and transport allocations. In addition, this would include safeguarded land or routes for future development, such as the route of the proposed Hatherton Canal restoration.

This policy sets out the main criteria that will be used to select site allocations included in the LDF and to assess whether future development proposals not based on site allocations in the LDF would comply with prevailing national, regional and strategic policy regarding the need to follow a sequential approach to site selection and development. A specific test has been included to ensure that future site allocations will comply with the Habitats Regulations, which provide protection to sites of international importance for nature conservation independently of the planning system. These Natura 2000 sites include Cannock Extension Canal SAC, located south of Norton Canes. .

Habitats Regulations test for site allocations included in the LDF:

The potential for adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites will be an important driver in selecting and prioritising sites for development. The first priority is to avoid development sites with the potential to create adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Such sites will not be selected unless it can be demonstrated at the time of site selection that these impacts can be mitigated using techniques with a demonstrable record of success elsewhere.

The policy would then need to go on to provide clear guidance as to the expected sequence of approach, as well as any other criteria considered necessary, such as compliance with sustainability principles. The current wording is incomplete in this regard.

The omission of the word “significant” in the suggested text is deliberate. This is because although minor adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites do not prevent a proposal going ahead, the cumulative effect of more than one minor adverse impact can add up to a significant adverse impact. Looking at the overall implications of the Core Strategy, if the potential for minor adverse impacts is allowed to remain, it becomes very difficult to show how the Core Strategy will not result in an overall significant adverse impact, because of the inherent lack of detail in the document. Therefore, the criteria need to ensure that only sites with no impact or where all adverse impacts can be mitigated are selected.

There is another route to consenting projects with potential for significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated. This involves a demonstration that there are no alternatives and that the project is required for overriding reasons of public importance, which may include health, safety and environmental benefits. Compensatory measures are then required to ensure that the overall network of Natura 2000 sites is not compromised. This is only appropriate in the most exceptional circumstances and so may be best left out of text included in the Core Strategy

This approach may be interpreted by some readers as referring the issue downwards. It is true that a Habitats Regulations Assessment is likely to be required for some other LDF components, for example the Site Allocations, as it will be necessary to demonstrate how each individual allocation complies with the Habitats Regulations. However, the emphasis is slightly different.

The Core Strategy sets out criteria to be followed by the subsidiary documents. If one of these criteria is to ensure that there is no significant impact on Natura 2000 sites via appropriate site selection criteria, all subsidiary documents must comply with this requirement. Therefore, all subsidiary documents prepared in accordance with the Core Strategy will use these criteria and the result would be no significant impact on Natura 2000 sites.

This is not the same as providing the necessary information on how the selected sites, for instance, comply with the Habitats Regulations.

4.3.6 *Tackling the potential effects of road run-off*

Road run-off as a result of increased traffic reflects the cumulative impact of all developments and activities within the District and surrounding region. Although some developments may have a greater impact than others on traffic levels, road run-off is not an issue which can be effectively dealt with at the site allocation or project level. This issue requires further assessment at Stage 2 to determine the following:

- What is the relationship, if any, between road drains serving the A5 and M6 Toll and the SAC?

If it can be demonstrated that there is no pathway for road run-off from the A5 and M6 Toll to reach the SAC, the potential for a likely significant effect from increased traffic on these roads can be discounted. Conversely, if a likely pathway is found, water protection measures may need to be identified for implementation at District level to prevent impacts. This will require working with the Highways Agency and Environment Agency to obtain and analyse information, and could be influenced by the outcome of any further relevant work on the Regional Spatial Strategy.

- What is the relationship, if any, between the SAC and road drains serving the local roads in the catchment of the SAC?

This investigation aims to identify particular local roads which may be causing water quality issues at present or have the potential to do so in future if traffic levels increase. The purpose of this is to provide guidance on when development proposals in the local area should trigger a traffic and transport assessment providing information on predicted traffic changes and how

this information on traffic changes should be used to identify when improvements in drainage arrangements should be required as part of the infrastructure provided with the development. This will require working with the District's Highways Department, Planning Department and Environment Agency to obtain and analyse information.

4.3.7 Effect of the mitigation

The effect of the mitigation suggested above would be to prevent potential adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from the application of the principles in the Core Strategy to other land use plans and development control decisions.

The suggested mitigation would have knock-on effects on subsidiary documents, particularly the Site Allocations paper, as it would require all site allocations to be screened for potential impact on Cannock Extension Canal SAC prior to inclusion in the paper.

