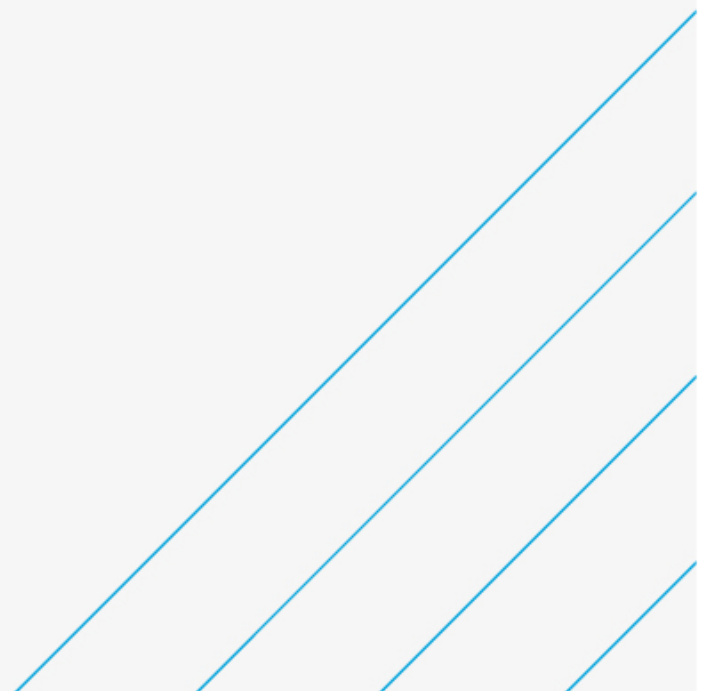


# Transport for the West Midlands Local Transport Plan Core Strategy

Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1:  
Screening and Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

Transport for the West Midlands

February 2022



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of this Document

Atkins, member of the SNC-Lavalin group, has been commissioned by Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM) to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the West Midlands' Local Transport Plan (LTP) Core Strategy<sup>1</sup>. This report comprises the Stage 1: Screening and Stage 2: AA of the TfWM LTP Core Strategy. It is the ambition that the LTP Core Strategy will set out the roadmap for transport delivery within the West Midlands up to 2041.

TfWM has developed five 'motives for change' to help frame the outcomes required for the new LTP, these include:

- Creating a fairer society;
- Supporting local communities and places;
- Becoming more active;
- Tackling the climate emergency; and,
- Sustaining economic success.

The purpose of this document is to set out the HRA of the LTP Core Strategy and help support the task of the competent authority in determining whether the plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any European Sites, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans. The LTP Core Strategy itself is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the nature conservation management of any European Sites.

## 1.2. Background to Habitat Regulations Assessment

A HRA is required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)<sup>2</sup> (hereafter, referred to as 'the Habitats Regulations') for all plans and projects which may have a likely significant effect (LSE) on a European Site and are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European Site.

European Sites refer to sites protected in the UK for the habitats and/ or species they contain that are of European or international importance. These include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) created under the EC Birds Directive and Habitats Directive, respectively. In addition, in accordance with UK policy, Wetlands of International Importance are included, which form part of a global network of protected sites created under the Ramsar Convention (also referred to as Ramsar Sites). A HRA is also required, as a matter of UK Government policy, for potential SPAs (pSPAs), possible SACs (pSAC), proposed Ramsar sites (pRamsar sites) and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites for the purposes of considering plans and projects which may affect them. These sites are hereafter referred to as 'European Sites'.

There are four stages to the HRA process. These are summarised below:

- **Stage 1 – Screening:** To test whether a plan or project either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect<sup>3</sup> on a European Site;
- **Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment:** To determine whether, in view of a European Site's conservation objectives, the plan (either alone or in combination with other projects and plans) would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site with respect to the site structure, function and conservation objectives. If adverse impacts are anticipated, potential mitigation measures to alleviate impacts should be proposed and assessed;

<sup>1</sup> Transport for West Midlands. Reimagining transport in the West Midlands: Local Transport Plan Core Strategy.

<sup>2</sup> Following the changes made to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the UK no longer form part of the EU's Natura 2000 ecological network and now form part of the UK's national network of European Sites. In this document they are still referred to as 'European Sites'.

<sup>3</sup> Likely significant effect is any effect that may reasonably be predicted as a consequence of a plan or project that may affect the conservation objectives of the features for which the site was designated. If any plan or project causes the cited interest features of a site to fall into unfavourable condition, they can be considered to have a likely significant effect on the site.

- **Stage 3 – Assessment of alternative solutions:** Where a plan is assessed as having an adverse impact (or risk of this) on the integrity of a European Site, there should be an examination of alternatives (e.g., alternative locations and scale of arising development); and,
- **Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain:** In exceptional circumstances where there are no alternative solutions and where adverse impacts remain (e.g., where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest). Compensatory measures would usually be required to offset negative impacts.

### 1.2.1. Stage 1: Screening

Having determined that the project or plan is not directly connected with, or necessary for the management of a European Site, it is necessary to undertake screening assessment to determine whether the proposals could have an LSE on one or more European Sites.

It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that the project or plan will have no LSE on a European Site. If there may be an LSE, or there is uncertainty and an LSE cannot be ruled out, this would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment (AA). As a result of European case law<sup>4</sup>, irrespective of the normal English meaning of 'likely', in this statutory context a 'likely significant effect' is a 'possible significant effect', one whose occurrence cannot be ruled out on the basis of objective information<sup>5</sup>.

According to the Waddenzee judgement (7th September 2004, Case C127/02) (paragraph 49) when the plan or project 'is likely to undermine the site's conservation objectives, it must be considered likely to have a significant effect on that site. The assessment of that risk must be made in the light inter alia of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by such a plan or project'.

It is also to be noted that relevant case law<sup>6</sup> ruled that it was not acceptable at screening to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce effects upon European Sites. Therefore, mitigation measures can only be taken account of at Stage 2: AA.

As this is a plan HRA, it is possible to undertake a 'pre-screening' exercise, in accordance with The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook<sup>7</sup>. This enables text within the plan that is purely aspirational or administrative to be quickly and reasonably removed from the screening assessment. This allows the HRA to focus on policies and objectives that require assessment of LSE as they will result in development or local environmental changes.

### 1.2.2. Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

For European Sites where a LSE is predicted, or it cannot be concluded that there is no LSE, an AA is required to determine whether the project or plan will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Site in view of its conservation objectives.

For all European Sites and associated qualifying features where it cannot be concluded that there will be no LSE, further information required to inform an AA includes:

- Conservation objectives of the site, including Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives;
- Current condition status of the qualifying features;
- Site specific and regional population estimates for qualifying features;
- Assessment of potential impacts on qualifying features – this detailed assessment is usually based upon information provided during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for projects. In the assessment of a plan this information is not usually available; and,
- Importance of the zone of influence for the relevant qualifying features, particularly mobile species, in the context of site and regional populations.

<sup>4</sup> According to UK EU withdrawal agreements, EU case law that has shaped and influenced the HRA process up to 31st December 2021, remains relevant in the UK and to the assessment.

<sup>5</sup> Tyldesley, D. and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, March 2021 edition UK: DTA Publications Limited.

<sup>6</sup> People Over Wind and Sweetman vs Coillte Teoranta (Case C-323/17), 12th April 2018

<sup>7</sup> Tyldesley, D. and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, March 2021 edition UK: DTA Publications Limited.

The strategic nature of the LTP Core Strategy means that the information available to undertake a detailed AA is limited as there are no specific project details, for instance, exact geographical location and timeframes. In such cases, the level of assessment is commensurate with the level of detail provided in the plan.

This report comprises the Stage 1: Screening and Stage 2: AA of the TfWM LTP Core Strategy.

## 2. Transport for the West Midlands Local Transport Plan

### 2.1. Background and need for the LTP Core Strategy

The West Midlands is one of the largest conurbations outside London; its central location puts it at the heart of the UK's transport networks and international connections. The region was one of the most prosperous areas of the UK until the 1970/ 80s and in the last 5 years it has been experiencing a resurgence of that power on the back of the growth in the following areas:

- Business and professional services sector;
- Technology driven manufacturing and city centre construction growth;
- City centre based international business and professional services sector which was driving high levels of business tourism;
- Manufacturing base becoming more productive and an automotive sector responding to the challenge of a carbon neutral future; and,
- High exports, foreign direct investment and strong international links, and the biggest higher education cluster outside London.

However, underlying this growth there were significant issues with inequality, poverty, youth unemployment, low skills, poor health and school performance.

There have been a number of significant changes to the wider context within which transport policy needs to be framed since the West Midlands' 'Movement for Growth' strategic transport plan<sup>8</sup> which was published in 2016. In particular, the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been severe for the West Midlands and economic forecasts consistently show the West Midlands to be one of the UK regions hit hardest by the economic crisis. The West Midlands has declared a climate emergency and has set an ambition target for achieving net zero carbon by 2041. The response to the pandemic and the climate emergency presents an opportunity to look differently at transport and ensure that policies and strategies are developed which help deliver inclusive growth and rapid decarbonisation.

To help respond to these challenges, TfWM are now reviewing the West Midlands LTP. There is significant scope for strategy to shift largely dependent on how members and the public wish to address gaps between objectives (including rapid decarbonisation and measures to address transport inequity) and appetite for action.

TfWM has developed five motives for change to help frame the outcomes required for a new LTP, as outlined within Figure 2-1.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/who-we-are/our-strategy/movement-for-growth-strategic-transport-plan/>



Figure 2-1 - Five motives for change



## 2.2. Geographical and Temporal Scope of the LTP Core Strategy

The LTP Core Strategy will cover the period up to at least 2041 and there will also be a focus in respect of certain elements such as Net Zero Carbon and will apply to the administrative boundary of the West Midlands Combined Authority area. This area is aligned with that of TfWM and is made up of seven core local councils (known as the 'Met 7'):

- Birmingham City Council;
- City of Wolverhampton Council;
- Coventry City Council;
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council;
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council;
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council;
- Walsall Council.

This area is considered to be the LTP Core Strategy area, as outlined within Figure 2-2 (below).

The LTP Core Strategy area covers approximately 898.6 km<sup>2</sup> and is a series of distinct communities in both urban and rural areas. The area is multi-centred and based on the Black Country, Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry and is home to 3.0 million residents and 91,150 businesses which employ 1.3 million people and generate £70.3 bn per annum in GVA. Between 2010 and 2018, output in the WMCA grew by 2.5% on average year-over-year (compared to the national average of 2.4%) and the age profile of the area is young, with a quarter of residents aged under 19, the highest share of young people of all UK metropolitan areas. The West Midlands is one of the fastest growing regions in the UK, with its population set to increase by 440,000 people by 2035, requiring 165,000 new homes<sup>9</sup>.

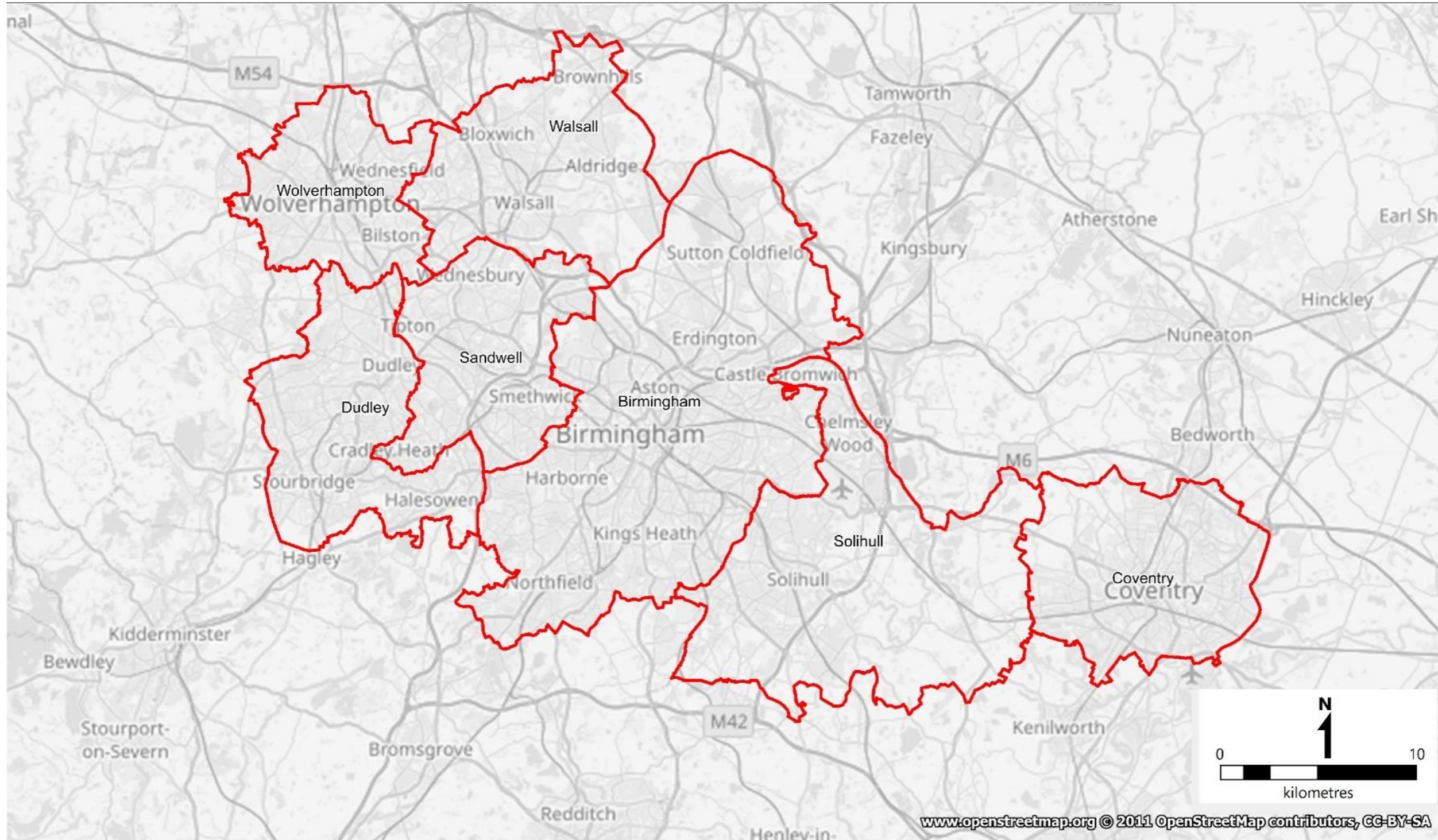
It is also important to recognise that the implementation of the LTP Core Strategy may have effects outside the immediate boundary of the LTP Core Strategy area. In this regard, the regions immediately adjacent to the LTP Core Strategy area will also be of focus. It is considered that this will include the following:

