



Powys County Council

REPLACEMENT LDP (2022-2037) PREFERRED STRATEGY

Habitats Regulations Assessment Information Report





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PREFERRED STRATEGY POLICY REVIEW

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PCC'S PREFERRED STRATEGY FOR THE REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 1.1.1. Powys County Council (hereafter 'PCC' or 'the Council') is preparing its Replacement Local Development Plan (2022-2037)¹ which will replace the Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) (2011-2026)². The Replacement LDP (RLDP) will cover all of Powys outside the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP), and will set out how much new development will be accommodated in the Powys Local Planning Authority (LPA) area to 2037, specifying where this growth will be located. The RLDP will also set out the policy framework for managing development proposals.
- 1.1.2. Once adopted, the RLDP will be used alongside Welsh Government's *Future Wales: The National Plan 2040* for delivering sustainable development and making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.1.3. PCC has developed its **Preferred Strategy** for the RLDP³. This is the first statutory consultation stage in the RLDP preparation process, and is subject to a statutory minimum six-week period of public consultation. The Preferred Strategy identifies:
- the **key issues** and **vision and objectives** for the RLDP;
 - **Strategic Growth Options** for the level and amount of growth (housing, employment land and retail);
 - **Strategic Spatial Options** for where this growth should be distributed across the plan area;
 - PCC's **preferred Strategic Growth Option** and **Strategic Spatial Option**;
 - proposed **Strategic Policies** for the RLDP; and
 - policies likely to be carried forward from the Adopted LDP (2011-2026).
- 1.1.4. The Preferred Strategy does not identify specific allocated sites and so the spatial distribution options remain fundamentally strategic at this stage; however, a **Candidate Site Register** has been published for consultation alongside the Preferred Strategy and representations on the sites will be used to inform the allocation of sites within the Deposit LDP (the next statutory stage). New candidate site submissions may also be made during the Preferred Strategy consultation period.
- 1.1.5. The Council is also completing an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) alongside the RLDP.

¹ Available at: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12866/replacement-local-development-plan-2022---2037>

² Available at: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/4898/Adopted-LDP-2018>

³ Available at: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12866/replacement-local-development-plan-2022---2037>

1.2 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

- 1.2.1. Regulations 105 and 107 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended) (the ‘Habitats Regulations’)⁴ transpose the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the ‘Habitats Directive’) as they relate to land-use plans in England and Wales. Regulation 105 states that if a land-use plan is “(a) *is likely to have a significant effect on a European site⁵ or a European offshore marine site⁶ (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site*” then the plan-making authority must “...*make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site’s conservation objectives*” before the plan is given effect.
- 1.2.2. The plan can only be given effect if it can be concluded (following an ‘appropriate assessment’) that the plan “...*will not adversely affect the integrity*” of a site, unless the provisions of Regulation 107 are met.
- 1.2.3. The process by which Regulation 105 is met is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)⁷. An HRA determines whether there will be any ‘likely significant effects’ (LSE) on any European site as a result of a plan’s implementation (either on its own or ‘in combination’ with other plans or projects)⁸ and, if so, whether there will be any ‘adverse effects on site integrity’⁹. The Council has a statutory duty to prepare the Local Plan and is therefore the Competent Authority for an HRA.

⁴ The 2017 Regulations have been amended by the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* to reflect the UK’s exit from the EU, although these largely carried forward the provisions and terminology of the 2017 Regulations and do not fundamentally alter their interpretation. This report therefore primarily refers to the 2017 Regulations and (where appropriate for clarity) the relevant provisions of the Habitats Directive.

⁵ The term ‘European site’ is retained by the 2019 amendment and for all practical purposes the definition is essentially unchanged from the 2017 Regulations. European sites are therefore: any Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from the point at which the European Commission and the UK Government agreed the site as a ‘Site of Community Importance’ (SCI) (if this was before 31 Jan 2020); any classified Special Protection Area (SPA); and any candidate SAC (cSAC). However, the term is also commonly used when referring to potential SPAs (pSPAs), to which the provisions of Article 4(4) of Directive 2009/147/EC (the ‘new wild birds directive’) are applied; and to possible SACs (pSACs) and listed Ramsar Sites, to which the provisions of the Habitats Regulations are applied a matter of Government policy (TAN5 para. 5.1.3; NPPF para. 187) when considering development proposals that may affect them. “European site” is therefore used in this document in its broadest sense, as an umbrella term for all of the above designated sites. Note, it is likely that this term will be supplanted at some point in the future although an appropriate UK-wide alternative has not yet been established (e.g. the NPPF in England has adopted the term ‘Habitats sites’ to refer collectively to those sites defined by Regulation 8; the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* replaces ‘Natura 2000’ with the ‘National Site Network’).

⁶ ‘European offshore marine sites’ are defined by Regulation 18 of *The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended); these regulations cover waters (and hence sites) over 12 nautical miles from the coast.

⁷ The term ‘Appropriate Assessment’ has been historically used to describe the process of assessment; however, the process is more accurately termed ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ (HRA), with the term ‘Appropriate Assessment’ limited to the specific stage within the process.

⁸ Also referred to as ‘screening’ or the ‘test of significance’.

⁹ Also referred to as the ‘integrity test’.

1.3 THIS REPORT

- 1.3.1. Regulation 105 essentially provides a test that the final plan must pass; there is no statutory requirement for HRA to be undertaken on draft plans or similar developmental stages (e.g. issues and options; preferred options). However, it is accepted best-practice for the HRA of strategic planning documents to be run as an iterative process alongside plan development, with the emerging policies or options reviewed during development to ensure that potentially adverse effects on European sites can be identified at an early stage, and avoided or mitigated through the plan development process. This is undertaken in consultation with the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) – in this instance Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Natural England (NE) – and other appropriate consultees.
- 1.3.2. WSP Ltd. (WSP) is helping the Council meet its obligations under Regulation 105. PCC initially issued an ‘**HRA Scoping Note**’¹⁰ in January to provide an opportunity for NRW and NE to comment on the intended approach to HRA. The scoping note:
- outlined the proposed approach and scope of the RLDP HRA;
 - identified those European sites that would be considered by the HRA process (see also Appendix A to this report);
 - explored some of the key issues for Local Plan HRAs and hence the RLDP, particularly those relating to ‘in combination’ effects associated with the overall quantum of development, notably:
 - water quality and nutrient neutrality;
 - air quality;
 - public access / recreational pressure.
- 1.3.3. WSP subsequently reviewed the scoping consultation comments relating to HRA.
- 1.3.4. The Council has now drafted its “**Powys Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2022-2037: Preferred Strategy**” consultation document and intends to issue this for consultation in August 2024. **This HRA report sits alongside the ISA that accompanies the Preferred Strategy consultation document.**
- 1.3.5. Note, **this HRA report does not constitute a formal ‘HRA screening’ or ‘Appropriate Assessment’** as the plan is still in development and so any screening or appropriate assessment conclusions would be premature; however, the principles of HRA are applied to the Preferred Strategy to (a) provide an initial assessment of the likely HRA conclusions, were the plan adopted as currently drafted; (b) indicate the ‘direction-of-travel’ of the HRA where conclusions cannot yet be made; and (c) identify additional data requirements and/or additional policy measures that may be required to ensure that the Deposit Draft Plan has no adverse effects on any European sites.
- 1.3.6. This report therefore adopts the broad layout and anticipated content of the final (Deposit LDP) HRA report and includes the following aspects:
- An overview of the approach to the HRA of the RLDP (Section 2).