For example, the current Site Allocations issues and options paper contains the protected route of the Hatherton Branch Canal, which appears probable to be assessed as likely to have a significant adverse effect on Cannock Extension Canal SAC for a variety of reasons, particularly the impact of increased boat traffic. Whilst it may be possible to demonstrate that construction-related impacts could be mitigated, there is no immediately obvious solution to the problem of increased boat traffic and little information appears to be available to assist an assessment. Consequently, the proposed new wording for the Core Strategy could prevent this route being included in the Site Allocations document. This may be considered to be a stumbling block.

Further investigation at Stage 2 is required to identify measures which can be taken to prevent water quality impacts on the SAC arising from traffic increases caused by developments across the District.

Further investigation of potential in-combination effects is also required at Stage 2 (see next chapter).

5 POTENTIAL IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS WITH OTHER PLANS OR PROJECTS

5.1 Identifying other plans and projects with potential in-combination effects

Other plans for areas within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal have been considered. This is in line with the current consensus on approach based on that set out in Scott Wilson et al (2006), which involves considering plans at a similar level to the one being assessed. In this case, this is district and county level plans.

Typically, only those plans or projects which have not yet been implemented but for which full details are available can be considered. Therefore, plans for which the preferred options report, submitted draft or adopted plan is available at the time of writing can be considered. Plans at the issues and options stage are not sufficiently complete to allow consideration.

The second criterion for selecting plans for consideration is whether they are likely to have ecological effects. Plans dealing with, for example, design quality of buildings, or business opening hours, are clearly unlikely to have significant ecological impacts and can be removed from the study. Similarly, plans which have already been assessed as having no impact at all on the European sites can be removed from consideration, although plans assessed as having less than significant adverse impacts need to be included.

Finally, plans which do not have clear spatial expression cannot reasonably be assessed for their in-combination effects.

The table in Appendix B summarises the process of identifying plans for consideration.

The following plans have been identified as potentially having in-combination effects and will be taken forward for assessment at Stage 2:

- Black Country Core Strategy
- Cannock Chase Local Plan
- Dudley Unitary Development Plan
- Lichfield Local Plan
- North Warwickshire Local Plan
- Sandwell Unitary Development Plan
- South Staffordshire Adopted Local Plan
- Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996 - 2011
- Staffordshire Local Transport Plan
- Walsall Unitary Development Plan
- Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011
- Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan 2001 - 2011

In the majority of cases, the potential for an in-combination effect relates to the identified potential effect of increased traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll, which is to be investigated at Stage 2 in respect of the Cannock Chase Core Strategy.

APPENDIX A

SCREENING TABLE

Key



Option is considered to have a likely significant adverse effect (no mitigation possible)



Option is considered to have a likely significant adverse effect (mitigation possible)



Option is considered to have a minor adverse effect (mitigation possible)