- Lichfield;
- Tamworth;
- North Warwickshire;
- Nuneaton and Bedworth;

<sup>9</sup> West Midlands City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, September 2021

- Rugby;
- Warwick;
- Stratford-on-Avon;
- Bromsgrove;
- Wyre Forest;
- South Staffordshire; and,
- Cannock Chase.

Figure 2-2 - LTP Area



West Midlands Metropolitan 7

 West Midlands Metropolitan 7

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## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Determination of European Sites to be included in the HRA

An initial review of the LTP Core Strategy in light of the Habitats Regulations has been undertaken as part of the HRA process. This initial review looked at the geographic extent or zone of influence of any impacts which could arise as a result of the LTP Core Strategy and considered which European Sites should be included within the assessment, hereafter referred to as 'the Study Area'.

All sites where potential direct, indirect and in-combination impacts to European Sites could reasonably be considered possible, were screened for inclusion. As an initial baseline, a buffer of 15 km from the LTP Core Strategy geographical boundary was established, which was extended to 30 km for SACs with bats<sup>10</sup> as a qualifying feature. This baseline captures all European Sites that could potentially be affected by LTP Core Strategy.

A total of six European Sites have been identified for inclusion in the screening assessment. These comprise two sites within West Midlands Met 7 area, and a further four sites located within 15 km of the LTP Core Strategy boundary as outlined within Section 4 below. Further details about each European Site are provided in Table 4-1 below. Full details, including the conservation objectives, vulnerabilities of the European Site and the current condition (if known), are provided in Appendix A.

Information on the vulnerabilities of European Sites identified was obtained from the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form for each the European site (accessed via the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website<sup>11</sup>) and the Conservation Objective Supplementary Advice for each European site (accessed via the Natural England website<sup>12</sup>). This information is presented in Section 4.

### 3.2. Assessing the impacts of the Plan 'Alone'

Following the gathering of information on the LTP Core Strategy and the European Sites, an assessment was undertaken to determine whether there could be any LSE on the European Sites 'alone' as a result of the LTP Core Strategy. In order to inform this process, all parts of the LTP Core Strategy were assessed. A pre-screening exercise was initially undertaken to identify all text that is aspirational or administrative in nature, will not result in future development/environmental change and, therefore, have no ability to impact upon European Sites.

Any LSEs are assessed by reference to the conservation objectives of the qualifying feature (interest feature) of the European Site. Any plan or project that causes a cited interest features to fall into unfavourable condition can be considered to have an LSE on the European Site. Stage 1 of the HRA process assesses potential effects on the European Sites without mitigation.

Plans or projects can adversely affect a site by:

- Causing delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the European Site;
- Interrupting progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the European Site;
- Disrupting those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the European Site; and,
- Interfering with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the European Site.

However, as the LTP Core Strategy is at a strategic level (which does not include details of the new infrastructure, extent of improvements to existing transport links and associated development that may arise as a result these interventions is unknown at this stage), the HRA has also been undertaken at a strategic level. It broadly assesses where there is scope for impacts upon European Sites due to proximity, the presence of impact pathways and the type of impacts that may occur as a result of a proposed scheme, such as changes in air quality, recreational pressure, and changes in hydrology. Due to the high-level strategic nature of the plan, any LSE will need to be assessed at the project or scheme level, with reference to the conservation objectives of the qualifying features of each of the European Sites.

<sup>10</sup> The 30 km is used within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standard LA 115 Habitats regulations assessment and set to cover the distances that bats may commute or forage from roost sites (winter or summer) and is thus aimed at capturing all potential likely significant effects.

<sup>11</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk>

<sup>12</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6490068894089216>

### 3.3. Assessing the Impact of the Plan ‘In-Combination’

If the individual project or plan does not have an LSE, but still has a residual effect i.e., it cannot be demonstrated that there is ‘no effect’ or ‘no appreciable effect’, then cumulative impacts with other plans and projects must be considered. However, if an LSE has been identified, the in-combination assessment does not need to be undertaken at Stage 1 and it can be carried forward to Stage 2: AA.

In the case that an in-combination assessment is required, other plans and projects also assessed for impacts on the same European Sites need to be identified. Cumulative impacts or ‘in-combination effects’ occur where two or more plans or projects have similar impacts (air and water quality impacts could combine to adversely affect interest features) on the same interest feature within the same timeframe. Examples of how these in-combination effects may occur is summarised in Table 3-1 below.

**Table 3-1 - Examples of Potential In-combination Effects**

Example Plans and Projects	Potential In-combination Effects
Local Core Strategies and Allocation Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct land take;</li> <li>• Hydrology changes, in particular from flooding;</li> <li>• Water and land quality;</li> <li>• Air quality;</li> <li>• Noise and vibration;</li> <li>• Waste; and</li> <li>• Recreation.</li> </ul>
Local Transport Plans	
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and associated development	
Other development: commercial, housing, minerals or waste developments	

Given the nature of the LTP Core Strategy, there is inevitably going to be a delay between the adoption of the LTP Core Strategy and any relevant development. Should an in-combination assessment be required, it is not possible to know when (or indeed if) any subsequent project proposal will come forward and therefore, it is not possible to predict what other plans and projects will be relevant. There is a need to consider the potential for in-combination effects at the plan stage, but that assessment is relevant to any subsequent development in its own right and needs to be scoped accordingly.

It will be necessary to determine the need for an in-combination assessment at the lower planning tiers (such as project stage), as part of individual project HRAs, when the details of any proposals are known.

In order to inform the in-combination assessment, a search was undertaken to identify other projects and plans that may have an in-combination effect with the LTP Core Strategy. This included a search of local authority websites and planning portals for strategic documents (such as Local Plans). The National Infrastructure Planning website<sup>13</sup> was searched for information on any Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within proximity of the same and adjoining regions that may have been assessed for impacts on the same European Sites under the Habitats Regulations. Only projects and plans with a Habitats Regulations Assessment were included within the in-combination assessment.

### 3.4. Approach to the HRA

HRA is an iterative process, where necessary suggestions can be made of how to amend the LTP Core Strategy to avoid an LSE on a European Site.

The precautionary principle (as enshrined in the Habitats Regulations) has been taken into account during this HRA. The precautionary principle is used when an HRA cannot objectively demonstrate that there will be no LSE on the European Sites. If this occurs, the subsequent stages of HRA must be completed for the project or plan.

It is also noted that the lack of project-specific detail means that the HRA site selection and screening process is undertaken at a high level. Combined with recent European case law, this means that measures to avoid or reduce effects cannot be considered at the screening stage (Stage 1).

The LTP Core Strategy is a high-level plan which provides outline details of any development proposals or actions. The provided details may include a general area of where development is to be located but certain specific details such as construction dates and working methodology are not provided at this stage.

<sup>13</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

### 3.5. Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to establish whether there are elements of the LTP Core Strategy which could have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites, considering mitigation measures where applicable.

The integrity of a site is defined as *“the coherence of the site’s ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/ or population of species for which the site is, or will be designated”*<sup>14</sup>.

European Commission guidance on the provisions of Article 6, emphasises that site integrity involves its ecological functions and that the assessment of adverse effect should focus on and be limited to the European Site’s conservation objectives<sup>15</sup>.

As described in Natural England’s guidance document The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents (Revised Draft)<sup>16</sup>:

*“...it should be borne in mind that appropriate assessment for a plan is unlikely to be as detailed an assessment as one undertaken at project level. Occasionally, where a proposal in a plan is advancing rapidly at project development level, concurrently with the plan-making process, such detailed information could be available, but usually such detailed assessments are unlikely to be achievable or feasible. The object is to assess whether it can be ascertained that the elements of the plan, alone or in combination with each other, and/ or other plans or projects, would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site.”*

Where necessary, mitigation measures have been put forward to address any adverse effects on integrity of the European Sites (see Section 6). Policy level HRA offers an opportunity to highlight where lower tier plans and projects will require HRA in order to avoid conflict with conservation objectives for European Sites. The purpose of policy level HRAs is to assess whether particular policies will impact on European Sites. If it cannot be ruled out that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the European Sites, then policies can be amended or deleted, or progressed to Stage 3. Where appropriate, safeguarding conditions can be used and/ or deliverable mitigation identified to avoid or remove the potential adverse impacts of a policy. This approach will ensure the plan is robust and deliverable. It is supported by the decision in the case of Feeney v Oxford City Council [2011] EWHC 2699, in which the Court ruled that the use of safeguard conditions is not excluded by the precautionary principle; on the contrary such a condition is based upon advance consideration of potential future risks.

Impacts of a plan depend to a large extent on how policies and proposals are implemented on the ground. Due to the uncertainties inherent in policymaking, the exact effect of a policy or proposal may not be certain until detailed implementation. This can make it difficult to conclude with any certainty that adverse effects on integrity will not take place. Due to the requirement within the Habitats Directive to apply the precautionary principle if it is not possible to be certain that adverse effects will not occur, this HRA proposes methods to mitigate for adverse effects that could occur. This is important, in order to demonstrate that any development brought forward as a result of policies in the LTP Core Strategy, can be delivered without adverse effects on integrity. Changes to the detailed design of development schemes, when they arise, may be necessary as well as mitigation.

<sup>14</sup> Natural England (2019) MPA Conservation Advice Glossary of Terms. Available here: [https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/pdfs/MPA\\_CAGlossary\\_March2019.pdf](https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/pdfs/MPA_CAGlossary_March2019.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> European Commission (2018) Managing Natura 2000 Sites. The Provision of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC.

<sup>16</sup> *The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents*, Natural England, 2009.

## 4. The European Sites

### 4.1. Introduction

A total of six European Sites were identified for inclusion in the HRA. The locations of these European Sites are shown on Figure 4-1 below. No SACs designated for bats lie within 30 km of LTP Core Strategy boundary.

### 4.2. European Sites within 15 km of the LTP Core Strategy

Further details about each European Site are provided in Table 4-1 below. Full details, including the conservation objectives, vulnerabilities of the European Site and the current condition (if known), are provided in Appendix A.