¹⁰ Wood (2022) *Powys County Council Local Development Plan: HRA Scoping Consultation*. Report for PCC, July 2022. Wood, Shrewsbury.



- A summary of the baseline condition of the European sites and features that are potentially vulnerable (i.e. both exposed and sensitive) to the likely effects of the Local Plan, and the impact pathways (Section 3 and Appendix A).
- A summary of the initial 'screening review' assessments undertaken as part of the HRA of the emerging policies and proposals of the RLDP, identifying those European sites and features that will not be affected by plan proposals, and those plan aspects which will not significantly affect any European sites (Section 4).

2 APPROACH TO HRA OF THE RLDP

2.1 OVERVIEW

- 2.1.1. European Commission guidance¹¹ and established case-practice suggests a four-stage process for addressing Articles 6(3) and 6(4), and hence Regulations 105 and 107 (see Box 1), although not all stages will necessarily be required:

Box 1 – Stages of HRA

Stage 1 – Screening or ‘Test of significance’

This stage identifies the likely effects of a project or plan on a European site, either alone or ‘in combination’ with other projects or plans, and considers whether these effects are likely to be significant. The ‘screening’ test or ‘test of significance’ is a low bar, intended as a trigger rather than a threshold test: a plan should be considered ‘likely’ to have an effect if the competent authority is unable (on the basis of objective information) to exclude the possibility that the plan or project could have significant effects on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; an effect will be ‘significant’ simply if it could undermine the site’s conservation objectives. Note that mitigation measures should not be taken into account at the ‘screening’ stage, in accordance with the People over Wind (Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) Case C-323/17); this reinforces the idea of screening as a ‘low bar’ and makes ‘appropriate assessments’ more common.

Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment (including the ‘Integrity test’)

An ‘appropriate assessment’ (if required) involves a closer examination of the plan or project where the effects on relevant European sites are significant or uncertain, to determine whether any sites will be subject to ‘adverse effects on integrity’ if the plan or project is given effect. The scope of any ‘appropriate assessment’ stage is not set, and the assessments will not be extremely detailed in every case (particularly if mitigation is clearly available, achievable, and likely to be effective). The assessments must be ‘appropriate’ to the effects and proposal being considered, and sufficient to ensure that there is no reasonable doubt that adverse effects on site integrity will not occur (or sufficient for those effects to be appropriately quantified should Stages 3 and 4 be required).

Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions

Where adverse effects remain after the inclusion of mitigation, Stage 3 examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of European sites. A plan or project that has adverse effects on the integrity of a European site cannot be permitted if alternative solutions are available, except for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI; see Stage 4).

Stage 4 – Assessment Where No Alternative Solutions Exist and Where Adverse Impacts Remain

This stage assesses compensatory measures where it is deemed that there are no alternatives that have no or lesser adverse effects on European sites, and the project or plan should proceed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI). The EC guidance does not deal with the assessment of IROPI, although the IROPI need to be sufficient to override the adverse effects on European site integrity, taking into account the compensatory measures that can be secured (which must ensure the overall coherence of the ‘national site network’).

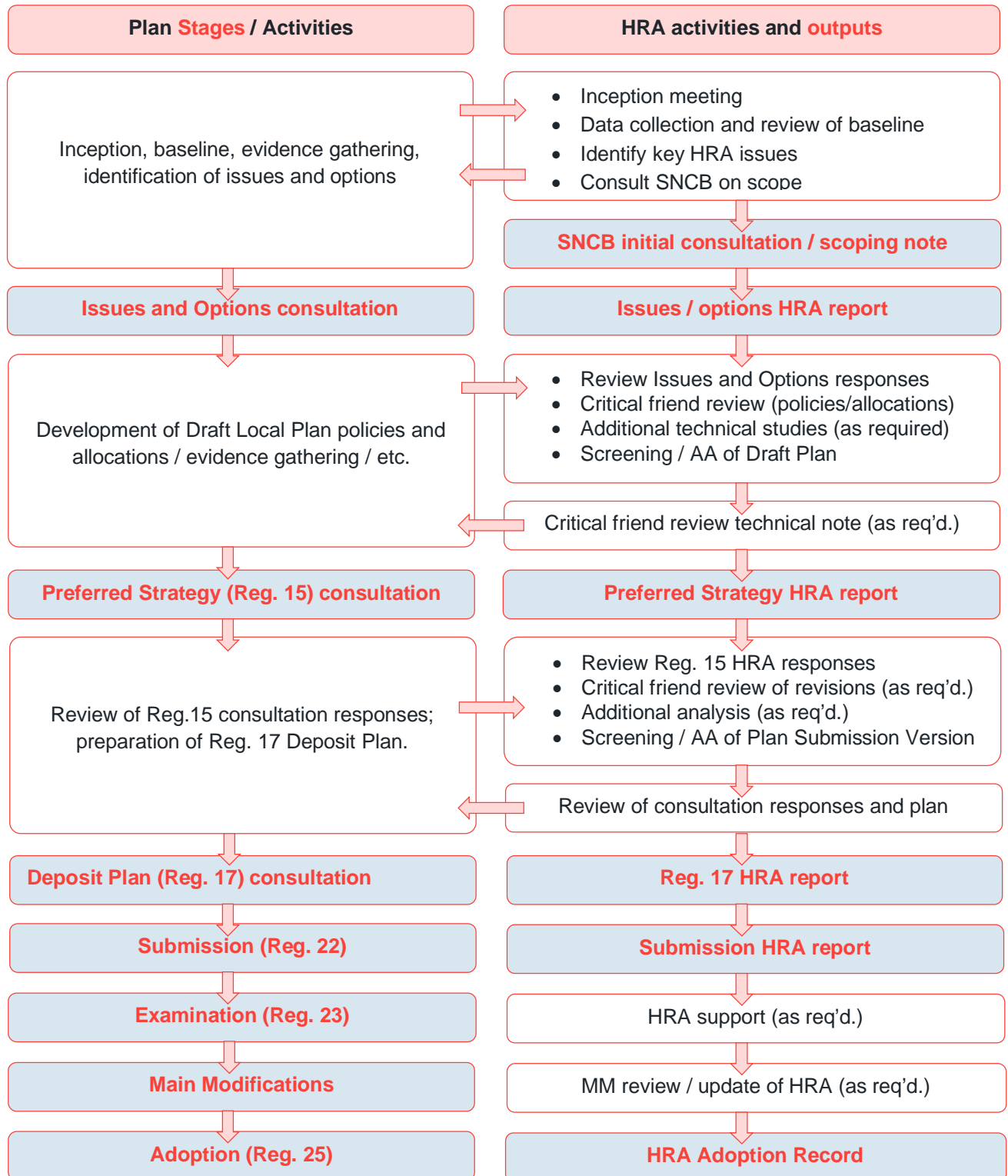
¹¹ *Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC 2002).