Neutral: Option is considered to have no effect



Option is considered likely to have a minor beneficial effect



Option is considered likely to have a major beneficial effect

Core Strategy Objectives

Core Strategy Development Plan Document Objective	Potential Effect on Natura 2000 sites	Next Steps / Mitigation
Effective Protection of the Environment		
To protect, conserve and enhance landscape character, particularly the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and to restore damaged areas of countryside and urban land, thereby creating new landscapes, particularly in respect of the Forest of Mercia.	<p style="text-align: center;">✘</p> <p>Promotes restoration of damaged areas of the countryside. Should restoration be undertaken in close proximity to Cannock Extension Canal SAC there is the potential for impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features (e.g. shading) 	Amend policy wording along the lines of “where this does not conflict with nature conservation objectives”.
To protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment, particularly those internationally, nationally and locally designated sites.	<p style="text-align: center;">✓✓</p> <p>This objective should ensure the protection and enhancement of all Natura 2000 sites.</p>	n/a
To protect, enhance and extend the Green Space Network within the built up areas and increase the amount of accessible natural greenspace generally.	<p style="text-align: center;">✘</p> <p>Promotes an increase in the amount of accessible natural greenspace, potentially in the vicinity of Cannock Extension Canal SAC, which may increase/improve access to the SAC. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water • Indirect pollution impacts (littering, dumping etc) as a result of recreation pressure <p>However, the protection, enhancement and extension of natural greenspace in Cannock may help to protect land from built/urban development; thereby potentially limiting adverse impacts which could result from other development uses, i.e. housing development.</p> <p>The term “accessible” is generally taken to include the provision of access for activities such as walking and cycling, but not more specialist activities such as re-opening of historic canals, boating or angling.</p>	Amend policy wording along the lines of “where this does not conflict with nature conservation objectives”.
To protect, conserve and enhance the archaeological, architectural, historic and cultural environment generally and in particular the designated areas.	<p style="text-align: center;">✘✘</p> <p>A full archaeological search of the area in the vicinity of Cannock Extension Canal SAC has not been undertaken for this study. However, the Roman Road of Watling Street passes by the northern end of the canal, suggesting that there may be a substantial cultural heritage resource in this area. The protection, conservation and enhancement of these and other features could have potential impacts on the SAC including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and use • Indirect disturbance of habitat features as a result of recreation pressure • Indirect pollution impacts (littering, dumping etc) as a result of recreation pressure <p>Cannock Extension Canal is in itself a feature of cultural heritage importance, as a now disused part of the national canal network. The restoration of disused canals and re-opening to (largely recreational) traffic may be considered to fall under “protect, conserve and enhance”. However, there is potential for major adverse impacts upon the SAC should the canal restoration be undertaken. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and use • Direct loss/modification of habitat features • Direct disturbance of habitat features 	<p>Amend policy wording along the lines of “where this does not conflict with nature conservation objectives”.</p> <p>Further information is required to assess whether the proposed Hatherton Canal restoration and connection into the Cannock Extension Canal would be promoted via this policy; this proposal has the potential for significant adverse effects on the SAC in the absence of mitigation measures.</p> <p>Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment required.</p>
To improve the quality of the built environment with the emphasis on securing high quality design in new development, enhancing public safety and amenity and improving air quality.	<p style="text-align: center;">~</p> <p>Although the objective is associated with new development it concerns design guidance on the built environment in relation to issues of human health/well-being. As such it is unlikely that there will be an impact upon Natura 2000 sites, although this may depend upon implementation of the design principles that are developed as a result of the objective.</p>	n/a

Core Strategy Development Plan Document Objective	Potential Effect on Natura 2000 sites		Next Steps / Mitigation
<p>To promote new development in sustainable locations which are well served by public transport and which will help reduce the need to travel by car by encouraging alternative forms of movement, including walking and cycling.</p>	<p>✘</p>	<p>Promotes new development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The objective does, however, state that new development will be promoted in 'sustainable' locations. Any assessment of potential development could therefore exclude land adjacent to or in the proximity of Natura 2000 sites, as this location could be deemed 'unsustainable'.</p> <p>The objective also seeks to encourage a reduction in car use, which could have a beneficial effect upon local air/water quality (i.e., a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and a reduction in the amount of pollutants entering the water environment (from cars and via run-off from roads) associated with vehicle use). The impact of the objective will depend upon its implementation and also its effectiveness, i.e. its ability to encourage more sustainable forms of transport (such as walking and cycling) and its ability to discourage use of the private car.</p>	<p>Biodiversity is a key part of successful sustainable development, yet there is no mention of biodiversity or nature conservation considerations being part of the principles of sustainable development. Recommend include section on protecting and enhancing biodiversity in this part of the Core Strategy, to make it clear that biodiversity considerations are a key part of what defines sustainable development and therefore what would constitute a sustainable location.</p>
<p>To help secure the provision of an effective, reliable and sustainable system of transport which provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and contributes to the relief of congestion.</p>	<p>✘ ✘</p>	<p>Promotes improvements/enhancements to the road network, including the potential for development of new roads. Improvements to the existing road network could also result in high levels of private vehicle use. The SAC is adjacent to the A5 and could potentially be used for water based transport in future. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: air and water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: air and water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The objective does, however, seek to ensure provision of an effective sustainable transport system, which may result in local air/water quality improvements; a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and a reduction in the amount of pollutants entering the water environment associated with vehicle use.</p>	<p>See above. Reword policy to more strongly emphasise that sustainability principles will be adhered to in provision of transport improvements.</p> <p>Further information in relation to proposed transport improvements is required in order to assess, particularly in relation to the A5 Watling Street which adjoins the SAC.</p> <p>Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment required.</p>
<p>To reduce the incidence of flooding of residential properties, businesses and roads.</p>	<p>~</p>	<p>The area surrounding Cannock Extension SAC is not shown as at risk on Environment Agency flood risk maps for the area. At this time, therefore, it appears unlikely that flood protection measures in this area would be required during the plan period.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Prudent Use of Natural Resources</p>			
<p>To encourage energy efficiency in new development, promote the use of renewable materials and energy sources and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill sites.</p>	<p>~</p>	<p>Although the objective is associated with new development it concerns design guidance on the built environment in relation to energy efficiency, use of renewable materials and waste production. As such it is unlikely that there will be an impact on Natura 2000 sites.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Social Progress Which Meets the Needs of Everyone</p>			