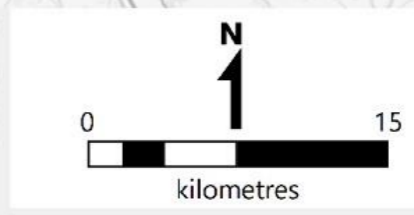
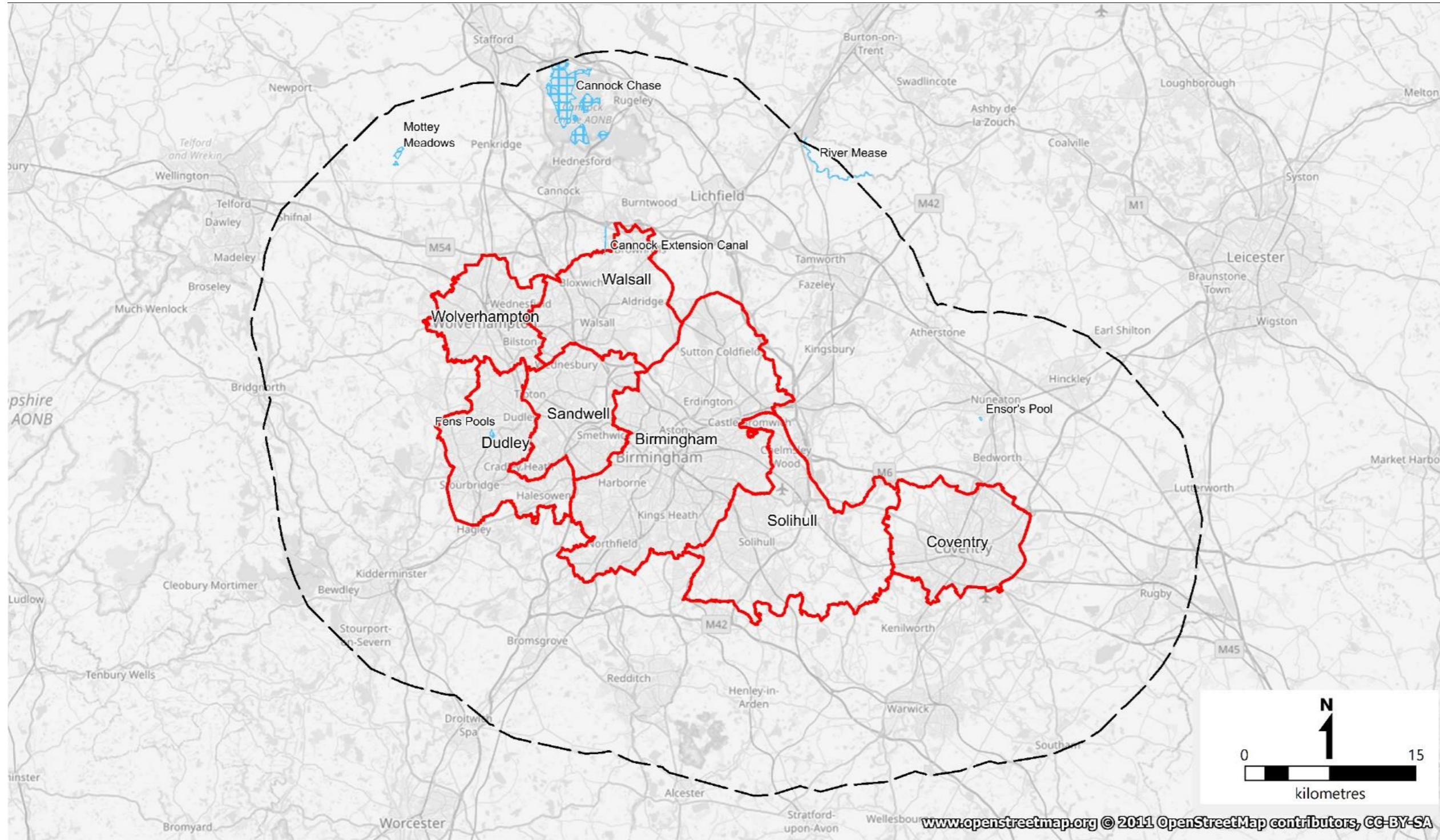
**Table 4-1 – European Sites within 15 km of LTP Core Strategy Boundary**

European Site Name and Status	Distance from LTP Core Strategy	Authority	Brief Description and reason for designation
Fens Pools SAC	Within LTP Core Strategy area	West Midlands	The site comprises of a series of small pools and a wide range of other habitats from swamp, fen and inundation communities to unimproved neutral and acidic grassland and scrub. Great crested newts ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> ) occur as part of an important amphibian assemblage. The site, which shows evidence of post-industrial activities, overlies Etruria marls and coal measures of the Carboniferous period.
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Partially within LTP Core Strategy area	Shropshire and Staffordshire, West Midlands	Cannock Extension Canal in central England is an example of anthropogenic, lowland habitat supporting floating water-plantain ( <i>Luronium natans</i> ) at the eastern limit of the plant's natural distribution in England. A very large population of the species occurs in the Canal, which has a diverse aquatic flora and rich dragonfly fauna, indicative of good water quality.  The low volume of boat traffic on this terminal branch of the Wyrley and Essington Canal has allowed open-water plants, including floating water-plantain, to flourish, while depressing the growth of emergents.
Ensor's Pool SAC	5.81 km	Warwickshire	Ensor's Pool lies on the western edge of Nuneaton and was formed in an abandoned clay pit. It has an average depth of 8 metres and is fed by groundwater. The pool overlies Etruria Marl which was extracted for brick-making early in the 20th Century. Ensor's Pool holds a very large and healthy population of native white-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ). It is one of the best lake populations of crayfish in England. Although crayfish plague outbreaks have occurred in the Midlands, this water body is isolated from river systems and is a good example of a 'refuge' site in an important part of the species' former range. The pool has some marginal vegetation of hard rush ( <i>Juncus inflexus</i> ), common spike-rush ( <i>Eleocharis</i>

			<p><i>palustris</i>), water horsetail (<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>) and lesser bulrush (<i>Typha angustifolia</i>). Water plants include spiked water-milfoil (<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>) and broadleaved pondweed (<i>Potamogeton natans</i>). The pool is surrounded by areas of scrub and grassland.</p>
Cannock Chase SAC	7.41 km	Shropshire and Staffordshire	<p>The area of lowland heathland at Cannock Chase is the most extensive in the Midlands. The character of the vegetation is intermediate between the upland or northern heaths of England and Wales and those of southern counties. Dry heathland communities are of the heather – western gorse (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Ulex gallii</i>) and heather – wavy hair-grass (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>) types. Within the heathland, species of northern latitudes occur, such as cowberry (<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>) and crowberry (<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>).</p> <p>Cannock Chase has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry (<i>Vaccinium intermedium</i>), a plant of restricted occurrence. The scarcity of water over much of the Chase effectively confines wetland flora and fauna to the stream valley systems and a scatter of natural and artificial pools and damp depressions. The Oldacre and Sherbrook valleys have small-scale mosaics of spring-fed mire and wet heath vegetation, a result of complex water chemistry. Where acidic conditions prevail the mires are mostly formed of bog mosses (<i>Sphagnum</i> spp.) with cranberry (<i>Vaccinium oxycoccus</i>), cottongrasses (<i>Eriophorum</i>) spp. and cross-leaved heath (<i>Erica tetralix</i>).</p>
Mottey Meadows SAC	10.47 km	Shropshire and Staffordshire	<p>Mottey Meadows contains lowland hay meadows with limited influence of agricultural intensification and so demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. There are transitions to other dry and wet grassland types. The site is important for a range of rare meadow species, including fritillary (<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>) at its most northerly native locality.</p>
River Mease SAC	13.48 km	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire	<p>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the watercress species (<i>Ranunculus fluitans</i>) and (<i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i>) vegetation for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>) for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the United Kingdom. European bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>) for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p>



Figure 4-1 – Location of European Sites in relation to the LTP Core Strategy Area with a 15 km buffer



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**West Midlands Metropolitan 7 - Biodiversity**

- West Midlands Metropolitan 7
- Special Areas of Conservation
- 15km Buffer

Note: No Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites found within 15km of the Metropolitan 7 area, and therefore not within the map extent.

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## 5. Stage 1 Screening Assessment

### 5.1. Screening Results

Taking into consideration the precautionary principle (under a worst-case scenario), each action within the LTP Core Strategy was screened for potential LSEs. The results of this screening assessment are provided within Table 5-1.

**Table 5-1 – European Sites within 15 km of LTP Core Strategy boundary**

European Site Name and Status	Distance from LTP Core Strategy	Qualifying features	Potential for LSE?	Justification
Fens Pools SAC	Within LTP Core Strategy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1166 Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>).</li> </ul>	Yes	Located within the LTP Core Strategy Area and potential impact pathways may be present, such as habitat loss, species disturbance, changes to water quality, changes to air quality, and increased recreational pressure.
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	Partially within LTP Core Strategy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1831 Floating water-plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>).</li> </ul>	Yes	Located within the LTP Core Strategy Area and may be subject to habitat loss, species disturbance, changes to water quality, changes to air quality, and recreational pressure.
Ensor's Pool SAC	5.81 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1092 White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>).</li> </ul>	No	Located approximately 5.81 km from the LTP Core Strategy Area and is designated for a population of white-clawed crayfish. Due to the distance and lack of impact pathways, it is not considered that the LTP Core Strategy would result in an LSE upon this European Site and has therefore been screened out.
Cannock Chase SAC	7.41 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European dry heaths</li> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with (<i>Erica tetralix</i>). (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)</li> </ul>	Yes	Whilst the European Site is located 7.41 km from the LTP Core Strategy Area, this is within the 15 km zone of influence for which an LSE cannot be screened out as a result of increased recreational pressure and changes in air quality.  A report by Footprint Ecology (2013) which assessed recreational impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC, found that 75% of all visitors came from a 15 km zone or less from the edge of the SAC. As the actions within the LTP Core Strategy may lead to improved transport links to this European Site (and thus, increased recreational pressure), an LSE cannot be ruled out.
Mottey Meadows SAC	10.47 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>).</li> </ul>	No	Located approximately 10.47 km from the LTP Core Strategy Area and is designated for an area of lowland hay meadow. Due to the distance and lack of impact pathways, it is not considered that the LTP Core Strategy would result in an LSE upon this European Site and has therefore been screened out.

European Site Name and Status	Distance from LTP Core Strategy	Qualifying features	Potential for LSE?	Justification
River Mease SAC	13.48 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the (<i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i>) vegetation. (Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by watercrowsfoot);</li> <li>White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>);</li> <li>Spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>);</li> <li>Bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>);</li> <li>Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>).</li> </ul>	No	It is possible that the SAC is hydrologically connected to the Scheme, however, owing to the distance it is considered that any potential impacts would be diluted by the time it potentially reaches the SAC. Due to the distance from the LTP Core Strategy area (13.48 km) and lack of impact pathways, it is not considered that the LTP Core Strategy would result in an LSE upon this European Site and has therefore, been screened out.

All elements of LTP Core Strategy were screened for actions that may result in an LSE on the relevant European Sites. The results of the screening are summarised in Table 5-2 with the full screening justifications provided in Appendix B.

**Table 5-2 – LTP Core Strategy Screening Summary**

Section	LSE?	Detail
<i>Our Actions – Making Behaviour Change Happen – ‘Avoid’</i>		
Informed Choices	No	Actions with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development. Actions with no LSE contain proposals that are unlikely to result in development. See Screening Table in Appendix B.
Managing Demand – Placemaking and Traffic Management	Yes	
Building the Consensus and Appetite for Action	No	
Controlled Parking Zones	No	
Mobility Credits	No	
Schools Restart Campaign	No	
<i>Our Actions – Supporting Inclusive Growth of New Developments – ‘Avoid’</i>		
Promoting Sustainable and Accessible Development	Yes	Actions with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development. Actions with no LSE contain proposals that are unlikely to result in development. See Screening Table in Appendix B.
Supporting Development with Transport Infrastructure	No	
Accounting for Digital Connectivity	No	
Eastern Green, Coventry	Yes	

Icknield Port Loop	Yes	
<i>Our Actions - Healthy Streets and Places to Walk, Cycle, Ride and Scoot – ‘Shift’</i>		
Enabling People to Cycle, Ride and Scoot	No	Actions with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development. Actions with no LSE contain proposals that are unlikely to result in development. See Screening Table in Appendix B.
Quiet and Safe Local Streets	No	
Delivering our Starley Network	Yes	
School Streets/Low Traffic Neighbourhoods	No	
Micro mobility	No	
<i>Our Actions – Connecting Our Places via Public Transport and Shared Mobility – ‘Shift’</i>		
Better Public Transport Services	Yes	Actions with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development. Actions with no LSE contain proposals that are unlikely to result in development. See Screening Table in Appendix B.
New Shared Mobility Services	No	
Our Network	No	
Mobility Hubs	No	
An Integrated Public Transport Network	Yes	
<i>Our Actions – Creating Resilient Networks – ‘Improve’</i>		
Keeping Things Moving	No	Actions with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development. Actions with no LSE contain proposals that are unlikely to result in development. See Screening Table in Appendix B.
Maintaining Our Networks	Yes	
Developing the Network	No	
Lode Lane Route Enhancements	No	
Wireless Infrastructure Project/Connected and Autonomous Vehicles Infrastructure	No	
<i>Our Actions – Delivering a Green Revolution – ‘Improve’</i>		
Assisting the Switch to Zero Emissions Vehicles	No	Actions with an LSE contain proposals that may lead to development. Actions with no LSE contain proposals that are unlikely to result in development. See Screening Table in Appendix B.
Working with Businesses to Innovate and Export Future Mobility Solutions	No	
Using Our Transport System to Enhance and Protect Our Environment	No	
Green Bus Shelters	No	
Coventry Electric Bus City	No	

## 5.2. LSE on European Sites

Following the identification of which elements of the plan can be screened out, the potential effect pathways have been identified along with a characterisation of any impacts on the European Sites.