- 2.1.2. HRAs of local planning documents rarely proceed beyond Stage 2, as alternatives to policies or allocations that adversely affect the integrity of a European site¹² are almost always available.
- 2.1.3. The stages in Box 1 (if required) are used to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations and so principally reflect the stepwise legislative tests applied to the final, submitted project or plan; there is no statutory requirement for HRA (or its specific stages) to be completed for draft plans or similar developmental stages. Attempting to rigidly apply these steps to the emerging or interim stages of strategic plans is not always appropriate, and often reduces the clarity and usefulness of the HRA as a plan-shaping process for both plan-makers and consultees.
- 2.1.4. Consequently there is inherent flexibility for the HRA *process* to be run in a manner that provides maximum benefit for plan-development and sound decision-making, whilst still ultimately meeting the legislative tests.
- 2.1.5. The HRA of the RLDP therefore employs an iterative and consultative approach to HRA, with outputs tailored to each stage of the plan development and consultation process, and the requirements of the key stakeholders, rather than trying to force the guideline HRA stages of Box 1 on to the emerging plan. The HRA therefore contributes to the plan evidence-base, so assisting with the development of sustainable policies from the beginning of the plan-making process rather than being a purely retrospective ‘test’ applied towards the end.
- 2.1.6. **Figure 2-1** below provides an overview of WSP’s preferred approach to the HRA of Local Plans, identifying the relationships between the HRA process / key outputs and the plan development / consultation points (e.g. Regulation 15 (Pre-deposit/Preferred Strategy) and Regulation 17 (Deposit in Wales). **Note, the precise approach to plan development varies between LPAs and so Figure 2-1 is indicative only;** some outputs may not be required depending on the plan development, or additional outputs may be appropriate as the plan evolves (e.g. ‘critical friend’ reviews of emerging policies).
- 2.1.7. In summary, the early stages of the process are relatively iterative and do not look like a ‘formal’ HRA – so, for example, an Issues and Options HRA report does not usually attempt to ‘screen’ the Issues and Options (partly as these will be too broad for any such assessment to be meaningful, although guidance would be provided if any options clearly present a risk of unavoidable adverse effects if pursued), but rather set out the local baseline and intended HRA scope, discuss potential data gaps, and identify the key HRA-related issues for the Local Plan to address in its development.
- 2.1.8. The HRA reporting aligns more closely with the guideline stages as the Local Plan develops, with later consultations typically being accompanied by a ‘Draft Local Plan HRA’ report that includes a more detailed ‘screening’ and ‘appropriate assessment’, setting out the HRA-related evidence and the anticipated conclusion (if the plan were to be adopted as drafted, recognising that the HRA can

¹² Note, the UK European sites are no longer legally part of the ‘Natura 2000’ network of protected sites, with this being replaced in the UK by the ‘national site network’ which comprises all existing SACs and SPAs and any new SACs and SPAs designated under the 2019 Regulations (Ramsar sites do not form part of the network). This also has relevance if compensation measures are required for an adverse effect, as the relevant metric is the overall coherence of the ‘national site network’. The 2019 Regulations establish management objectives for the ‘national site network’ which contribute to the conservation of UK habitats and species that are also of pan-European importance, and to the achievement of their favourable conservation status within the UK.

only be completed for the final, adopted plan). This report would then be updated for subsequent consultation stages to reflect consultation responses and plan amendments.

Figure 2-1 - Indicative HRA process for Local Plans in Wales



2.2 GUIDANCE

2.2.1. The following guidance is used during the review and assessment of the Powys Replacement LDP:

- UK Government (2019). *Appropriate assessment: Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment* [online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment> [Accessed May 2024].
- Tyldesley, D. & Chapman, C. (2024). *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook* [online]. DTA Publications Limited. Available at: <https://www.dtapublications.co.uk/handbook/>. [Accessed May 2024].
- EC (2019). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/caf47cb6-207a-11e9-8d04-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>. [Accessed May 2024].
- Natural England (2020). *Guidance on how to use Natural England's Conservation Advice Packages in Environmental Assessments*. Natural England, Peterborough.
- Defra (2012). *The Habitats and Wild Birds Directives in England and its seas: Core guidance for developers, regulators & land/marine managers* [online]. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82706/habitats-simplify-guide-draft-20121211.pdf. [Accessed May 2024].
- PINS Note 05/2018: *Consideration of avoidance and reduction measures in Habitats Regulations Assessment: People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta*. [withdrawn].
- SNH (2019). SNH Guidance Note: *The handling of mitigation in Habitats Regulations Appraisal – the People Over Wind CJEU judgement* [online]. Scottish Natural Heritage. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2019-08/Guidance%20Note%20-%20The%20handling%20of%20mitigation%20in%20Habitats%20Regulations%20Appraisal%20-%20the%20People%20Over%20Wind%20CJEU%20judgement.pdf>. [Accessed May 2024].

2.2.2. Additional topic-specific guidance (for example, in relation to the assessment of air quality effects) is identified within the relevant assessment sections.

2.3 CONSULTATION AND PLAN EVOLUTION

2.3.1. The HRA process is completed alongside the development of the Plan, and the HRA reports issued at each stage of the plan development reflect the assessment and process at that point in time.

2.3.2. The consultations to date are as follows:

- An initial consultation on the intended approach to HRA, undertaken in January 2023; this comprised issue of an HRA Scoping Note¹³ to provide an opportunity for NRW and NE to comment on the intended approach to HRA. The scoping note:
 - outlined the proposed approach and scope of the Local Development Plan HRA;
 - identified those European sites that would be considered by the HRA process (see also Section 3 of this report);

¹³ Wood (2022) *Powys County Council Local Development Plan: HRA Scoping Consultation*. Report for PCC, July 2022. Wood, Shrewsbury.

- explored some of the key issues that are currently relevant for Local Plan HRAs and the RLDP, particularly those relating to ‘in combination’ effects associated with the overall quantum of development, notably water quality and nutrient neutrality; air quality; and public access / recreational pressure.
- A follow-up workshop with NRW and NE to discuss key HRA issues relevant to Powys (22 Feb 2023).
- The ‘Preferred Strategy’ consultation HRA document (this report).

2.3.3. Appropriate HRA reports will be produced to accompany the future plan consultation stages; additional consultations on specific technical aspects are undertaken and documented as required.

2.4 STUDY AREA

2.4.1. The zone of influence of a Local Plan varies according to the aspect being considered (for example, noise effects would rarely extend more than a few hundred metres from the source), and so it is not usually appropriate to employ ‘arbitrary’ spatial buffers to determine those European sites that should be considered within an HRA.

2.4.2. However, as distance is a strong determinant of the scale and likelihood of most effects, the considered use of a suitably precautionary search area as a starting point for the assessment (based on an understanding of both the likely plan outcomes and European site interest features) has some important advantages. Using buffers allows the systematic identification of European sites using GIS, so minimising the risk of sites or features being overlooked, and ensures that sites for which there are no reasonable impact pathways can be quickly and transparently excluded from any further screening or assessment. It also has the significant advantage of providing a consistent point of reference for consultees following the assessment process, allowing the screening to focus on the potential effects, rather than on explaining why certain sites may or may not have been considered in relation to a particular aspect of the plan.