Core Strategy Development Plan Document Objective	Potential Effect on Natura 2000 sites		Next Steps / Mitigation
<p>To ensure an adequate supply of land for new housing to meet identified needs which: Provides for a range of house types and tenure to meet the diverse needs of the community, including affordable housing for those on low incomes and provision for gypsies; Makes the best use of land within urban areas at densities appropriate to the location; and Maximises the use of previously developed land and buildings.</p>	<p>✘ ✘</p>	<p>Promotes provision of land for new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The objective does, however, state that land for housing provision should make the best use of land within 'urban areas', at densities appropriate to the location, and that housing development should maximise the use of previously developed land/buildings.</p>	<p>Make specific reference to sustainability principles in site allocation, design and development of new housing.</p> <p>Further information in relation to proposed housing allocations would be required to assess fully, however it appears that the required housing provision could be accommodated on sites not in the immediate vicinity of the SAC i.e. on sites not likely to cause impacts on the SAC. Proven mitigation measures are available to protect the water environment close to construction sites.</p> <p>Note that the Site Allocations DPD will need to consider this issue in more detail to ensure that the above is achieved.</p>
<p>To maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford Town Centres, identifying a range of potential development opportunities, ensuring that they are the principal foci for new retail development, whilst monitoring and developing the role of district and local centres in providing local shopping and community services.</p>	<p>~</p>	<p>Cannock Town Centre is located approximately 5.1km north west of the SAC, and Hednesford Town Centre and Rugeley Town Centre are located approximately 5.5km and 11km north of the SAC. Given the distance of the town centres from the SAC it is unlikely that development will affect the SAC.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Social Progress Which Meets the Needs of Everyone</p>			
<p>To secure the provision of necessary and relevant infrastructure services and facilities to a high standard in conjunction with development.</p>	<p>✘ ✘</p>	<p>Promotes provision of infrastructure services and facilities as a knock-on effect of development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	<p>Make specific reference to sustainability principles in selection of site, design, construction and operation of infrastructure services.</p> <p>There is inherent flexibility in the location of off-site infrastructure facilities such as wastewater treatment, which means there is nothing in the Core Strategy to indicate it is likely that sites potentially affecting the SAC would be preferred over sites with no impact on the SAC.</p>
<p>To integrate land use planning policies with the development of strategies of health, education and social service providers through the Community Strategy, reflecting their proposals for expansion, improvement, and new provision, without conflicting with other land use or conservation interests.</p>	<p>~</p>	<p>Although the objective is associated with new development it concerns the integration of land use planning policies and other development strategies. As such it is unlikely that there will be an impact upon the SAC. The objective also recognises the need to ensure policies reflect the requirements of the strategies without conflicting with conservation interests.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Maintenance of High and Stable Levels of Economic Growth and Employment</p>			

Core Strategy Development Plan Document Objective	Potential Effect on Natura 2000 sites	Next Steps / Mitigation
<p>To maintain a high quality portfolio of employment land <i>to increase the total and range of job opportunities available to a growing workforce</i> and to help increase the competitiveness of local businesses through: The regeneration and improvement of established employment areas; The retention of good quality of employment sites in sustainable locations and the prevention of their loss to other uses; and The identification of new high quality employment sites in sustainable locations.</p>	<p>Promotes the regeneration of employment land and provision of new employment sites. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>However, the objective emphasises that new employment sites should be placed in 'sustainable locations' and states that the existing sites located in sustainable locations should be retained. Any assessment of potential employment sites could therefore exclude land adjacent to or in the proximity of the SAC as this location could be deemed 'unsustainable'.</p>	<p>Make stronger reference to sustainability principles in site allocation, design and development of new employment sites.</p> <p>Further information in relation to proposed employment allocations would be required to assess fully. However, it appears that the required employment land provision could be accommodated fully on sites not likely to generate impacts on the SAC (i.e. sustainable locations). Proven mitigation measures also exist to ensure the water environment is protected during development.</p> <p>Note that the Site Allocations DPD will need to consider this issue in more detail to ensure that the above is achieved.</p>
<p>To encourage the development of sustainable tourism through the development of new and the improvement of existing tourism facilities, balancing the needs of visitors with those of the local community and the protection of the environment.</p>	<p>Promotes the development of new tourism facilities and the improvement of existing facilities, which could include canal-based activities. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Potential to promote inappropriate type and scale of development • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: air and water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: air and water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features as a result of recreation pressure • Indirect disturbance of habitat features as a result of recreation pressure • Direct recreational pressure (boating, fishing etc) <p>The objective does, however, refer to the encouragement of 'sustainable tourism' and affirms the importance of balancing the needs of visitors, local communities and the protection of the environment.</p>	<p>The policy wording in relation to protection of the environment needs to be strengthened along the lines of "where this does not conflict with nature conservation objectives".</p> <p>This policy would promote the restoration of the Cannock Extension Canal for recreational purposes, which would have a likely significant effect on the site in the absence of mitigation.</p> <p>Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment required.</p>