Potential effects are considered to be as follows:

- **Habitat loss and fragmentation** – includes direct loss of habitats under the footprint of temporary or permanent works. Indirect effects through the loss of habitat connectivity and supporting habitats (such as functionally linked land);
- **Species disturbance (visual, noise, vibration)** – this refers to disturbance by construction works or operation of any schemes on species that may cause behavioural effects (such as avoidance and change in foraging behaviour). Construction plant and machinery, piling, light pollution and movements of vehicles and workers are all considered;
- **Changes to water quality** – effects on aquatic species and habitats from discharges, contamination, increased nutrient loads or changes in sedimentation levels;

- **Changes to air quality** – evaluates the risk of discharges to air, including fugitive dust, combustion emissions and nitrogen deposition;
- **Changes to surface and groundwater hydrology** – changes to the flow, supply, availability and drainage of water, increased risks associated with flooding;
- **Introduction and spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) and disease** – the risk of introducing or spreading INNS and disease throughout construction works; and,
- **Recreation impacts** – increased recreational pressure on European Sites from increased accessibility and visitor numbers, resulting in disturbance and habitat erosion if not managed.

### 5.3. In-combination Assessment

As the LTP Core Strategy was unable to confidently rule out an LSE alone, in-combination effects have not been considered as part of the Stage 1 assessment but will be taken forward for consideration at Stage 2: AA. Those sections of LTP Core Strategy where no effects were identified due to an absence of actions that may lead to development do not require an in-combination assessment.

### 5.4. Screening Conclusion

A precautionary approach has been taken due to potential for impacts on European Sites as a result of proposed schemes that may result in future development or changes to local environmental conditions. The LTP Core Strategy is a high-level plan which provides outline details of any development proposals or actions. The provided details may include a general area of where development is to be located but certain specific details such as extent, scale, timing and approach are not provided at this stage.

Even with the application of the precautionary principle, it is considered very unlikely that the LTP Core Strategy would result in an LSE upon Motte Meadows SAC, Ensor's Pool SAC, and River Mease SAC. This is due to the distance of the European Sites from the LTP Core Strategy area and taking into consideration the qualifying features, which are not considered likely to be impacted by any actions within LTP Core Strategy, as outlined in Table 5-2 above. Therefore, these European Sites have been screened out of further assessment.

Within the LTP Core Strategy, there are several actions for which an LSE cannot be confidently (or objectively) ruled out based on the high-level overview (as outlined in Table 5-2 above, with further details provided within Appendix B). Therefore, an LSE on the following European Sites cannot be confidently ruled:

- Fen's Pools SAC;
- Cannock Extension Canal SAC; and,
- Cannock Chase SAC.

To ensure the general protection of the European Sites potentially affected by the LTP Core Strategy, a specific commitment is outlined to carry out a HRA at the appropriate stage of scheme development, where this is shown to be necessary.

## 6. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

### 6.1. Introduction

Following completion of the HRA Stage 1: Screening assessment, it was concluded that the LTP Core Strategy strategies may result in an LSE on Fens Pools SAC, Cannock Extension Canal SAC, and Cannock Chase SAC. Consequently, these strategies require a Stage 2: AA.

### 6.2. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the Plan Alone

As there is not sufficient detail within the LTP Core Strategy to enable the specific impacts on individual features of the European Sites to be determined, those features on which there may be an LSE cannot be singled out and taken forward to AA. Therefore, the risk of having an impact was broadly assessed by considering all qualifying features, which will indicate whether there could be a subsequent risk to the integrity of the European Site.

An assessment table has been produced for each European Site potentially affected by the LTP which are provided in Appendix C. Within the assessment tables, potential effects of schemes (in accordance with each European Site's vulnerabilities) potentially arising from the plan, following mitigation, are considered together. Impacts during construction and operation are also considered, but as most schemes will be operational for the foreseeable future, decommissioning is not included.

#### 6.2.1. Habitat Loss

There is no detail currently available regarding the actual works to be undertaken as part of each scheme and the final scheme extent. Two European Sites are located within the LTP Core Strategy area (Fens Pools SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC); however, it is not anticipated that any of the actions within the LTP Core Strategy would fall directly within these European Sites. Therefore, provided all schemes avoid the loss of habitats during construction and operation, along with sufficient buffer where relevant, it is considered that habitat loss and/ or fragmentation will be unlikely as a result of the LTP Core Strategy. It is therefore concluded that an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites through habitat loss can be ruled out.

#### 6.2.2. Species Disturbance

Given the high level of the LTP Core Strategy and the lack of scheme details, it is not possible at this stage to confirm that species disturbance may occur. However, schemes arising out of the LTP Core Strategy could, in theory, result in species disturbance via noise, vibration, visual disturbance and recreational disturbance of the qualifying species of European Sites. This particularly applies where the affected land is situated in close proximity to a European Site, but impact to mobile species using functionally linked land or commuting routes outside European Site boundaries will also be considered.

In order to limit the potential for impacts on European Sites, the following mitigation could be implemented, where appropriate, for schemes or actions arising out of LTP Core Strategy in locations within or close to European Sites, or where disturbance impacts to mobile species are possible:

- Obtain appropriate licencing for legally protected species to ensure no impact on favourable conservation status;
- Restrict timing of most disturbing activities to avoid or limit seasonal disturbance (e.g., avoid or limit disturbance during core breeding seasons);
- Limit noise from plant and machinery;
- Creation of noise attenuation bunds;
- Creation of buffer zones and set-back distances, particularly around sensitive features (e.g., bat roosts);
- Visual screening of works;
- Sensitively designed lighting directed away from habitat areas and the minimum amount of lighting required to undertake the task;
- Restrict works either geographically or temporally (e.g., avoid winter or avoid night-time working);
- Educate workers on importance of adjacent European Sites; and,
- Create alternative areas for outdoor recreation to discourage workers from visiting European Sites, particularly those with species prone to disturbance.

It is concluded that with the implementation of appropriate scheme specific mitigation measures, no adverse effects on the qualifying features of the European Sites is considered likely, and therefore, there will be no impacts upon the integrity of the European Sites identified as a result of the LTP Core Strategy alone through species disturbance.

### 6.2.3. Changes to Water Quality

Changes in water quality could result from direct discharges from sewage or surface water run-off outfalls, altering water chemistry, nutrient levels, pH, or oxygen levels. Any de-watering works could also result in sediment discharge into aquatic habitats. Other potential pollutant sources include accidental spillages of fuels or oil, heavy metals leaching from soil run-off, pollutants such as dust and construction waste in surface water run-off and increases in nutrient loading. Any surface water discharges that are made into local watercourses and waterbodies or directly or indirectly into European Sites could be damaging. The release of these pollutants and increases in suspended sediment into freshwater environments could lead to smothering of habitats and species, or changes in species diversity as a result of increased toxicity or nutrients, so affecting the achievement of the conservation objectives and site integrity.

In order to avoid these potential effects, drainage systems should be designed to either avoid discharge into watercourses, or to attenuate and reduce the risk of pollutants and suspended solids. Modelling of any discharges or releases may be required once any project-level details are known in order to quantify any impacts. As such, the following mitigation measures could be implemented:

- Works should be undertaken following pollution prevention guidelines<sup>17</sup> and Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidance on the control of water pollution from construction sites<sup>18</sup>;
- Drainage systems should be designed to avoid direct discharge into watercourses;
- Attenuation and/ or settlement ponds installed to reduce the risk of pollutants and suspended sediment reaching the receptors;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) installed;
- Implementation of a flocculant system before discharge;
- Silt curtains used whilst dredging;
- Implementation of pollution prevention guidelines;
- Effective soil management plans to avoid run-off from any earthworks;
- Foul water discharge to existing treatment plants and not to surface water; and,
- Appropriate bunding around fuel storage.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified will result from LTP Core Strategy alone through changes in water quality.

### 6.2.4. Changes to Surface and Groundwater Hydrology

Excavations and earthworks during construction and new roads and other impermeable surfaces during operation have the potential to change surface water hydrodynamics. Diversion or blocking of surface water features, the presence of earthworks or roads all have the potential to alter existing surface water drainage characteristics in the catchment. Pluvial flood events may become more frequent as the built-up area increases, and fluvial flooding may increase if surface water run-off is diverted into watercourses. A reduction or increase in surface water flows could affect water quality.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation could be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP Core Strategy:

- Re-routing of watercourses, positioning of earthworks to reduce risk of effects;
- Modelling or monitoring of flow rates and water levels in local watercourses where these may be affected by development;

<sup>17</sup> All of the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs) are available from <https://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpp-documents/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>. Note: the GPPs also make reference to environmental legal obligations, but that information is currently out of date and requires updating.

<sup>18</sup> The CIRIA documents are a series of publications developed by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association. Each document is targeted at a particular type of business or activity and covers environmental good practice to minimise pollution.

- Complete a Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) to assess potential surface water and groundwater effects during phases of development and operation; and,
- Mitigation to control any surface floodwater.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation, no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified will result from LTP Core Strategy alone through changes in surface and groundwater hydrology.

### 6.2.5. Changes to Air Quality

During construction, emissions to air would be mainly from plant and machinery, road traffic and dust from works or emissions from concrete batching plants. During operation, traffic on new roads or increased volumes of traffic on existing roads may alter local air quality resulting in additional impacts on sensitive habitats within 200 m of the affected road network.

The potential effects of increases in deposition of nitrogen compounds (NO<sub>x</sub>) include long-term changes in habitat and species distribution and diversity as nutrient loading encourages more vigorous species, such as grasses, to out-compete forbs and slow growing non-vascular plants. Acidification of soils and freshwater (primarily today through nitrogen deposition) causes similar effects, depending on the geology and soil chemistry influence susceptibility of an ecosystem to acid deposition.

An assessment of any adverse impacts from changes in air quality should be undertaken on a site-by-site basis, through determination of the applicability of the critical levels and critical loads at each site, and further ecological assessment and modelling. Critical loads for vegetation types are presented on the Air Pollution Information System (APIS) website<sup>19</sup>.

Good practice measures to control dust from construction sites should be sufficient to limit the amount of emissions reaching the European Sites. With respect to emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> or acidic compounds through construction activities, generic mitigation measures such as turning engines off when idle, operating equipment on ultra-low sulphur diesel, ensuring engines are routinely maintained, providing public transport for workers etc. may limit emissions to within acceptable thresholds.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation could be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP Core Strategy:

- Enclosure of silos, cement powder delivery systems and installation of dust mitigation systems;
- Avoid dust releasing activities;
- Site design to reduce dust emissions (e.g., covering stockpiles, reducing vehicle speed);
- Dust control measures implemented (water bowsers);
- Regular maintenance of plant and machinery;
- Drivers to switch off vehicles when stationary;
- Avoid use of diesel generators;
- Implement air quality monitoring scheme;
- Turning engines off when idle;
- Operating equipment on ultra-low sulphur diesel;
- Ensuring engines are routinely maintained; and,
- Providing public transport for workers.

Operational impacts cannot be mitigated in this way and would need to be avoided through modelling and management of the affected road network, particularly roads that lie within 200 m of a European Site.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation, no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified will result from LTP Core Strategy alone through changes in air quality.

### 6.2.6. Introduction of INNS/Disease

The risk of terrestrial INNS and disease introduction to European Sites remains, if appropriate mitigation measures are not implemented. Any works have the potential to spread INNS that are already established on the site and elsewhere in the UK. During operation, the introduction and spread of INNS and disease are considered less likely due to reduced movement of substrate and vehicles.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.apis.ac.uk/>



In practice, to manage these risks, any future project proponent will be required to apply Biosecurity Risk Assessments and Method Statements to cover all activities. These are likely to include regular survey and monitoring requirements for INNS/ diseases. The implementation of effective Biosecurity Risk Assessments and procedures should enable to rule out any risk to site integrity.

In order to limit the potential for impacts the following mitigation could be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP Core Strategy:

- Implement Biosecurity Risk Assessments and Method Statements to cover all activities;
- Undertake measures that would control and eradicate INNS within the area of works; and,
- Implement regular survey and monitoring requirements for INNS.

Mitigation through iterative design and the implementation of standard mitigation and good practice guidance should ensure no risk to achievement of conservation objectives and consequently no adverse effect on site integrity. It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified will result from LTP alone through the introduction of INNS/diseases.

### 6.2.7. Recreational Pressures

Improving access to European Sites, particularly in combination with local increases in population driven by housing and employment development, can increase the amount of recreation at a European Site. This may result in increased disturbance/ erosion of habitats, disturbance of species within the site from increased numbers of people and dogs, littering, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. It can also drive the need for more visitor facilities and car parking facilities, visitor management, an educational programme, site warden, increased recreational pressure on European Sites from increased accessibility and visitor numbers, resulting in disturbance and habitat erosion if not managed.

In order to limit the potential for impacts, the following mitigation could be implemented for any schemes or actions arising out of the LTP Core Strategy:

- Visitor management schemes, including provision of dedicated footpaths, fencing and screening of sensitive areas;
- Education of visitors through signage and online information; and,
- Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) for new residential developments to ease the pressure on European Sites where this is an issue.