2.4.3. Most Local Plan HRAs adopt a 15km buffer for the identification of European sites that may be exposed to significant effects, with sites beyond this distance considered as required. The HRA of this plan therefore considers:

- all European sites within 15km of the LPA’s administrative area (see **Table 3-2, Section 3**);
- any additional sites that may be hydrologically linked¹⁴ to the Local Plan’s zone of influence; and
- any additional sites identified by NRW or NE following the HRA Scoping Report consultation (particularly in relation to air or water quality, see below).

2.4.4. This is considered to be a suitably precautionary starting point for the assessment of the Local Plan. However, the logical consequence of this scoping – **i.e. that the ‘screening’ essentially assumes that there will be ‘no effect’ (and hence no possibility of ‘in combination’ effects) on European sites not included within the scope** – should be recognised.

¹⁴ Typically downstream sites that are receptors for pollutants (etc.) although other sites might be considered depending on the linkages – for example, upstream sites with migratory fish that would utilise rivers within the LPA area.

2.5 DATA COLLECTION

2.5.1. The screening and appropriate assessment stages take account of the baseline condition of the European sites and their interest features¹⁵, including (where reported) data on

- the site boundaries and the boundaries of the component SSSIs;
- the conservation objectives;
- information on the attributes of the European sites that contribute to and define their integrity;
- the condition, vulnerabilities and sensitivities of the sites and their interest features, including known pressures and threats;
- the approximate locations of the interest features within each site (if reported); and
- designated or non-designated 'functional habitats' (if identified).

2.5.2. These data are derived from, where available / relevant:

- the most recent JNCC-hosted GIS datasets;
- the Standard Data forms for SACs and SPAs and Information Sheets for Ramsar sites;
- Article 12 and 17 reporting;
- the published site Conservation Objectives;
- Supplementary Advice to the conservation objectives (SACO) where available¹⁶;
- Site Improvement Plans (SIPs);
- Core Management Plans (Wales only); and
- the supporting Site of Special Scientific Interest's favourable condition tables where relevant and where no SACOs applicable to the features are available.

2.5.3. Note:

- For SPAs, the qualifying features are taken as those identified on the most recent JNCC datasets and citations, or NE conservation objectives sheets, where these post-date the 2nd SPA Review (i.e. it will be assumed that any amendments suggested by the SPA review have been made) unless otherwise identified to us by NRW or NE.
- The conservation objectives for Ramsar sites are taken to be the same as for the corresponding SACs / SPAs (where sites overlap); SSSI Definition of Favourable Condition (FCTs) are used for those Ramsar features not covered by SAC/SPA designations.

¹⁵ The interest features are taken to be the qualifying features; and other site features that may be relevant to site integrity, particularly 'typical species' (for SACs) and within-site supporting habitats for SPAs.

¹⁶ NE has published '*Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features*' for most European sites in England which describe in more detail the range of ecological attributes which are most likely to contribute to a site's overall integrity, and the targets each qualifying feature needs to achieve in order for the site's conservation objectives to be met.

- 2.5.4. Where possible the site data are used to identify other features that may be relevant to site integrity, particularly ‘**typical species**’ (for SACs), **within-site supporting habitats**, and non-European site or non-designated ‘**functionally linked habitats**’.
- 2.5.5. A ‘**typical species**’ is broadly described by EC guidance as being any species (or community of species) which is particularly characteristic of, confined to, and/or dependent upon the qualifying Annex I habitat feature at a particular site. This may include those species which:
- are critical to the composition or structure of an Annex I habitat (e.g. constant species identified by the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) community classification);
 - exert a critical positive influence on the Annex I habitat’s structure or function (e.g. a bioturbator (mixer of soil/sediment), grazer, surface borer or predator);
 - are consistently associated with, and dependent upon, the Annex I habitat feature for specific ecological needs (e.g. feeding, sheltering), completion of life-cycle stages (e.g. egg-laying) and/or during certain seasons/times; or
 - are particularly distinctive or representative of the Annex I habitat feature at a particular site.
- 2.5.6. Within-site **supporting habitats** are those which support the population(s) of the qualifying species and which are therefore critical to the integrity of the feature.
- 2.5.7. ‘**Functionally linked habitats**’ or ‘**functionally-linked land**’ (**FLL**) are generally taken to be habitats or features outside a European site boundary that are important or critical to the functional integrity of the site’s habitats and / or its qualifying features. These might include, for example:
- ‘buffer’ areas around a site (e.g. dense scrub areas preventing public access; areas of land that reduce the effects of agricultural run-off; etc.);
 - specific features or habitats relied on by mobile species during their lifecycle (e.g. high-tide roosts for waders; significant maternity colonies for bats known to hibernate within an SAC; areas that are critical for foraging or migration; etc), recognising that ‘functionally-linked’ is not intended as a speculative catch-all covering any habitat that might be occasionally used by, or suitable for, a particular species¹⁷).
- 2.5.8. Note, many SPAs and Ramsar sites are largely coincident, both spatially and in terms of features and ecological functionality; within this document **SPA and Ramsar site names may therefore be combined with the suffix “SPA/Ramsar”** for simplicity where this is not material to the assessment of specific sites or features. In addition, sites may be assessed collectively (for clarity and to reduce repetition) where there are substantive overlaps in effect pathways or mechanisms, although the conclusions will always relate to the sites individually.

¹⁷ Case law notes that such land should be necessary to the conservation of the protected habitat types and species (*Holohan v An Bord Pleanala C-461/17*) or play an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of qualifying species at favourable conservation status.

2.6 REVIEWING THE EMERGING PLAN

- 2.6.1. The principles¹⁸ of ‘screening’ are applied to the emerging plan and its components (i.e. the policies and allocations) as part of an iterative review process, to ensure that:
- any necessary technical assessments focus on those plan aspects that are likely to result in significant effects on European sites; and
 - that the policies of the adopted plan are drafted to provide appropriate overarching safeguards that help (alongside any subsequently identified mitigation) to ensure that the adopted plan will have no significant effects or no significant adverse effects.
- 2.6.2. The outcomes of the HRA reviews are reported as appropriate at each consultation stage; this reporting may outline anticipated conclusions in relation to specific plan aspects. The outcomes of these reviews are re-visited throughout plan evolution to ensure that they remain robust, and that the overall performance of the plan in relation to the safeguarding of European sites meets expectations.
- 2.6.3. The reviews are intended to be a coarse filter for identifying potential effect pathways that cannot be self-evidently discounted, and hence those aspects where further investigation (‘appropriate assessment’) is required to determine the scale or nature of any effects and / or any bespoke mitigation that is necessary, rather than detailed assessments in their own right.