Core Strategy Issues and Options

Core Strategy Issues and Options		Potential Effect	Next Steps / Mitigation	
Core Policies and Options				
Issue 1 – Sustainable Development	Core Policy Proposed Scope and Content	✘ ✘	<p>Promotes provision of land for new development (housing, industry, retail, commerce, leisure and recreation and other uses, and renewable energy) and provision for essential infrastructure and services. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features • Direct recreational pressure (boating, fishing etc) <p>The policy does, however, highlight the need to conserve or enhance natural resources and environmental assets and the need to minimise all forms of pollution. The policy also highlights the need to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment.</p>	See above. Policy needs to mention biodiversity specifically instead of only referring to natural resources and the natural environment in a landscape context.
	Options	/	<i>No options are proposed for Issue 1</i>	n/a
Issue 2 – Sustainable Environment	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	✓ ✓	Promotes the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment.	n/a
	Options	/	<i>No options are proposed for Issue 2</i>	n/a
Issue 3 – Sustainable Living	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	~	The proposed scope and content of the sustainable living policy is not considered to have an effect upon the SAC.	n/a
	Options	/	<i>No options are proposed for Issue 3</i>	n/a
Issue 4 – Sequential Approach to Site Selection	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	✘ ✘	<p>Promotes provision of land for new housing, employment and retail/town centre related development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: air and water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The proposed scope and content does, however, state that the Core Strategy should only consider such alternative locations firstly at edge of centre locations, followed by out-of-centre sites. Residential development would have to give priority to developable brownfield land and buildings within urban areas, followed by urban extensions and finally new development.</p>	Reword to emphasise the importance of environmental selection criteria/sustainability including nature conservation.
	Option A – Apply a sequential approach to the location of development	✘ ✘	<p>Promotes new housing, employment and retail/town centre related development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emission/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The Option does, however, state that new development should be situated in town centres before edge of town or out of town sites, and that new housing should be built on previously developed land before greenfield sites are considered.</p>	Reword to emphasise the importance of environmental selection criteria/sustainability including nature conservation.

Core Strategy Issues and Options		Potential Effect	Next Steps / Mitigation	
Core Policies and Options				
	Option B – Consider previously developed land outside urban areas for development	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new housing, employment and retail development outside of urban areas. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	Reword to emphasise the importance of environmental selection criteria/sustainability including nature conservation.	
Issue 5 - Housing	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes provision of land for new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The proposed scope and content does, however, state that sustainable windfall land development should be consistent with the principles of sustainable development and not conflict with ecological interests.</p>	<p>Make specific reference to sustainability principles in site allocation, design and development of new housing.</p> <p>Further information in relation to proposed housing allocations would be required to assess fully.</p>	
	Developable Brownfield Land Options			
	Option A – 45% of housing to be developed on previously developed land	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	See above	
	Option B – 55% of housing to be developed on previously developed land	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	See above	
	Option C – 66% of housing to be developed on previously developed land	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	See above	
Affordable Housing Options				
Option A – Provide affordable housing in accordance with PPS3	<p>~</p> <p>Although the objective is associated with new development it concerns the provision of affordable housing. As such it is unlikely that there will be an impact upon the SAC.</p>	n/a		

Core Strategy Issues and Options		Potential Effect	Next Steps / Mitigation
Core Policies and Options			
	Option B – Residential developments in excess of 15 units to provide for greater than 36% of affordable housing	~	Although the objective is associated with new development it concerns the provision of affordable housing. As such it is unlikely that there will be an impact upon the SAC.
	Density Options		
	Option A – Housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare	xx	<p>Promotes new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features
Issue 5 - Housing	Option B – Housing density of 40 dwellings per hectare	xx	<p>Promotes new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features
	Option C – Housing density of 50 dwellings per hectare	xx	<p>Promotes new housing development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features
Issue 6 – Economic Development	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	xx	<p>Promotes provision of land for new employment sites. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The proposed scope and content does, however, state that economic development should take into account the potential impact upon air quality, possible increases in air pollution and climate change.</p>
	Option A – Evenly distribute the outstanding allocation of employment land throughout the District	xx	<p>Promotes provision of land for new employment sites. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features
			Reword policy to make greater emphasis on all environmental impacts, particularly nature conservation and the aquatic environment, and make specific reference to sustainability principles in site allocation and development.
			Make specific reference to sustainability principles in site allocation.