A report by Footprint Ecology (2013) which assessed recreational impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC, found that 75% of all visitors came from a 15 km zone or less from the edge of the SAC. The report provided a range of mitigation to offset the expected increase of visitors and these should be incorporated into the LTP, as relevant.

It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation, no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified will result from LTP Core Strategy alone through recreational pressures.

## 6.3. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment - In-combination Effects

The results of the in-combination assessment are presented with Table 6-1 below. Overall, no in-combination effects have been identified.

**Table 6-1 - In-combination assessment results**

Document Detail/Project	Summary of risks to the European Sites from the proposed project/plan	In-combination effect?
M54 to M6 Link Road Scheme - Habitats Regulations Assessment No Significant Effects Report <sup>20</sup>	The HRA submitted as part of the NSIP considered potential effects upon Cannock Extension Canal SAC and Cannock Chase SAC in regard to air quality (nitrogen deposition). The report concluded that there is sufficient information and assessment	No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites. Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be

<sup>20</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/m54-to-m6-link-road/>

Document Detail/Project	Summary of risks to the European Sites from the proposed project/plan	In-combination effect?
	evidence to conclude that the Scheme would not result in an LSE on European Sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.
West Midlands Interchange Scheme. Habitats Regulations Assessment No Significant Effects Report <sup>21</sup>	<p>The HRA submitted as part of the NSIP assessed potential impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC, Motte Meadows SAC, and Cannock Extension Canal SAC in regards to changes in water quality, changes in air quality, disturbance noise, and habitat loss/ fragmentation.</p> <p>The report concluded that there is sufficient information and assessment evidence to conclude that the Scheme would not result in an LSE on European Sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</p>	<p>No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.</p>
Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy <sup>22</sup>	<p>The HRA screening exercise for the Joint Core Strategy identified the following European sites for consideration: Cannock Chase SAC. As a result of the assessment and recommendations it is considered that all negative effects in relation to the conservation objectives of Cannock Chase SAC can be overcome by pursuing these actions and undertaking comprehensive HRA of all future spatial development DPDs for the BC</p>	<p>No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.</p>
North Warwickshire Local Plan (Incorporating Main Modifications) Habitats Regulations Assessment Report <sup>23</sup>	<p>The screening assessment concluded that the Plan would have no likely significant effects upon the majority of European sites identified during the assessment, including the River Mease SAC, Ensor's Pool SAC, and Cannock Chase SAC. Likely significant effects of air pollution on the Cannock Extension Canal SAC could not be excluded on the basis of the available information; therefore these effects were subject to an Appropriate Assessment. The Appropriate Assessment of those likely significant effects has concluded that the Plan as proposed to be modified would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Cannock Extension</p>	<p>No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.</p>

<sup>21</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/west-midlands-interchange/>

<sup>22</sup> [Microsoft Word - UE-0079\\_BCJCS\\_AA\\_4\\_040610HD.doc \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://www.walsall.gov.uk/~/media/Assets/Planning/UE-0079_BCJCS_AA_4_040610HD.doc)

<sup>23</sup>

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi9isrHreb1AhVMe8AKHS\\_FBHcQFnoECAUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.northwarks.gov.uk%2Fdownload%2Fdownloads%2Fid%2F8600%2Fmain\\_modifications\\_habitat\\_regulations\\_assessment\\_february\\_2021.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3W8g-bzeD37IZ4zXL00q0g](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwi9isrHreb1AhVMe8AKHS_FBHcQFnoECAUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.northwarks.gov.uk%2Fdownload%2Fdownloads%2Fid%2F8600%2Fmain_modifications_habitat_regulations_assessment_february_2021.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3W8g-bzeD37IZ4zXL00q0g)

Document Detail/Project	Summary of risks to the European Sites from the proposed project/plan	In-combination effect?
	Canal SAC as a result of increasing air pollution either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.	
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Local Plan Review Updated Habitat Regulations Assessment Stage 1: Screening <sup>24</sup>	The screening exercise identified European Sites with potential linkages to the Solihull Metropolitan Borough area. These are as follows: Ensor's Pool SAC; Cannock Extension Canal SAC; Cannock Chase SAC; Fens Pool SAC; and, River Mease SAC. Based on a review of the available evidence it was concluded that none of the policies and proposals of the Submission Draft of the Solihull Local Plan Review will result in a significant effect on the Natura 2000 sites; their qualifying features; habitats or species critical to the function of the qualifying feature; or the delivery of their conservation objectives, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.	No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.  Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.
Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document <sup>25</sup>	The following European sites were identified within a 20km search zone around SMBC area: Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Cannock Chase Extension SAC; and Fens Pools SAC. Based on the information given in the following chapters, it is considered unlikely that the SADDPD could lead to significant effects on any European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. An Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations is not required.	No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.  Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.
M42 Junction 6 Improvement Scheme- Habitat Regulations Assessment: No Significant Effects Report <sup>26</sup>	Through a process of screening, four European Sites were identified and assessed: Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Fens Pools SAC; Cannock Extension Canal SAC; and the River Mease SAC. Potential impact pathways were identified, which include land take, air quality, water quality, and noise and vibration. The HRA submitted as part of the NSIP concluded that there is sufficient information and assessment evidence to conclude that the Scheme would not result in an LSE on European Sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.  Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.

<sup>24</sup> [UPDATED HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING \(solihull.gov.uk\)](https://solihull.gov.uk/updates/2022/02/24/updated-habitat-regulations-assessment-stage-1-screening)

<sup>25</sup> [Habitat Regulations Assessment for the Sandwell SADDPD | Sandwell Council](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-agendas-and-minutes/council-agendas-and-minutes-2022/habitat-regulations-assessment-for-the-sandwell-saddpd)

<sup>26</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/m42-junction-6-improvement/?ipcsection=docs>

Document Detail/Project	Summary of risks to the European Sites from the proposed project/plan	In-combination effect?
Walsall Council Site Allocation Document & Town Centre Area Action Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment (October 2016) <sup>27</sup>	The HRA assessed potential impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC and Cannock Extension Canal SAC. Potential impact pathways included increase recreational pressure and mineral extraction. The HRA concluded that there are insufficient details with which to make an assessment of the potential impacts of proposals and projects that feature in the Walsall Site Allocation Document (SAD), therefore they cannot be excluded on the basis of an objective assessment of the available information, at the time of writing.	No – whilst an LSE could not be ruled out on Cannock Chase SAC, this was down solely to an increase in recreational pressure. As long as the required mitigation is implemented in line with the relevant policy and strategic documents, any adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in-combination is considered unlikely.  Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.
Cannock Chase District Council - Cannock Chase Local Plan HRA Report <sup>28</sup>	The HRA assessed impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC, Cannock Extension Canal SAC, Motte Meadows SAC, and the River Mease SAC. Potential impact pathways included habitat loss, changes in air pollution, recreational pressures, and changes in water quality. The HRA was unable to screen out impacts upon the European Sites through changes in air quality and increased recreational pressure.	No – The plan does not include residential dwellings but may lead to increased recreational pressure upon Cannock Chase SAC through improved transport links. As long as the required mitigation is implemented in line with the relevant policy and strategic documents, any adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in-combination is considered unlikely.  Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.
HRA addendum to Cannock Chase Council Local Plan regarding the Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation and new residential development <sup>29</sup>	The HRA addendum assessed impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC regarding increased recreational pressure. The authorities have concluded that an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC would arise from residential development within 15 km of this European Site in the absence of mitigation. This conclusion has been reached following analysis of the evidence base by the SAC Partner competent authorities.	No – The plan does not include residential dwellings but may lead to increased recreational pressure upon Cannock Chase SAC through improved transport links. As long as the required mitigation is implemented in line with the relevant policy and strategic documents, any adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in-combination is considered unlikely.  Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.
Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Black Country Plan (BCP) Interim HRA to support	The following European sites have been screened into the HRA process: Cannock Chase SAC, Cannock Extension Canal SAC, Fens Pools SAC, Motte Meadows SAC, and River Mease SAC. The following impact	No – whilst an LSE could not be ruled out on the European Sites, as long as the required mitigation is implemented in line with the relevant policy and strategic documents, any adverse effect on the integrity of the European

<sup>27</sup> [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importedddocuments/hra - sad\\_aap\\_screening\\_assessment\\_publication\\_28-10-16\\_final.pdf](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importedddocuments/hra - sad_aap_screening_assessment_publication_28-10-16_final.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> [cannock\\_chase\\_local\\_plan\\_preferred\\_options\\_habitat\\_regulations\\_assessment\\_report\\_march\\_2021.pdf \(cannockchasedc.gov.uk\)](https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hra_addendum_0.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hra\\_addendum\\_0.pdf](https://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/hra_addendum_0.pdf)

Document Detail/Project	Summary of risks to the European Sites from the proposed project/plan	In-combination effect?
the plan making process (July 2021) <sup>30</sup>	<p>pathways were considered: air quality, water quality and quantity, public access and disturbance, and habitat loss and fragmentation.</p> <p>The HRA concluded that the BCP will be screened in for an HRA Appropriate Assessment because, taking no account of mitigation measures that the plan may incorporate, the BCP is considered likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. The HRA Appropriate Assessment will focus on the following potential impacts: air quality, water quality and quantity, public access and disturbance, habitat loss and fragmentation.</p>	<p>Sites in-combination is considered unlikely.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.</p>
HRA Screening of the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) (October 2013) <sup>31</sup>	<p>The following European sites have been screened into the HRA process: Cannock Chase SAC, Cannock Extension Canal SAC, Fens Pools SAC, Ensor's Pools SAC, Motte Meadows SAC, and River Mease SAC. Potential significant effects were identified and were explored for the remaining ten sites. These included air quality, disturbance and recreation pressures, water resources, water quality, and wastewater.</p> <p>There are no European sites in the City of Birmingham. Of those that have been identified from a 20 km area of search and others that have been included through hydrological pathways that lie beyond this search zone, none are expected to experience adverse effects from proposals in the BDP. Earlier assessment in November 2012 recommended that the issues of air quality, disturbance from recreation, water supply and treatment be explored as part of further HRA work. These issues have been appraised along with several other identified vulnerabilities of European sites. The Pre-Submission Version of the BDP is not likely to lead to adverse effects on any European sites alone or in-combination with other plans. There is no requirement to prepare an appropriate assessment.</p>	<p>No – all potential impacts arising as a result of the project have been screened out alone and are not considered to have any in-combination effects upon the European Sites.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the LTP Core Strategy, no in-combination effects are likely to occur with this Plan.</p>

<sup>30</sup> [https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/18641/c-600\\_black\\_coutry\\_interim\\_hra\\_report\\_11\\_060721sc-compressed.pdf](https://blackcountryplan.dudley.gov.uk/media/18641/c-600_black_coutry_interim_hra_report_11_060721sc-compressed.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1523/sub6\\_pre-submission\\_habitat\\_regulations\\_assessment\\_2013.pdf](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1523/sub6_pre-submission_habitat_regulations_assessment_2013.pdf)

## 6.4. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment - Conclusion

In the absence of detailed project-specific information, a high-level assessment of the potential for actions within the LTP Core Strategy to have an adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites was undertaken. Six European Sites, located within the Survey Area, were assessed against the likely impacts associated with the types of development that could be expected to come forward under the LTP Core Strategy.

Detailed information is not yet available about the nature and extent of any works or actions as part of schemes that are likely to arise out of the LTP. However, it is considered reasonable to anticipate from the information available that the developments could be delivered in a manner which avoids any adverse effects on the integrity of the European sites through the use of standard mitigation techniques which are set out under Section 6.2 above. Furthermore, it is predicted that adverse impacts can be avoided or 'designed out' and to facilitate this process early consultation with Natural England is strongly recommended, such as the screening and scoping stage of projects.

Account has also been taken of the fact that the Habitats Regulations assessment provisions apply to projects as well as plans. For those projects that require planning permission, the relevant planning authority, if required, will need to undertake a HRA prior to granting of any planning permission, and it will have to be demonstrated that the project will not give rise to any LSE alone or in-combination. For schemes that would be progressed under permitted development rights, it may be necessary to obtain 'prior approval' from the relevant planning authority. Should this be the case, and HRA is required, approval will only be given for those schemes that will not give rise to adverse effects on European site integrity .

Taking into account the proposed mitigation measures (as set out in Section 6.2 above) and the fact that the Habitats Regulations apply to projects as well as plans, it can be concluded that the LTP will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites alone or in combination with other plans and projects. However, upon completion of the LTP Core Strategy, or upon completion of any future iterations, the HRA should be revisited and updated accordingly.

# Appendices



# Appendix A. European Site Information

## A.1. European Sites within 15 km of the LTP

The following tables provide information about the SACs within 15 km of the LTP Core Strategy including their designation status and location in relation to the plan boundary, a brief description, their conservation objectives and sensitivities.