2.7 SCREENING / ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT PLANS

- 2.7.1. The various drafts of the Local Plan that are formally issued for consultation are generally accompanied by HRA documents that include a ‘screening’ and ‘appropriate assessment’, setting out the HRA-related evidence and the anticipated conclusion (if the plan were to be adopted as drafted, recognising that the HRA can only be formally completed for the final, adopted plan).
- 2.7.2. The ‘screening’ in these HRA reports identifies the following aspects and excludes them from the scope of the appropriate assessments:
- those European sites that are **not** vulnerable (i.e. both exposed and sensitive) to the outcomes of the plan); and
 - the policies and allocations that cannot have significant effects, alone or in combination, or which cannot be assessed at the plan level (e.g. policies that support development or other changes but which are too general to allow any specific assessments of effects (i.e. the locations, scale, quantum etc. are not specified below the geographical level of the plan, assuming that the type of development proposed is not such that significant effects would be unavoidable regardless of these aspects).
- 2.7.3. **The ‘screening’ does not take into account ‘mitigation’, in accordance with ‘People over Wind’** (see Section 2.8 below).

¹⁸ i.e. exploring whether significant effects on European sites are possible; note, from a strict procedural perspective the tests in Regulation 105 (including the ‘test of significance’) can only be formally applied to the plan intended for adoption and not to its various phases or iterations; therefore the term ‘screening’ is used advisedly when applied to assessments completed alongside earlier stages of the plan development.

- 2.7.4. The ‘low-bar’ principle is used for screening¹⁹; in general, unless the possibility of significant effects can be simply and self-evidently excluded then an ‘appropriate assessment’ is completed (rather than a more detailed ‘secondary screening’ or similar). This applies to the plan aspects alone and in combination (i.e. unless it is evident that there will be ‘no effects’ from any aspects, the possibility of ‘in combination’ effects is not excluded and these are taken forward to ‘appropriate assessment’). This approach simplifies the overall assessment and ensures procedural clarity.
- 2.7.5. The ‘**appropriate assessment**’ determines whether any aspect of the plan will have ‘adverse effects on integrity’ for any European sites, taking into account the sites’ conservation objectives and conservation status. Site integrity (in HRA terms) is “*the coherent sum of the site’s ecological structure, function and ecological processes, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site is designated*” (EC Guidance ‘*Managing Natura 2000*’ (2018)).
- 2.7.6. Where a site or interest feature has a ‘favourable’ conservation status then a ‘no adverse effects on integrity’ conclusion can be reached provided that this status will not be undermined by the plan or project at hand; if the conservation status is ‘unfavourable’ then the plan or project must not reduce the conservation status further or create conditions that would make it more difficult for the site or feature to reach ‘favourable’ conservation status. It should be noted that this is not simply a test of whether there are negative effects; an effect may be negative but not undermine the site’s conservation objectives. The integrity test incorporates the precautionary principle, whereby plans or projects should not be approved unless there is no reasonable scientific doubt that adverse effects on site integrity will not occur²⁰.
- 2.7.7. Appropriate assessments are therefore used to provide a more detailed examination of those plan aspects where significant effects are likely, or (commonly) where there is a residual uncertainty which the assessment is intended to resolve or a mitigation measure requires examination. The ‘appropriate assessment’ stage may therefore conclude that the proposals are likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a site (in which case they should be abandoned or modified); or that the effects will be ‘significant’ but not adverse (i.e. an effect pathway exists, but those effects will not undermine site integrity, perhaps due to mitigation proposed for inclusion within the plan); or that the effects would, if screening were re-visited, be ‘not significant’ (i.e. the anticipated effect is subsequently shown to be nugatory or *de minimis*²¹).
- 2.7.8. The appropriate assessments are ‘appropriate’ to the nature of the strategic plan, the aspect under consideration, and the scale and likelihood of any effects; for example, exhaustive examination of feature sensitivities and possible effect pathways may not be undertaken for plan aspects that would

¹⁹ The low-bar nature of the screening test is characterised in case-law (*C-258/11 - Sweetman and Others*) as ‘*should we bother to check?*’ – i.e. is a closer examination of possible effects required (i.e. appropriate assessment) or can effects self-evidently be excluded as nil or entirely nugatory?

²⁰ It should be noted that ‘no reasonable scientific doubt’ does not mean ‘absolute certainty’ (which is rarely achievable in any case, particularly at the plan level where detail on specific future developments is often unavailable); sufficient certainty may be achieved through the use of suitably conservative assumptions (e.g. in modelling) or evidence from best-practice elsewhere, taking into account any advice from the relevant statutory bodies. The plan-making authority can also put in place a legally enforceable policy framework that provides certainty over outcome by ensuring that the potential adverse effects identified using the best-available information will not be realised.

²¹ In the absence of avoidance or mitigation measures, as per ‘People over Wind’.

have previously been ‘screened out with mitigation’ if there is a high degree of confidence in the mitigation measures. It is also assumed that all normal permitting, licensing, consenting and management procedures will be employed when plan aspects are delivered, and that established best-practice avoidance and mitigation measures will be employed throughout scheme design and construction to safeguard environmental receptors, including European site interest features. The HRA does not therefore assess speculative or hypothetical effects based on assumptions of non-compliance at a lower planning tier.

IN COMBINATION EFFECTS

- 2.7.9. Consideration of ‘**in combination**’ effects is not a separate assessment but is integral to both the screening and appropriate assessment stages.
- 2.7.10. At the screening stage the ‘in combination’ assessment focuses on those Local Plan effects that are ‘not significant’, aiming to identify whether these effects might interact with other plans or projects to result in significant effects on a European site in combination (recognising that Local Plan effects that are effectively nil and indistinguishable from background variations cannot operate ‘in combination’ and so can be excluded from the in combination assessment at the screening stage). Any significant ‘in combination’ effects identified are then considered at the appropriate assessment stage, where the assessment aims to determine whether the residual effects of the Local Plan (after mitigation is accounted for) could nevertheless interact with aspects of other plans and projects to adversely affect the integrity of a European site.
- 2.7.11. There is limited guidance available on the scope of the ‘in combination’ element, particularly with regard to which plans or projects should be considered.
- 2.7.12. The assessment of in combination effects arising within the Local Plan itself, or between Local Plans (e.g. of allocations cumulatively or the overall quantum of development regionally) are fundamentally integrated into the assessments, as most effect pathways (e.g. increased recreational pressure) are inherently cumulative.
- 2.7.13. However, the assessment should not be limited to plans at the same level in the planning hierarchy and there is consequently a wide range of strategic plans that could have potential ‘in combination’ effects with the Local Plan. The plans identified by the ISA provide the basis for the assessment of ‘in combination’ effects with strategic plans; these plans are reviewed to identify any potential effects and then considered (as necessary) within the screening and appropriate assessment stages. The assessment does not generally include national strategies, national policy or legislation since the Local Plan must be compliant with these. The assessment takes account of any HRAs completed for those plans, where these are freely available for review²². It is considered that ‘in combination’ effects are most likely in respect of other regional and sub-regional development plans and strategies.
- 2.7.14. With regard to projects, The Planning Inspectorate’s National Infrastructure Projects database²³ is used to identify major projects with the potential to affect the European sites in the HRA scope,

²² There is no statutory requirement to issue HRAs for public comment, and so many HRAs are not available or are only made available publicly for short consultation periods. In these instances it is assumed that the HRA of the plan was able to conclude ‘no adverse effects’ if the relevant plan has been adopted.