Core Strategy Issues and Options		Potential Effect	Next Steps / Mitigation	
Core Policies and Options				
	Option B – Concentrate the outstanding allocation of employment land at Cannock and Rugeley	~	Cannock Town Centre is located approximately 5.1km north west of the SAC, and Rugeley Town Centre are located approximately 11km north of the SAC. Given the distance of the town centres from the SAC it is unlikely that development will impact upon the SAC.	n/a
Issue 6: Economic Development	Option C – Restrict the outstanding allocation of employment land to 'brownfield' sites	xx	Promotes provision of land for new employment sites. Potential impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	Make specific reference to sustainability principles in site allocation.
Issue 7 – Sustainable Transport	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	xx	Promotes provision of land for future road, rail and water based transport schemes including the Hatherton Branch Canal restoration. Potential impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural process (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollution emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation (including boating activities along the canal) • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	Make specific reference to sustainability principles. Further information in relation to proposed allocations/schemes, in particular the Hatherton Branch Canal restoration, would be required to assess fully. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment required.
	Option A – Restrict new development locations to sites having access to good public transport	xx	Promotes new development. Potential impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Potential to promote inappropriate scale and type of development • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	See above
	Option B – Locate development where there is easy access to the road network	xx	Promotes new development. Potential impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Potential to promote inappropriate scale and type of development • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	See above
Issue 8 – Quality Design	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	~	Although the objective is associated with new development the objective is concerned with ensuring quality design. As such it is unlikely that there will be an impact upon the SAC. The proposed policy scope also states that development should prevent the creation of pollution and waste, and reflect biodiversity interests.	n/a
	Options	/	No options are proposed for Issue 8	n/a

Core Strategy Issues and Options	Potential Effect		Next Steps / Mitigation	
Core Policies and Options				
Issue 9 – Green Belt	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	✘ ✘	<p>Allows limited types of development and redevelopment within the Green Belt and minor alterations to the Green Belt. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>The policy scope does, however, seek to ensure that the Green Belt is protected from inappropriate development and does not propose significant changes to the Green Belt boundary. The SAC is within the current Green Belt boundary.</p>	<p>Reword policy to provide further information on what constitutes inappropriate development and what types of development will be considered in the Green Belt. More information on the nature of the rigorous planning policy considerations is recommended, specifically reference to sustainability/environmental/nature conservation considerations.</p>
	Option A – Resist any form of new development in the Green Belt regardless of the circumstances	✓	<p>Affords protection to the Green belt surrounding the SAC, thus limiting the potential impact of development upon the SAC.</p>	n/a
	Option B – Consider boundary amendments in existing transport corridors which relate to future employment opportunities	✘ ✘	<p>Potentially allows for amendments to the Green Belt boundary to enable new development. Since Cannock Extension Canal is adjacent to the A5, potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – associated with construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	<p>Reword policy to include wording similar to “subject to environmental and sustainability considerations”.</p>
	Option C – Maintain strict compliance with prevailing guidance from the Government and the RSS	✘ ✘	<p>Allows limited types of development and redevelopment within the Green Belt and minor alterations to the Green Belt. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water • Pollutant emissions: water • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	<p>Reword policy to include wording similar to “subject to environmental and sustainability considerations”.</p>
Issue 10 – Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	~	<p>Relates to the protection of Cannock Chase AONB from inappropriate development. The AONB is located approximately 7.3km north west of the SAC. As such it is unlikely that it will impact upon the SAC.</p>	n/a
Issue 11 – Nature Conservation	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	✓ ✓	<p>Affords protection to designated sites of nature conservation interest from international to local level, with particular regard to SACs.</p>	n/a