### A.1.1. Fens Pools SAC

**Table A-1 - Fens Pools SAC**

Name, Designation and Site Code	Fens Pools SAC UK0030150
Location and Area	Dudley; within LTP Area 20.40 ha
Brief Description	The site comprises of a series of small pools and a wide range of other habitats from swamp, fen and inundation communities to unimproved neutral and acidic grassland and scrub. Great crested newts ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> ) occur as part of an important amphibian assemblage. The site, which shows evidence of post industrial activities, overlies Etruria marls and coal measures of the Carboniferous period.
Reason for Designation	Qualifying features for this site are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1166 Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying species;</li> <li>The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying species;</li> <li>The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying species rely;</li> <li>The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> The conservation objectives should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives available on the Natural England website <sup>32</sup> .
Vulnerabilities of the European Site	Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overgrazing;</li> <li>Inappropriate scrub control;</li> <li>Disease;</li> <li>Water pollution;</li> <li>Habitat fragmentation.</li> </ul>
Condition Assessment	Considered to be 100% favourable (Fens Pools SSSI) <sup>33</sup> .

<sup>32</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327609814581248>

<sup>33</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportUnitCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1003757&ReportTitle=Fens%20Pools%20SSSI>



## A.1.2. Cannock Extension Canal SAC

**Table A-2 - Cannock Extension Canal SAC**

Name, Designation and Site Code	Cannock Extension Canal SAC UK0012672
Location and Area	Walsall, Staffordshire; within LTP Area 5.47 ha
Brief Description	Cannock Extension Canal in central England is an example of anthropogenic, lowland habitat supporting floating water-plantain ( <i>Luronium natans</i> ) at the eastern limit of the plant's natural distribution in England. A very large population of the species occurs in the Canal, which has a diverse aquatic flora and rich dragonfly fauna, indicative of good water quality. The low volume of boat traffic on this terminal branch of the Wyrley and Essington Canal has allowed open-water plants, including floating water-plantain, to flourish, while depressing the growth of emergents.
Reason for Designation	Qualifying features for this site are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S1831 Floating water-plantain (<i>Luronium natans</i>).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> The conservation objectives should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives available on the Natural England website <sup>34</sup> .
Vulnerabilities of the European Site	Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water pollution;</li> <li>• Overgrazing;</li> <li>• Invasive species;</li> <li>• Air pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.</li> </ul>
Condition Assessment	Considered to be 41.10% favourable and 58.90% unfavourable – recovering (Cannock Extension Canal SSSI) <sup>35</sup> .

<sup>34</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5063623810482176>

<sup>35</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S1006558&ReportTitle=Cannock%20Extension%20Canal%20SSSI>

### A.1.3. Ensor's Pool SAC

**Table A-3 - Ensor's Pool SAC**

Name, Designation and Site Code	Ensor's Pool SAC UK0012646
Location and Area	Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire 3.86 ha
Brief Description	<p>Ensor's Pool lies on the western edge of Nuneaton in the north of Warwickshire and formed in an abandoned clay pit. It is about 220 m long, 50 metres wide with an average depth of 8 m and is fed by groundwater. The pool overlies Etruria Marl which was extracted for brickmaking earlier this century.</p> <p>Ensor's Pool is associated with an exceptionally large population of native white-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) estimated at 50,000 individuals.</p>
Reason for Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S1092 White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>The supporting processes on the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>The populations of qualifying species;</li> <li>The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> <p>The conservation objectives should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives available on the Natural England website<sup>36</sup>.</p>
Vulnerabilities of the European Site	<p>Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overgrazing;</li> <li>Inappropriate scrub control;</li> <li>Disease;</li> <li>Water pollution;</li> <li>Habitat fragmentation.</li> </ul>
Condition Assessment	Considered to be 100% unfavourable – declining (Ensor's Pool SSSI) <sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6577286383927296>

<sup>37</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S1006643&ReportTitle=Ensor%27s%20Pool%20SSSI>

## A.1.4. Cannock Chase SAC

**Table A-4 – Cannock Chase SAC**

Name, Designation and Site Code	Cannock Chase SAC UK0030107
Location and Area	Shropshire and Staffordshire 1244.2 ha
Brief Description	The area of lowland heathland at Cannock Chase is the most extensive in the Midlands. The character of the vegetation is intermediate between the upland or northern heaths of England and Wales and those of southern counties. Dry heathland communities are of the heather – western gorse ( <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Ulex gallii</i> ) and heather – wavy hair-grass ( <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> ) types. Within the heathland, species of northern latitudes occur, such as cowberry ( <i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i> ) and crowberry ( <i>Empetrum nigrum</i> ). Cannock Chase has the main British population of the hybrid bilberry <i>Vaccinium intermedium</i> , a plant of restricted occurrence. The scarcity of water over much of the Chase effectively confines wetland flora and fauna to the stream valley systems and a scatter of natural and artificial pools and damp depressions. The Oldacre and Sherbrook valleys have small-scale mosaics of spring-fed mire and wet heath vegetation, a result of complex water chemistry. Where acidic conditions prevail the mires are mostly formed of bog mosses ( <i>Sphagnum spp.</i> ) with cranberry ( <i>Vaccinium oxycoccus</i> ), cottongrasses ( <i>Eriophorum spp.</i> ) and cross-leaved heath ( <i>Erica tetralix</i> ).
Reason for Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European dry heaths;</li> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and,</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.</li> </ul> <p>The conservation objectives should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives available on the Natural England website<sup>38</sup>.</p>
Vulnerabilities of the European Site	<p>Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergrazing;</li> <li>• Drainage;</li> <li>• Hydrological changes;</li> <li>• Disease;</li> <li>• Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition;</li> <li>• Wildfire/arson;</li> <li>• Invasive species.</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6687924741472256>

Condition Assessment

Considered to be 1.07% favourable, 90.23% unfavourable – recovering, 2.76% unfavourable – no change, and 5.94% unfavourable – declining (Cannock Chase SSSI)<sup>39</sup>.

### A.1.5. Motte Meadows SAC

**Table A-5 – Motte Meadows SAC**

Name, Designation and Site Code	Motte Meadows SAC UK0030051
Location and Area	Staffordshire 43.87 ha
Brief Description	Motte Meadows contains lowland hay meadows with limited influence of agricultural intensification and so demonstrates good conservation of structure and function. There are transitions to other dry and wet grassland types. The site is important for a range of rare meadow species, including fritillary ( <i>Fritillaria meleagris</i> ) at its most northerly native locality.
Reason for Designation	Lowland hay meadows ( <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> )
Conservation Objectives	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.</li> </ul> <p>The conservation objectives should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives available on the Natural England website<sup>40</sup>.</p>
Vulnerabilities of the European Site	<p>Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water pollution;</li> <li>• Hydrological changes;</li> <li>• Water abstraction;</li> <li>• Change in land management.</li> </ul>
Condition Assessment	Considered to be 80.92% favourable and 19.08% unfavourable – no change (Motte Meadows SSSI) <sup>41</sup> .

<sup>39</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S1004497&ReportTitle=Cannock%20Chase%20SSSI>

<sup>40</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5720449535180800>

<sup>41</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S1002612&ReportTitle=Motte%20Meadows%20SSSI>

## A.1.6. River Mease SAC

**Table A-6 – River Mease SAC**

Name, Designation and Site Code	River Mease SAC UK0030258
Location and Area	Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire 23.03 ha
Brief Description	Rising in the Coal Measures of north-west Leicestershire, the River Mease flows approximately 25 km westwards across a largely rural and agricultural landscape to its confluence with the River Trent at Croxall. As a relatively un-modified lowland river, the River Mease contains a diverse range of physical in-channel features, including riffles, pools, slacks, vegetated channel margins and bankside tree cover, which provide the conditions necessary to sustain populations of spined loach ( <i>Cobitis taenia</i> ), bullhead ( <i>Cottus gobio</i> ), freshwater white-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ) and otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ).
Reason for Designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation. (Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by watercress);</li> <li>• White-clawed crayfish (or Atlantic stream) (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>);</li> <li>• Spined loach (<i>Cobitis taenia</i>);</li> <li>• Bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>);</li> <li>• Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>).</li> </ul>
Conservation Objectives	<p>Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of qualifying species; and,</li> <li>• The distribution of qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul> <p>The conservation objectives should be read in conjunction with the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives available on the Natural England website<sup>42</sup>.</p>
Vulnerabilities of the European Site	<p>Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water pollution;</li> <li>• Drainage;</li> <li>• Inappropriate weirs, dams and other structure;</li> <li>• Invasive species;</li> <li>• Siltation;</li> </ul>

<sup>42</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6217720043405312>

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Condition Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water abstraction.</li></ul> Considered to be 100% unfavourable no change (River Mease SSSI) <sup>43</sup> .
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<sup>43</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportConditionSummary.aspx?SiteCode=S2000416&ReportTitle=River%20Mease%20SSSI>

# Appendix B. Screening Assessment

## B.1. Screening Assessment

**Table B-1 - Screening Assessment**

Action	Action Wording	Potential for an LSE?	Justification
<i>Making Behaviour Change Happen – ‘Avoid’</i>			
Informed Choices	<p>Information is critical for helping people make the right decisions. TfWM and our local authorities have already made significant progress in how we communicate about the transport network to the people who live and work in and visit the region. We have established and recognisable brands across our different modes and for things like Swift as part of an integrated network. We provide information and communicate across a range of platforms. A number of our local authorities have also developed well-known brands and channels for transport information e.g., Birmingham Connected. To drive public awareness of travel behaviours and choices we will further develop the Transport for West Midlands brand as a key source of trusted, reliable information for transport information and journey planning.</p> <p>We will broaden our communication and engagement to build on traditional information on public transport options and disruption and start to promote the role of shared mobility options, switching to zero emission vehicles, improving driver behaviour and about alternatives to travel and accessing services and mobility options differently e.g., through mobility hubs.</p> <p>Our customer information will need to be more targeted and impactful, and we will use tools such as our traveller segmentation research, the West Midlands online transport engagement community engagement and further research to help us develop stronger, more effective campaigns. We will continue to build on the success of our Travel Demand Management programme to help more businesses better plan their use of our transport networks.</p>	No	Action relates to communication and helping residents become better informed about the transport network. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Managing Demand – Placemaking and Traffic Management	We can choose to make some forms of travel more or less attractive through how we design and create places and by the way manage our streets and highway networks. There are scalable opportunities to change the transport system and the way we use it and measures which affect or influence the cost or convenience of different forms of transport are also an important part of the policy toolbox. To help	Yes	Action is likely to lead to small-scale localised development through the provision of roadspace reallocation. This may include increases in habitat loss/ disturbance, habitat fragmentation, species disturbance, air qual,

Action	Action Wording	Potential for an LSE?	Justification
	<p>us deliver the behaviour change we now need to consider how these can be delivered at scale and at pace.</p> <p>Roadspace allocation can take the form of small scale urban realm improvements in town centres, to low traffic neighbourhoods and to larger corridor based roadspace reallocation schemes. We will need to deliver bold roadspace allocation across the region and consider how to prioritise and balance the competing needs of modes within our highway network.</p> <p>Parking charges at key destinations and in busy locations and this could include Workplace Parking Levies. In some circumstances charges could be used to encourage the use of cleaner vehicles e.g., permits or Clean Air Zones.</p> <p>These schemes also generate an income which can be used to support more improvements to sustainable modes of travel. Planning policy also provides a tool through which to manage the supply of parking and TfWM will work with local authorities to ensure the appropriate local planning policy is in place.</p> <p>There will be a limit to the scale and the impact of measures being introduced at the local level by the WMCA and our local authorities and without the appropriate national action we could see unintended social and economic impacts. We need to have an open and honest conversation with Government about a national Road User Charging (RUC) scheme. This would help with driving behaviour change in a more holistic way across the UK and help to plug the tax revenue gap currently faced as petrol and diesel cars are phased out. We will work closely with Midlands Connect and the National Infrastructure Commission for to explore the case for a national RUC scheme.</p>		<p>water qual and recreation. Therefore, an LSE cannot be ruled out.</p>
<p>Building the Consensus and Appetite for Action</p>	<p>Engagement with the public and stakeholder is an essential part of the design and delivery of a new transport strategy and the measures it includes. Activities cover everything from surveys tracking the performance of the transport system, to gathering feedback on new transport policy and strategy or commenting on major infrastructure proposals such as Sprint.</p> <p>We have surveyed over 12,000 residents over five phases of engagement relating to travel behaviours during and after the pandemic. Separately, our quarterly Travel Trends and Behaviours Tracking Survey (TTABS) monitors travel patterns amongst local residents and their opinions on different modes of travel. We also engaged on our 'Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands' Green Paper with the public and stakeholders with in-depth discussion on key issues with our online community.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Action relates to engagement with the public and stakeholders and tracking the performance of the transport network. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.</p>