²³ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/>

along with any other major projects that the Council is advised of during the plan development process. However, it should be noted that the in combination assessment can be greatly limited by the information available for other plans and projects, particularly where these are at an early stage of development.

- 2.7.15. It is not generally possible to produce a definitive list of existing minor planning applications near each European site, and generating a list of these is typically of little value (since many will be consented and delivered prior to the plan being adopted, and/or before developments supported by the plan are bought forward (i.e. they will form part of the baseline for future project-level HRAs); they typically must meet the policy requirements of the Local Plan also.

2.8 NOTES ON MITIGATION AND AVOIDANCE

- 2.8.1. The development of avoidance or mitigation measures is important to the HRA and plan development process. ‘Avoidance measures’ are those that are implemented during the iterative plan development process (for example, abandoning a policy or allocation that is likely to have unavoidable adverse effects if implemented)²⁴; mitigation measures are used where significant effects are identified in order to prevent adverse effects on a site’s integrity²⁵.
- 2.8.2. Avoidance or mitigation measures should aim to reduce the probability or magnitude of impacts on a European site until ‘no likely significant effects’ or ‘no adverse effects on integrity’ are anticipated, and they will generally involve the development and adoption of (for example) wording changes to policies, or additional safeguarding policies. Measures must be specific and targeted, and likely to work; it is not appropriate to re-state existing legislation or policy, for example by adding “*and must have no significant effect on any European site*” (or similar) to every policy. The avoidance or mitigation measures should also reflect the limited influence that the Council can exert on non-planning issues and should not generally exceed requirements set by national planning policy or guidance.
- 2.8.3. The ‘People Over Wind’ judgment creates some issues for the application of avoidance and mitigation measures in the HRA process, stating that “...*it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects [mitigation] of the plan or project on that site*”; as noted, this contrasts with established practice in this area (based on the ‘Dilly Lane’ judgment).
- 2.8.4. There is limited guidance on the practical implementation of the ‘People over Wind’ judgment, particularly for plan-level HRAs where the assessment process is usually concurrent with plan development and where measures are invariably incorporated into the plan before the formal ‘screening’ of the final version takes place. Indeed, many ‘recommendations’ derived from an iterative policy review process might be interpreted as ‘avoidance’ or ‘mitigation’ measures if viewed solely in terms of their implications for European sites, making it difficult to distinguish between basic good policy practice and ‘mitigation’.

²⁴ Note, the term ‘avoidance measures’ in this context is not synonymous with the representation of ‘mitigation’ used in the People over Wind judgment.

²⁵ Although it should be noted that not all ‘likely significant effects’ will require mitigation measures: the effect may be considered to be likely to be significant (i.e. has the potential to undermine the conservation objectives) but may be shown on further examination to be too limited to have any risk of adversely affecting site integrity.

- 2.8.5. For example, generic policies promoting the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), or safeguarding designated sites (including European sites), or requiring that developers ensure utility provision in advance of occupation, are fairly standard inclusions in virtually all land-use plans but will all act to moderate potential environmental changes that could affect European sites. However, it would clearly be illogical to attempt to screen a hypothetical version of the plan that did not include such policies, particularly if these are included independently of the HRA results.
- 2.8.6. The broader context of the ‘People over Wind’ case suggests that the judgment is principally focusing on those instances where specific measures are included or relied on to avoid or mitigate a specific effect that has been identified, and which would otherwise be significant; the judgment argues that the effectiveness of any such measures should be examined through an appropriate assessment stage. It is therefore arguable that an exhaustive examination of a plan’s genesis to see if any aspects might count as ‘mitigation’ for screening purposes is not necessary, or (arguably) consistent with the intent of the Habitats Directive or the ‘People over Wind’ judgment.
- 2.8.7. Therefore, the screening **does not** take account of specific measures that are included in response to a specific identified effect on a European site, and which are intended to avoid or reduce that effect. However, generic policy safeguards that would be included regardless of the presence of European sites are essentially just ‘the plan’ and are not considered to be ‘mitigation’ unless there is a specific effect or pathway that they are intended or relied on to obviate. Aspects requiring specific investigations to understand the problem (and hence the mitigation requirements), or which rely on established mitigation to avoid an effect, are subject to AA.

2.9 UNCERTAINTY AND ‘DOWN THE LINE’ ASSESSMENT

- 2.9.1. As noted, the appropriate assessments are ‘appropriate’ to the nature of the strategic plan, the aspect under consideration, and the scale and likelihood of any effects. To some extent, therefore, the plan-level assessment is aiming to identify those proposals or aspects for which adverse effects appear unavoidable irrespective of how they are delivered at the project level (so that they are not included in the final plan), and those cumulative or spatial aspects that cannot be addressed through normal project-level controls. However, the fundamental nature of strategic plans ensures that some aspects cannot be assessed to the same level of detail as projects, and some residual uncertainties may consequently remain at the plan level.
- 2.9.2. For most policies, even at the strategic level, it will be clear if adverse effects are likely at an early stage, and in these instances the policy should not be included within the plan since plans should not include proposals which would be likely to fail the Habitats Regulations tests at the project application stage. For other aspects, however, the effects may be uncertain and it is therefore important that this uncertainty is addressed either through additional investigation or (if this is not possible) appropriate mitigation measures that provide certainty that the predicted effect will not occur or will not adversely affect site integrity.
- 2.9.3. It is usually possible to incorporate caveats or measures within policy text that are sufficient to ensure that adverse effects will not occur. However, for other policies this may not be possible because there is insufficient information available about the nature of the development that is being proposed through the policy to enable a robust conclusion to be reached. In these instances, it may be appropriate and acceptable for assessment to be undertaken ‘down-the-line’ at a lower tier in the planning hierarchy. For this to be acceptable, the following conditions must usually be met:

- the higher tier plan appraisal cannot reasonably predict the effects on a European site in a meaningful way; whereas;
- the lower tier plan, which will identify more precisely the nature, scale or location of development, and thus its potential effects, retains enough flexibility within the terms of the higher tier plan over the exact location, scale or nature of the proposal to enable an adverse effect on site integrity to be avoided; and
- HRA of the plan at the lower tier is required as a matter of law or Government policy.

2.9.4. This approach is applied as appropriate to the screening and appropriate assessment stage.

3 BASELINE SUMMARY AND IMPACT PATHWAYS

3.1 EFFECT PATHWAYS AND KEY REGIONAL PRESSURES

- 3.1.1. The provisions of the Habitats Regulations ensure that ‘direct’ (encroachment) effects on European sites as a result of land use change (i.e. the partial or complete destruction of a European site) are generally unlikely under normal circumstances, and this will not occur as a result of the Local Plan. Indeed, local plans will generally assist the safeguarding of European sites through their protective policies. However, there will be a number of areas where the direction, controls or influence provided by a plan can result in outcomes that can affect European site interest features.
- 3.1.2. Most potential effect pathways are associated with broad ‘quantum of development’ or population growth aspects, and whilst Local Plans are not necessarily the main driver of these effects, they do have a key role in managing these locally through the site allocation process. In this context, the main aspects through which the Local Plan could affect European sites in the study area are:
 - through individual allocations or supported developments that are ‘directed’ to a specific location or area; or
 - through ‘in combination’ effects resulting from the cumulative impacts of development associated with the Local Plan and with the plans and programmes of external authorities (such as neighbouring LPAs).
- 3.1.3. These aspects could affect European sites on their own, through typical development-related mechanisms operating at the local scale in relation to specific allocations (e.g. noise, lighting, etc.; see **Table 3-1**); or collectively by exacerbating regional pressures (e.g. pressures on water supply).