Core Strategy Issues and Options		Potential Effect	Next Steps / Mitigation
Core Policies and Options			
Issue 12 – Provision of infrastructure, Facilities and Developer Contributions	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes the provision of infrastructure and facilities to support new development, with the potential for knock-on effects arising from development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water • Pollutant emissions: water • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	Policy needs to state that the cumulative environmental impact of infrastructure/facilities projects associated with developments needs to be considered prior to consent of development, particularly in relation to nature conservation, water quality and flood drainage (all of which may affect the SAC).
Issue 13 – Cultural and Community Facilities	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	As with previous policies, new development is promoted but no information on likely need or criteria for selecting suitable sites is included.
Issue 14 - Waste	Policy Proposed Scope and Content	<p>~</p> <p>No specific waste policies are required in the Core Strategy, since the Staffordshire Waste Core Strategy will provide full details.</p>	n/a
Spatial Options	Option A – Dispersed Balanced Development	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new development. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features <p>Location of SAC close to Norton Canes and A5 means that either option could result in significant adverse impacts should site allocations be unsuitable.</p>	Need to cross-reference issue 4 (site selection)
	Option B – Concentrated High Density Development	<p>✘ ✘</p> <p>Promotes new development, including the potential for development on greenfield and green belt land outside of the urban areas. Potential impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to promote inappropriate development locations • Disruption/alteration of natural processes (surface water run-off, deposition and erosion) • Pollutant emissions/incidents: water – during construction and operation • Pollutant emissions: water – associated with transportation • Indirect loss/modification of habitat features • Indirect disturbance of habitat features 	Need to cross-reference issue 4 (site selection)

APPENDIX B

SCREENING OF PLANS FOR POTENTIAL IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

Plan name	Location	Stage	Sustainability appraisal, SEA or HRA completed?	Likely effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC?	Clear spatial expression	Comments	Take forward for consideration?
County level plans (Black Country, Staffordshire etc)							
Black Country Study = West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 1 revisions	Covers area containing Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Phase 1 revisions complete (Black Country Study)	Yes – see main text	Yes – see main text	No.	See main text	See main text
Black Country Core Strategy	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	At Issues and Options Stage	HRA underway	Development in Black Country might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes for some elements of the Strategy.	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996 - 2011	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted.	None found	Policies R7 and R8 deal with canals.	No.	When the RSS and local LDFs are complete, the Structure Plan will be defunct. However, at present, the policies have been saved.	Yes
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Minerals Local Plan 1994 - 2006	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted.	None found.	No, no proposals in area near SAC.	Yes	Will be superseded by Staffordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework	No
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Waste Local Plan 1998 - 2011	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted	Yes – all policies recorded as either positive impact on biodiversity or no impact.	No	No	Relies on Best Practicable Environmental Option for considering applications – therefore no impact likely. See also policy 3 re site selection criteria	No
Staffordshire Local Transport Plan	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Submitted March 2006	SEA completed in June 2006	Network management component of plan identified as having minor adverse effects on nature conservation/biodiversity, presumably as a result of increased traffic capacity. This will include the major routes near the SAC.	Some proposals can be understood geographically but many are network-wide.	Replacement of Pelsall Road Bridge (over the SAC) is listed in the plan and is currently being implemented, so not suitable for consideration.	Yes
Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996 - 2011	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted and policies saved.	None found.	Development in Warwickshire might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes for some elements.	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	The Local Transport Plan provides a much greater level of detail on proposals and will be examined to represent transport activity in Warwickshire which could affect the site.

Plan name	Location	Stage	Sustainability appraisal, SEA or HRA completed?	Likely effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC?	Clear spatial expression	Comments	Take forward for consideration?
Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 2006	SEA (2005)	see above	Yes for some elements	Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Warwickshire Waste Local Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 1995 and currently under review, with some policies saved.	None found.	See above	Yes	See above	No.
Warwickshire Waste Development Framework	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	At Preferred Options stage.	Sustainability appraisal planned but no reports available as yet.	None identified, clear criteria have been set for the assessment of sites and transport options to ensure environmental protection.	Site allocations document not yet available.		No.
Warwickshire Minerals Local Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 1995 and currently under review, with some policies saved.	None found.	See above	Yes	See above	No.
Warwickshire Minerals Development Framework	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	At Preferred Options stage.	Sustainability appraisal planned but no reports available as yet.	None identified, clear criteria have been set for the assessment of sites and transport options to ensure environmental protection.	Site allocations document not yet available.		No.
Cannock Chase plans							
Cannock Chase Local Plan	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 1997; currently in force	None found.	Yes – allocation for tourist development immediately west of the SAC, plus protects line of proposed Hatherton Canal restoration	Yes (site allocations)	Many allocations may have been fulfilled, and the Plan will be superseded by the emerging LDF including the Core Strategy, but the cumulative impact of projects promoted under the Local Plan which have not yet been implemented must be taken into account in this assessment.	Yes
Other borough level plans							