Action	Action Wording	Potential for an LSE?	Justification
	We will continue to develop our use of online communities and citizen assembly style forums to help us communicate, engage and build consensus on the most challenges issues and the measures that might need to be introduced.		
Controlled Parking Zones	Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) are introduced as a means of managing on-street and off-street car parking, in order to safeguard the access needs of local residents, businesses and their visitors. By managing car parking effectively, additional streetscape can be freed up for pedestrians and cyclists and creates a more pleasant environment.	No	Action relates to managing car parking within urban areas to free up streetspace and would not lead to development of infrastructure. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Mobility Credits	Cost is often a significant barrier to people changing their travel behaviour, therefore Mobility Credits can offer an effective solution to overcome this.  The scheme is put in place to provide a financial incentive for people to scrap older, more polluting vehicles and get them using alternative forms of transport. In a national first, Coventry City Council launched a scheme in March 2021 where 74 residents received £3000 worth of credits for scrapping their personal vehicles. This was loaded onto a pre-paid card which could be used on public transport and other mobility services, included shared e-scooters, taxis, car clubs and car hire.	No	Action relates to encouraging residents to use more efficient and sustainable transport and discouraging the use of older more polluting vehicles or personal cars. This would likely lead to an improvement in air quality within the respective areas. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Schools Restart Campaign	TfWM worked with our local authority partners to support students to return to school at the start of September 2020, following pandemic closures. The team identified that 100,000 students would need to return safely to 1,500 sites.  With an understanding of what demand to travel would likely be like pinch points were identified to manage demand. TfWM and local authorities came together in regional workshops to work through the challenge. A strategy for managing the demand was developed with a particular of communications and engagement strategy. Schools in 'watch spot' areas benefited from free travel planning and implemented active travel measures. Imperative in the solution was the partnership work that saw TfWM strengthen local transport, schools transport and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision. The public transport network was strengthened to accommodate social distancing and bus boarding figures were monitored daily.  A toolkit with a range of communications materials was developed for the 1,500 schools. In March 21 the campaign was refreshed with an updated toolkit, face covering campaign, walking bubble maps and social media campaign with strong emphasis on active travel.	No	Action relates to the safe return of students to schools following pandemic closures. This includes accommodating social distance and other protective measures. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.

*Our Actions – Supporting Inclusive Growth of New Developments – ‘Avoid’*

Promoting Sustainable and Accessible Development	TfWM and WMCA will continue to support and promote a brownfield land first policy. It is acknowledged that there are challenges around the quantum of development required and the ability of that to be met from brownfield land. However, if the region is to meet its Net Zero targets for carbon reduction we will need to increase the use of sustainable modes for necessary travel with moves to focus development around transport hubs and along transport corridors. As such the planning process is an important part of encouraging behaviour change and to help reduce the impacts of transport on communities and the environment.	Yes	Action may lead to development. This may include increases in recreational pressure, habitat loss (including functionally linked land), and changes in air pollution. Therefore, an LSE cannot be ruled out.
Supporting Development with Transport Infrastructure	Active, innovative and sustainable should be key elements considered in all new developments; minimising the impacts caused by single occupancy car usage. We need to encourage well-designed new developments which support mixed and sustainable communities with high levels of public transport usage as well as cycling and walking. We also seek to ensure that the cost of public transport, along with poor accessibility and availability are not prohibiting factors which prevents people moving into the region.  We will publish non-statutory guidance to support developers, local planning authorities and local communities with information to assist developers in implementing transport infrastructure and services. The guidance will set out what measures TfWM has available to support developers in designing and implementing sustainable travel measures, together with how they can work with TfWM and local authorities to ensure the transport network is able to provide the support needed for developments to flourish and meet the wider needs of the West Midlands.	No	Action involves support for developers, local planning authorities and local communities to assist developers to incorporate sustainable elements into development. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Accounting for Digital Connectivity	Digital connectivity presents a huge opportunity for improving access, however, there is also a risk that as society shifts more towards online systems, an inequality gap defined by digital skills and capability will widen, with some households becoming more excluded and isolated. To support the objectives of the LTP it will be important to develop and deliver high speed, reliable broadband and 5G connectivity to all communities and businesses within the West Midlands. Delivering enhanced digital infrastructure will help to reduce digital poverty and create a series of connected communities across the region that have equitable access to digital connectivity. We will work across the WMCA to better integrate digital accessibility linked to digital skills within transport strategy to support improving access for everyone to opportunities, particularly those in poverty.	No	Action relates to improving the digital network (such as the 5G network) to improve communication. It is unclear at this stage whether this would include the provision of new infrastructure, however, any infrastructure is likely to be within urban areas with localised impacts. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Eastern Green, Coventry	Eastern Green in Coventry is a 435 acre, residential led mixed use urban extension, with a range of developers and local companies involved including Coventry City Council and Homes England.	Yes	Action relates to large-scale development which may lead to an LSE upon the European Sites. This may include increases in recreational pressure, habitat loss

	The site will deliver significant housing numbers and associated employment, retail and community uses including 2250 new homes, 15 ha employment land (B1, B2, B8), a new major district centre, and primary schools. It will be served by extensive green infrastructure and public open space as well as good bus services and cycleways. A car club is also being explored together with West Midlands Bike Hire to ensure active travel within and beyond the site. Mobility credits will also be provided to families moving in, to help reduce car usage at the site and Very Light Rail is also being considered as part of the wider design of the site.		(including functionally linked land), and changes in air pollution. Therefore, an LSE cannot be ruled out.
Icknield Port Loop	<p>This development sees a multi-million-pound investment programme to drive forward new housing in central Birmingham. Port Loop, when completed will see 43 acres of derelict industrial land transformed into a new 1,150-home waterside district featuring two, three and four-bedroom houses, apartments, public and communal green spaces, as well as excellent walking and cycling links throughout the development and beyond including along the Old Main Line Canal.</p> <p>The Port Loop Investment is the latest from the WMCA’s devolved housing and regeneration programme – providing new homes, jobs and commercial floorspace while supporting the region’s economic recovery and ambitions to be a net zero carbon region over the next 20 years. This site is also helping protect the Green Belt while creating new jobs and communities on brownfield land, with active travel and excellent transport links at the heart of the development.</p>	Yes	Action relates to large-scale development which may lead to an LSE upon the European Sites. This may include increases in recreational pressure, habitat loss (including functionally linked land), and changes in air pollution.
<i>Our Actions - Healthy Streets and Places to Walk, Cycle, Ride and Scoot – ‘Shift’</i>			
Enabling People to Cycle, Ride and Scoot	We will work with local authorities to provide a package of measures to support behaviour change. This will include accessible, reliable information on available routes, as well as incentives and rewards for reaching certain levels of walking and cycling activity. Schools and businesses will be encouraged to promote active travel by providing training to equip people with the skills to make these changes. To support the uptake of active and micro-mobility, we will promote the provision of supporting facilities to make these options more attractive. This will include secure parking facilities, storage, changing facilities and charging facilities.	No	Action relates to encouraging greater use of walking and cycling activities. Small-scale infrastructure may be required (such as storage, changing facilities, and charging facilities); however, these are anticipated to be very small-scale and localised structures. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Quiet and Safe Local Streets	To promote the uptake of active modes and micro-mobility, we will make local streets more attractive by making them clean, quiet and safe. We will continue to invest and focus on road safety with a view to meeting an ambitious target of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by 50% by 2030 in line with the Towards Zero vision. Potential measures could include where supported introducing filtered permeability, reducing speeds, encouraging the use of e-cargo bikes for last mile deliveries and managing on-street parking on residential streets and local centres.	No	Action relates to improving road safety and tranquillity only through reducing speeds, encouraging the use of e-cargo bikes and managing on-street parking on residential streets and local centres. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.

Delivering our Starley Network	We will ensure the delivery of our Starley Network. It is a network of cycling and walking routes that covers 500 miles of connected routes in the West Midlands. We will deliver a package of measures to provide cycle routes and towpaths, new pop-up cycle lanes, walking routes and walking zones in towns and cities. This will result in a high-quality network of walking and cycling corridors and public realm improvements in strategic centres, designed to Government standards.	Yes	Action relates to improving the cycle and walking network through providing cycle routes and towpaths. It is not clear where these developments may be located, and therefore, using the precautionary principle, an LSE cannot be ruled out.
School Streets/Low Traffic Neighbourhoods	Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN's) are schemes which are designed in a way to limit the access of vehicular traffic to a street or collection of streets, in order to make them safer, easier and more appealing for cycling and walking. Within the West Midlands, Birmingham City Council have trialled a number of LTN schemes across Kings Heath, Moseley, Bournville and Lozells as part of their Places for People initiative. Through using the Commonplace platform, residents, businesses and travellers in the area have been able to put forward their opinion on how each of these schemes is having an impact on the area. These are currently being reviewed. The LTNs have brought about mixed opinions and have been very divisive. However, in other regions of the UK such as Walthamstow they have proved popular and have had a number of benefits such as reduced private car ownership and dependency and an increase in active travel.	No	Action relates to limiting traffic within target streets in order to make them safer, easier and more appealing for cycling and walking. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Micromobility	Micromobility is a broad term used to describe personal light electrically powered vehicles that can be used for urban transport. E-scooters and e-bikes are generally well-known and understood to fall under this label, but there are other kinds of vehicles that offer different opportunities for different groups depending on their needs, helping us to promote a more inclusive West Midlands in the future.	No	Action relates to the increased use of micromobility (such as e-scooters and e-bikes). This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
<i>Our Actions – Connecting Our Places via Public Transport and Shared Mobility – ‘Shift’</i>			
Better Public Transport Services	We will invest in highway and rail infrastructure so as to enable public transport operators to provide more frequent, quicker and reliable services where demand can sustain those services. This will include providing greater priority on highways to buses, extending our West Midlands Metro, and improving rail capacity and delivering new stations in the West Midlands.	Yes	Action relates to improved infrastructure to enable public transport operators to provide better services to meet demand. It is not clear where these developments may be located, and therefore, using the precautionary principle, an LSE cannot be ruled out.
New Shared Mobility Services	We will work with providers of shared mobility services such as car clubs, e-scooter and bike share schemes to provide infrastructure to support their operation where consumer demand can sustain them. These services will be particularly important as last mile solutions to travel where other options are not viable.	No	Action relates to the increased use of shared mobility (such as e-scooters and car clubs). This would potentially improve air quality and sustainability. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Our Network	A public transport network can offer more to citizens than the sum of its component parts where services are better planned and citizens do not face	No	Action relates to improved integration of public transport ticketing only. This is

	penalties for moving between services and operators. We will seek to improve integration of public transport by investing in better interchange facilities, continuing to evolve our Swift multi-modal best value ticketing offer, and exploring how governance changes could enable TfWM to better influence service planning and network design.		considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Mobility Hubs	<p>The purpose of mobility hubs is to bring together various transport modes into one place. The aim is to allow universal ticketing across different modes to make multimodal travel more seamless.</p> <p>It has become feasible in recent years to offer certain types of micromobility – in particular e-scooters and bike hire – as short distance transport options to the public. In the West Midlands we have now introduced bike hire and e-scooter hire, and these are proving to be very popular for commuters and visitors to our strategic centres.</p> <p>As we expand our charging infrastructure across the region there is also opportunity to bring together electric vehicles and even car share facilities at certain interchanges as part of our effort to encourage people to move away from private car ownership.</p> <p>This can support those in society who do not own cars by providing last mile solutions to get from train stations and bus stops directly to desired destinations through micro-mobility and bike share, but also providing options for those in more rural regions through car share facilities. This supports a shift away from private car ownership by increasing convenience for users.</p>	No	Action relates to improved mobility hubs. Some new infrastructure may be required; however, these are anticipated to be very small-scale and localised structures within an urban setting. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
An Integrated Public Transport Network	The West Midlands public transport network will become a more integrated system, based on measures set out in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and the Bus Service Improvement Plan. TfWM is currently considering international best practice to inform development of an integrated public transport network in the West Midlands.	Yes	Action relates to greater integration of the public transport network. Infrastructure may be required to facilitate this (which include new metro and rail routes); however, exact locations and scale are not known at this stage. Therefore, using the precautionary principle, an LSE cannot be ruled out (particularly in relation to increased recreational pressure upon European Sites).
<i>Our Actions – Creating Resilient Networks – ‘Improve’</i>			
Keeping Things Moving	We will continue to develop Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) for all modes in partnership with local authorities, National Highways, West Midlands Police and operators to manage the network and incidents/major events. We will coordinate the delivery of the transport investment programme and minimise impact through collaboration with our partners. We will coordinate schemes either to avoid excessive disruption to our networks or to capitalise on opportunities to	No	Action relates to improved partnerships with other organisations to improve road safety. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.