Table 3-1 - Typical effect pathways and environmental changes associated with terrestrial development

Pressure / Threat	Common environmental changes
Hydrological changes	Temperature changes Salinity changes Water flow changes Flood regime changes
Pollution and other chemical changes	Non-synthetic and synthetic compound contamination Radionuclide contamination Introduction of other substances (solid, liquid or gas) De-oxygenation Nutrient enrichment Organic enrichment
Physical loss	Physical loss of habitat Physical change to another habitat
Physical damage	Habitat structure changes Changes in suspended solids Siltation rate changes

Pressure / Threat	Common environmental changes
Other physical pressures	Litter Electromagnetic changes Noise changes Introduction of light Barrier to species movement Death or injury by collision
Biological pressures	Visual disturbance Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species Introduction of microbial pathogens Exploitation / harvesting of species Removal of non-target species during exploitation / harvesting

- 3.1.4. Significant effects or significant adverse effects as a result of individual allocations ‘alone’ are typically unlikely as most environmental changes have a limited ‘zone of influence’ (for example, noise effects on species will rarely be significant over 500m from the source based on natural rates of attenuation alone), and most allocations will not be located particularly close to a European site. However, the Local Plan HRA must also consider the potential for development supported by the plan to operate ‘in combination’ both internally (e.g. between allocations) or with external plans and programmes (e.g. cumulative housing growth regionally). ‘In combination’ changes are often of an inherently larger scale or operate over larger areas.
- 3.1.5. There is obviously a wide range of potential mechanisms and pathways for ‘in combination’ effects depending on the European sites and features. However, there are a few key mechanisms by which local plans (etc.) most commonly operate cumulatively to affect European sites; these are noted below, and provide the broad framework for assessing potential ‘in combination’ effects associated with the Local Plan:
- **Recreational pressure:** Many European sites will be vulnerable to some degree of impact as a result of recreational pressure, although the effects of recreational pressure are complex and very much dependent on the specific conditions and interest features at each site. Local plans can influence recreational pressure through their allocations and associated controls.
 - **Urbanisation:** Urbanisation is generally used as a collective term covering a suite of often disparate risks and impacts that occur due to increases in human populations near protected sites. This would include varied aspects such as fly-tipping or vandalism, predation by cats, or the dispersal of invasive species, although the effects of these aspects depend on proximity, accessibility and the interest features of the sites. This is generally only realised where allocations are close to a designated site.
 - **Atmospheric pollution:** The most relevant air pollutants to habitats and species (particularly plant species) are the primary pollutants sulphur dioxide (SO₂, typically from combustion of coal and heavy fuel oils), nitrogen oxides (NO_x, mainly from vehicles) and ammonia (NH₃, typically from agriculture). These pollutants affect habitats and species mainly through acidification and eutrophication. Local Plans will generally have few specific point-sources for air emissions and

such emissions would typically be controlled through project-level permissions; the main issue for local plans is the assessment of ‘in combination’ effects due to air quality changes that might be associated with the quantum of development growth proposed / supported by a Local Plan, particularly in relation to traffic and N-deposition.

- **Water resources and flow regulation:** The exploitation and management of water resources is connected to a range of activities, most of which are not directly controlled or influenced by local plans; for example, agriculture, flood defence, recreation, power generation, fisheries and nature conservation. Much of the water supply to water-resource sensitive European sites is therefore managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of local plans. Increased housing growth (which is likely to be supported by a local plan) increases demand on public water supply abstractions, some of which are associated with European sites; however, the consenting regimes are subject to HRA and, importantly, water companies are required to produce 25-year Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs) that take into account predicted population growth and protected sites when considering future water resource provision. It is therefore very unlikely that development within one local planning authority area could have direct and consequential effects on a European site if growth is in line with water company predictions, particularly as most water companies operate conjunctive-use systems that do not rely on single-source provision. This aspect is most typically managed through policy.
- **Water quality:** Most waterbodies and watercourses are affected to some extent by point or diffuse sources of pollutants, notably nitrates and phosphates. Point sources are usually discrete discharge points, such as wastewater treatment works (WTW) outfalls, which are generally managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of local plans. In contrast, diffuse pollution is derived from a range of sources (e.g. agricultural run-off; road run-off) that cannot always be easily traced or quantified. Development promoted or supported by local plans is likely to increase demand on wastewater treatment works, and potentially increase run-off which could indirectly affect downstream European sites – although there will inevitably be attenuation as distance from the source increases.

3.1.6. In addition, many European interest features (particularly more mobile animal species) may use or be reliant on non-designated habitats outside of a European site during their life-cycle. All of the above aspects (recreation, water resources, etc.) can therefore also affect European site integrity indirectly through effects on ‘functional habitats’ beyond the designated site boundary.

3.1.7. It should be noted that PCC is completing various reports and studies to update the environmental baseline for the Local Plan, some of which will be relevant to the HRA. These are available at <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12866/Replacement-Local-Development-Plan-2022--2037>.

3.2 EUROPEAN SITE SUMMARIES

3.2.1. As noted, the HRA of the Local Plan will consider potential effects on:

- all European sites within 15km of the LPA’s administrative area (see **Table 3-2**);
- any additional sites that may be hydrologically linked to the Local Plan’s zone of influence; and
- any additional sites identified by NE or NRW following the ISA Scoping Report consultation.

3.2.2. This is considered to be a suitably precautionary starting point for the assessment of the Local Plan. This scope therefore includes the following sites²⁶:

Table 3-2 - European sites within scope

Site	Location relative to the LPA boundary
Aberbargoed Grasslands SAC	Within 15km
Afon Eden - Cors Goch Trawsfynydd SAC	Within 15km
Afon Teifi/ River Teifi SAC	Within 15km
Afon Tywi/ River Tywi SAC	Within 15km / Downstream site
Berwyn a Mynyddoedd de Clwyd/ Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC	Within Powys
Berwyn SPA	Within Powys
Blaen Cynon SAC	Within 15km
Brecon Beacons/ Bannau Brycheiniog SAC	Within Powys
Cadair Idris SAC	Within 15km
Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries/ Bae Caerfyrddin ac Aberoedd SAC	Downstream site
Coed Cwm Einion SAC	Within 15km
Coed y Cerrig SAC	Within 15km
Coedydd a Cheunant Rheidol/ Rheidol Woods and Gorge SAC	Within 15km
Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystumod Meirion/ Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat Sites SAC	Within 15km
Coedydd Llawr-y-glyn SAC	Within Powys
Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SAC	Within Powys
Coetiroedd Cwm Elan/ Elan Valley Woodlands SAC	Within Powys
Cors Caron Ramsar	Within 15km
Cors Caron SAC	Within 15km
Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar	Within Powys
Cors Fochno SAC	Within 15km

²⁶ Note, at the screening stage the assessment would essentially assume that there will be 'no effect' (and hence no possibility of 'in combination' effects) on European sites not included within the scope.