Plan name	Location	Stage	Sustainability appraisal, SEA or HRA completed?	Likely effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC?	Clear spatial expression	Comments	Take forward for consideration?
Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan 2001 - 2011	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 2006 and policies have been saved until LDF is ready	None found.	Development in Wolverhampton might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes (site allocations)	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Walsall Unitary Development Plan	Covers area containing part of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted March 2005, currently in force until new LDF is ready	None found	Development in Walsall might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes (site allocations)	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Sandwell Unitary Development Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted April 2004 and policies saved until LDF is ready for implementation.	None found	Development in Sandwell might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes (site allocations)	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Dudley Unitary Development Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 2005.	None found	Development in Dudley might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes (site allocations)	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Lichfield Local Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 1998.	None found	Development in Lichfield might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes (site allocations)	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
Lichfield Local Development Framework	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Early stage of preparation	Too early in process.	Too early to say, but see above.	No		No
South Staffordshire Adopted Local Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 1996, policies saved until LDF ready	None found	Development in South Staffs might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes (site allocations)	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes

Plan name	Location	Stage	Sustainability appraisal, SEA or HRA completed?	Likely effects on Cannock Extension Canal SAC?	Clear spatial expression	Comments	Take forward for consideration?
South Staffordshire Local Development Framework	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Early stage of preparation	Too early in process.	Too early to say, but see above.	No		No
North Warwickshire Local Plan	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Adopted 2006.	None found	Development in Warwickshire might reasonably be expected to result in changes in traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll which could have a cumulative effect on the site.	Yes	Some allocations may already have been fulfilled. Traffic on the A5 and M6 Toll is largely a regional issue which may be resolved by investigations at Stage 2.	Yes
North Warwickshire Local Development Framework	Parts of area are within 15km of Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Early stage of preparation	Draft scoping report prepared so far, setting out the method which will be used in the assessment	Too early to say, but see above.	No		No

APPENDIX C

REPORT CONDITIONS

WHITE YOUNG GREEN ENVIRONMENTAL

REPORT CONDITIONS

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT OF THE BLACK COUNTRY AND CANNOCK CHASE CORE STRATEGIES SANDWELL MBC

This report is produced solely for the benefit of SANDWELL MBC and no liability is accepted for any reliance placed on it by any other party unless specifically agreed in writing otherwise.

This report is prepared for the proposed uses stated in the report and should not be used in a different context without reference to WYGE. In time improved practices, fresh information or amended legislation may necessitate a re-assessment. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of WYGE using due skill and care in the preparation of the report.

This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the environment of the site in the context of the surrounding area at the time of the inspections. Environmental conditions can vary and no warranty is given as to the possibility of changes in the environment of the site and surrounding area at differing times.

This report is limited to those aspects reported on, within the scope and limits agreed with the client under our appointment. It is necessarily restricted and no liability is accepted for any other aspect. It is based on the information sources indicated in the report. Some of the opinions are based on unconfirmed data and information and are presented as the best obtained within the scope for this report.

Reliance has been placed on the documents and information supplied to WYGE by others but no independent verification of these has been made and no warranty is given on them. No liability is accepted or warranty given in relation to the performance, reliability, standing etc of any products, services, organisations or companies referred to in this report.

Whilst skill and care have been used, no investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or not fully representative information. Any monitoring or survey work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations, including for example timescale, seasonal and weather related conditions.

Although care is taken to select monitoring and survey periods that are typical of the environmental conditions being measured, within the overall reporting programme constraints, measured conditions may not be fully representative of the actual conditions. Any predictive or modelling work, undertaken as part of the commission will be subject to limitations including the representativeness of data used by the model and the assumptions inherent within the approach used. Actual environmental conditions are typically more complex and variable than the investigative, predictive and modelling approaches indicate in practice, and the output of such approaches cannot be relied upon as a comprehensive or accurate indicator of future conditions.

The potential influence of our assessment and report on other aspects of any development or future planning requires evaluation by other involved parties.

The performance of environmental protection measures and of buildings and other structures in relation to acoustics, vibration, noise mitigation and other environmental issues is influenced to a large extent by the degree to which the relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the final design and specifications and the quality of workmanship and compliance with the specifications on site during construction. WYGE accept no liability for issues with performance arising from such factors

February 2006