	<p>reduce costs where multiple schemes can be delivered simultaneously nearby (without excessive disruption).</p> <p>We will continue to invest and focus on road safety with a view to meeting an ambitious target of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by 50% by 2030 in line with the Towards Zero vision. We will continue to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to manage road incidents more efficiently.</p> <p>To help us do this we will invest in technology to help monitor performance and manage traffic and invest in communication and information tools to help us become a trusted source of travel advice and support travel behaviour change. We will build on the success of our Travel Demand Management programmes to encourage residents and businesses to re-mode, re-route, re-time or remove some journeys.</p>		
Maintaining Our Networks	<p>We will work with our local authorities to support delivery of the region's highways maintenance programme to prevent the deterioration of main carriageways, structures and the unclassified network, which is essential for improving accessibility to local services, public transport and to make local trips by walking, cycling and other emerging mobility solutions safe and attractive. We will seek to "dig once" where possible and seek to future proof schemes to minimise disruption and costs when further schemes are progressed (for example where bus priority schemes may be upgraded to Sprint and/or Metro in future).</p>	Yes	Action relates to maintaining the highway network. The exact locations and scale of required works are not known at this stage. Therefore, using the precautionary principle, an LSE cannot be ruled out.
Developing the Network	<p>The development of the West Midlands highway network will influence and be influenced by supporting strategies for active travel, public transport and delivering behaviour change. We will bring forward a series of multi-modal corridors and low traffic neighbourhoods that will deliver targeted road space re-allocation to support active travel and public transport and reduce the dominance of the car in residential areas. We will also address key pinch points which compromise overall public transport reliability or with safety problems. We will strengthen the key bus based rapid transit corridors that are at the heart of our overarching network strategy and focus on key multi-mode interchange points.</p>	No	Action relates to creating low-traffic neighbourhoods (to reduce car usage and encourage use of public transport). Small-scale development may be required (such as road modifications), however, these are anticipated to be very small-scale and localised. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Lode Lane Route Enhancements	<p>Lode Lane is a key corridor in providing access to over 20,000 job roles in Solihull Town Centre and at Jaguar Land Rover, as well as wider access to Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the UK Central Hub.</p> <p>Lode Lane is one of the busiest bus corridors in the region, generating a bus every two minutes during peak periods which carry more people into Solihull Town Centre during mornings than in cars.</p> <p>A comprehensive route intervention was delivered between Jaguar Land Rover and Solihull Town Centre, including new bus lanes and bus priority at junctions.</p>	No	Action relates to enhancements of an existing bus lane. The exact locations and scale are not known at this stage, however, will be localised to Lode Lane and is not within close proximity of any European Sites. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.

	<p>Critically, the scheme was delivered by maximising existing road space with no loss of service to general traffic.</p> <p>The scheme opened in October 2016 and has achieved a 45% reduction in bus journey times in the morning peak hour into Solihull Town Centre. Bus patronage increased by 11%, and there is now an enhanced environment for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>		
Wireless Infrastructure Project/Connected and Autonomous Vehicles Infrastructure	<p>To improve the safety and efficiency of our roads we are introducing and installing hundreds of sensors across the network which will be able to facilitate fast communications across the network. Sensors will provide a breadth of useful information which can be used to make smart decisions about traffic management as well as relaying integral information to road users.</p> <p>By updating the network in this way, we can work closely with our external stakeholders such as emergency services to provide safer roads, faster response times and improved data about the network.</p> <p>This work is future proofing our region in advance of predicted changes which will be seen to our transport system. As society transitions to connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) we need to ensure that our infrastructure is fit for purpose.</p>	No	Action relates to improved safety infrastructure with other organisations to improve road safety. Small-scale infrastructure may be required (such as sensors), however, these are anticipated to be very small-scale and localised structures. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
<i><u>Our Actions – Delivering a Green Revolution – ‘Improve’</u></i>			
Assisting the Switch to Zero Emissions Vehicles	<p>We will work with partners, including local authorities and businesses across the region to ensure that the West Midlands’ fleet moves to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) as quickly and efficiently as possible, choosing the most suitable zero emission technologies (including a short-term role for low carbon fuels where zero emission technologies are less feasible within the next decade). We will help local authorities to plan and enable appropriate charging and fuelling infrastructure to be implemented, that is appropriate to the needs and characteristics of different places and avoids street clutter.</p> <p>The provision and locations of charging stations will be strategically planned including on the key route network and strategic road network for HGVs and LGVs, but also at mobility hubs to provide easy access to other greener modes of transport (e.g. car clubs and e-scooters) and to provide charging for cars where private provision with off-street parking is unavailable. We will also work with our bus operators to support them with the adoption of hydrogen and/or electric buses where appropriate, understanding a particular need for electric charging en-route where charging in depots is insufficient.</p>	No	Action relates to assisting the switch to zero emissions which would improve local air quality. Small-scale infrastructure may be required (such as charging sensors), however, these are anticipated to be very small-scale and localised structures within an urban setting. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Working with Businesses to Innovate and Export	We will work with partners, including local authorities and businesses across the region to understand how innovation in the mobility sector can support our aims, and to support the development and trialling of new solutions by providing access	No	Action relates to greater collaboration to understand innovation in the mobility sector.

Future Mobility Solutions	to public assets (including our transport infrastructure, organisational expertise, match funding and publicly owned data).		This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Using Our Transport System to Enhance and Protect Our Environment	We will use transport assets for non-transport functions so as to protect and enhance our built and natural environment. This will include, but not be limited to, the use of transport land and buildings for sustainable energy generation, enhancing biodiversity and providing green spaces, and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).	No	Action relates to the creation of green spaces and biodiversity enhancements. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Green Bus Shelters	Green bus shelters which can improve air quality, generate their own power and even attract bees are being trialled in Halesowen. Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has worked with the Halesowen Business Improvement District (BID) and Halesowen in Bloom to bring some plant-topped bus shelters to improve the town centre environment. The shelters are made from recycled materials and their roofs include plants designed to reduce carbon in the environment as well as filters to catch fine particles and improve air quality. Wild flowers, which attract bees and other pollinators, will grow from the eaves and roof edges and appear during the Spring, turning the bus stops to buzz stops. Further to this are solar panels which will not only generate power for the display screens, lights but also allow people to charge their mobile phones for free while waiting for the bus. If the trial proves successful more of the environmentally friendly stops could be installed as TfWM replaces and renews its 5,000 bus shelters across the region – playing a part in helping the region achieve its #wm2041 net-zero carbon targets.	No	Action relates to incorporating green roofs and solar panels on existing bus shelters. Whilst modifications are required, these will be small-scale and localised. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.
Coventry Electric Bus City	Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and bus operators are working together to make the bus fleet in Coventry all electric. This will be the UK's first All Electric Bus City and under the ground-breaking project, every bus in Coventry will be electric powered by 2025, leading to improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and lower running costs. A £50m grant from DfT will fund 297 all-electric buses and is supported by a further £78m of investment from local bus operator into depot charging facilities and associated power upgrades.	No	Action relates to turning Coventry's bus fleet electric which would improve local air quality. This is considered unlikely to result in an LSE upon any European Sites.



# Appendix C. Appropriate Assessment Tables

## C.1. Introduction

These matrices present the results of the strategic level appropriate assessment undertaken for the actions where an LSE could not be confidently ruled out. The potential effects for each European Site have been taken from the Site Improvement Plan and Standard Data Forms for each respective European Site.

Where relevant, mitigation measures to reduce or prevent effects are included. These mitigation measures are outlined within Section 6.2 of this HRA.

The matrices provided within this Appendix are set out in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 10 Site Integrity Matrices<sup>44</sup>.

**Matrix key:**

✓ = High risk of having an impact and therefore adverse effects on site integrity cannot be excluded at this stage

X = Low risk of having an impact and therefore adverse effects on site integrity are unlikely

Where effects are not relevant to a particular feature, or have been excluded at screening stage, the matrix cell has been 'greyed out' (and an explanation is provided as to why the effect is not relevant)

C = Construction

O = Operation

**Decommissioning has been excluded as any development/construction will be retained for the foreseeable future or the actions do not have a decommissioning stage.**

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<sup>44</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-ten/>

## C.2. Appropriate Assessment Tables

### C.2.1. Fens Pools SAC

**Table C-1 - Fens Pools SAC**

Name of European Site and designation	Fens Pools SAC									
EU Code	UK0030150									
Distance from LTP Core Strategy	Within LTP									
European Site features	Adverse effect on integrity									
Effect (threat)	Overgrazing		Inappropriate scrub control		Disease		Water pollution		Habitat fragmentation	
<b>Stage of development</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>
S1166 Great crested newt ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> )	A <sup>x</sup>	A <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	E <sup>x</sup>	E <sup>x</sup>

#### Evidence to support conclusion:

A: The actions within the LTP would not change any grazing patterns within the SAC. Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of overgrazing. No impact pathway is considered to exist.

B: The actions within the LTP would not change or lead to any changes in the management of scrub control within the SAC. Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of inappropriate scrub control. No impact pathway is considered to exist.

C: Any development has the potential to result in the spread of disease. The implementation of Biosecurity Risk Assessments and Method Statements to cover all activities is a well-established mitigation measure which should ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC. The risk is reduced during operation due to less groundwork and other operations that could potentially introduce/spread disease.

D: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the mitigation provided for protecting the European Sites (such as pollution prevention on waterways), it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of water pollution.

E: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of habitat loss and fragmentation impacts. Impacts, if any, will be reduced/negligible during operation.

### C.2.2. Cannock Extension Canal SAC

**Table C-2 - Cannock Extension Canal SAC**

Name of European Site and designation	Cannock Extension Canal SAC							
EU Code	UK0012672							
Distance from LTP Core Strategy	Partially within LTP							
European Site features	Adverse effect on integrity							
Effect (threat)	Water pollution		Overgrazing		Invasive Species		Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	
<b>Stage of development</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>
S1831 Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>	A <sup>x</sup>	A <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>

**Evidence to support conclusion:**

A: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the mitigation provided for protecting the European Sites (such as pollution prevention on waterways), it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of water pollution.

B: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of overgrazing. The actions within the LTP would not change any grazing patterns within the SAC. No impact pathway is considered to exist.

C: Any development has the potential to result in the spread of invasive species. The implementation of Biosecurity Risk Assessments and Method Statements to cover all activities is a well-established mitigation measure which should ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC. The risk is reduced during operation due to less groundwork and other operations that could potentially introduce/spread invasive species, however, with the aforementioned mitigation measures, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impacts upon the integrity of the European Sites.

D: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network which mostly aim at improving local air quality and the mitigation provided for protecting the European Sites from any changes in air pollution, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of air pollution.

### C.2.3. Cannock Chase SAC

**Table C-3 – Cannock Chase SAC**

Name of European Site and designation	Cannock Chase SAC															
EU Code	UK0030258															
Distance from LTP Core Strategy	7.41 km															
European Site features	Adverse effect on integrity															
Effect (threat)	Undergrazing		Drainage		Hydrological changes		Disease		Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition		Wildfire/ arson		Invasive species		Recreational Pressure	
Stage of development	C	O	C	O	C	O	C	O	C	O	C	O	C	O	C	O
European dry heaths	A <sup>x</sup>	A <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	E <sup>x</sup>	E <sup>x</sup>	F <sup>x</sup>	F <sup>x</sup>	G <sup>x</sup>	G <sup>x</sup>	H <sup>x</sup>	H <sup>x</sup>
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> . (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)	A <sup>x</sup>	A <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	B <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	C <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	D <sup>x</sup>	E <sup>x</sup>	E <sup>x</sup>	F <sup>x</sup>	F <sup>x</sup>	G <sup>x</sup>	G <sup>x</sup>	H <sup>x</sup>	H <sup>x</sup>

**Evidence to support conclusion:**

A: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of overgrazing. The actions within the LTP would not change any grazing patterns within the SAC. No impact pathway is considered to exist.

B: Excavations and earthworks during construction have the potential to change both surface water and groundwater hydrodynamics. Permanent changes to surface water and groundwater hydrology due to the presence of roads and other infrastructure would be expected during the operational phase. Taking into consideration the provided mitigation measures, the integrity of the SAC would not be adversely affected.

C: The actions within the LTP do not include construction or modification of any weirs or dams nor are likely to impact any existing structures. Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of inappropriate weirs, dams, and other structures.

D: As the SAC lies outside the LTP boundary, any potential introduction/ spreading of disease would be confined to development sites within the county. Therefore, an impact pathway is not considered to exist.

E: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network which mostly aim at improving local air quality and the mitigation provided for protecting the European Sites from any changes in air pollution, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of air pollution.

F: Given the nature of the proposals to mostly provide facilities and improvements within the existing transport network and the protection for European Sites written into the LTP, it is unlikely that any development arising from the plan would result in an adverse effect on site integrity during construction as a result of any increase in wildfire or arson.

G: As the SAC lies outside the LTP boundary, any potential introduction/ spreading of INNS would be confined to development sites within the county, an impact pathway is not considered to exist.

H: A report by Footprint Ecology (2013) which assessed recreational impacts upon Cannock Chase SAC, found that 75% of all visitors came from a 15 km zone or less from the edge of the SAC. The report provided a range of mitigation to offset the expected increase of visitors and these should be incorporated into the LTP, as relevant. It is therefore concluded that with the implementation of the appropriate outlined mitigation within this report, no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified will result from LTP Core Strategy alone through recreational pressures.

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