Site	Location relative to the LPA boundary
Craig yr Aderyn (Bird's Rock) SPA	Within 15km
Crymlyn Bog Ramsar	Within 15km
Crymlyn Bog/ Cors Crymlyn SAC	Within 15km
Cwm Cadlan SAC	Within 15km
Cwm Clydach Woodlands / Coedydd Cwm Clydach SAC	Within 15km
Cwm Doethie - Mynydd Mallaen SAC	Within 15km
Dee Estuary/ Aber Dyfrdwy SAC	Downstream site
Downton Gorge SAC	Within 15km
Drostre Bank SAC	Within Powys
Dyfi Estuary / Aber Dyfi SPA	Within Powys
Elenydd - Mallaen SPA	Within Powys
Elenydd SAC	Within Powys
Granllyn SAC	Within Powys
Grogwynion SAC	Within 15km
Johnstown Newt Sites SAC	Within 15km
Llangorse Lake/ Llyn Syfaddan SAC	Within Powys
Llyn Tegid Ramsar	Within 15km
Midland Meres & Mosses - Phase 1 Ramsar	Within 15km
Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar	Within 15km
Migneint-Arenig-Ddualt SAC	Within 15km
Migneint-Arenig-Ddualt SPA	Within 15km
Montgomery Canal SAC	Within Powys
Mynydd Epynt SAC	Within Powys
Northern Cardigan Bay / Gogledd Bae Ceredigion SPA	Within 15km
Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau/ Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC	Within Powys
Rhos Goch SAC	Within Powys

Site	Location relative to the LPA boundary
River Clun SAC	Within 15km
River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC	Within 15km / Downstream site
River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC	Within Powys
River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC	Within Powys
Severn Estuary Ramsar	Downstream site
Severn Estuary SPA	Downstream site
Severn Estuary/ Môr Hafren SAC	Downstream site
Sugar Loaf Woodlands SAC	Within 15km
Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Tanat ac Efyrnwy SAC	Within Powys
The Dee Estuary Ramsar	Downstream site
The Dee Estuary SPA	Downstream site
The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC	Within 15km
Usk Bat Sites / Safleoedd Ystlumod Wysg SAC	Within Powys
West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC	Within 15km / Downstream site

- 3.2.3. Note that down-catchment sites that are fundamentally offshore marine entities designated for these reasons, without substantive estuarine components or similar, are not considered to be vulnerable (i.e. both exposed and sensitive) to the outcomes of the PCC plan (i.e. **Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA** and **Bae Caerfyrddin/ Carmarthen Bay SPA**).
- 3.2.4. Consultations with NRW and NE have not identified any additional sites that are likely to require assessment.
- 3.2.5. With regard to downstream receptors, all of the marine and coastal sites associated with rivers that have catchments within the PCC area other than those noted above are currently included in the scope, although many of these sites will have a very limited exposure to environmental changes in the PCC area (particularly where the only areas of catchment within the PCC area are upland watersheds where development (etc.) will be extremely limited). Note also that the coastal and estuarine European sites that are down-catchment from the PCC area have not been identified as

sites that are in unfavourable condition due to excessive nutrients in advice to LPAs²⁷ (such that ‘nutrient neutrality’²⁸ is being deployed or considered as mitigation).

- 3.2.6. **The key data for these sites are set out in Appendix A.** This provides a summary of the European sites within the scope, including:
- a contextual overview of each site;
 - their interest features;
 - their condition; and
 - the current pressures and threats identified for each site²⁹.
- 3.2.7. These are based on the citations, the Site Improvement Plans (SIPs), information on the condition of the underlying SSSIs, and any supplementary advice provided by NE³⁰ or NRW.
- 3.2.8. The potential mechanisms by which the Local Plan could affect these sites are discussed in **Section 3.1**. There are many factors currently affecting the European sites over which the Local Plan will have no or little influence; analysis of the available European site data and the SSSI condition assessments indicates that the most common reasons for an ‘unfavourable’ condition assessment of the component SSSI units are due to inappropriate management of some form (e.g. over- or under-grazing, scrub control, water-level management etc.).

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

- 3.2.9. The Conservation Objectives and Supplementary advice documents for the SACs and SPAs benchmark Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for each feature. Guidance³¹ from the UK Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) provides a broad characterisation of FCS, stating that it “*relates to the long-term distribution and abundance of the populations of species in their*

²⁷ E.g. for NE the letter from NE to LPA Chief Executives and Heads of Planning, 16 March 2022 (*Re. Advice for development proposals with the potential to affect water quality resulting in adverse nutrient impacts on habitats sites*; for NRW, the ‘*Principle Principles of nutrient neutrality in relation to development or water discharge permit proposals*’ (available at: <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/planning-and-development/our-role-in-planning-and-development/principles-of-nutrient-neutrality-in-relation-to-development-or-water-discharge-permit-proposals/?lang=en>).

²⁸ Poor water quality due to nutrient enrichment from elevated nitrogen and phosphorus levels is one of the primary reasons for European sites being in unfavourable condition, and substantial reductions are needed to achieve favourable conservation status. ‘Nutrient neutrality’ is a mitigation approach that potentially allows new developments to be approved provided that there is no net increase in nutrient loading within the catchments of the affected European site.

²⁹ The Natural England Site Improvement Plans identify ‘pressures’, which are factors that are known to be currently affecting a site, and ‘threats’ which are factors that may not be exerting a pressure at the moment but which have the potential to do so based on local site knowledge. The NRW Core Management Plans are not as explicit regarding the key pressures and threats, but identify the condition status of individual features, and the key factors influencing this.

³⁰ NE has published ‘*Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features*’ for most European sites, which describe in more detail the range of ecological attributes which are most likely to contribute to a site’s overall integrity, and the targets each qualifying feature needs to achieve in order for the site’s conservation objectives to be met.

³¹ JNCC (2018). *Favourable Conservation Status: UK Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies Common Statement* [online]. Available at: <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/b9c7f55f-ed9d-4d3c-b484-c21758cec4fe/FCS18-InterAgency-Statement.pdf>. [Accessed March 2022].

natural range, and for habitats to the long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long-term survival of its typical species in their natural range. It describes a situation in which individual habitats and species are maintaining themselves at all relevant geographical scales and with good prospects to continue to do so in the future”.

- 3.2.10. In Wales, the Regulation 37 advice and Core Management Plans for the SACs and SPAs set out conservation objectives that benchmark Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for each feature. For the Welsh European sites the conservation objectives comprise a ‘vision’ for the feature (the key component of the objective) and (where relevant) performance indicators by which the objectives may be measured. These are used and referred to as necessary within the assessment but are not generally reproduced in this report as they are freely available online.
- 3.2.11. For sites in England, the conservation objectives have been revised by NE in recent years to improve the consistency of assessment and reporting. As a result, the high-level conservation objectives for all sites are effectively the same:
- 3.2.12. For SACs:
- *With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the ‘Qualifying Features’...), and subject to natural change; 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 [as applicable to each site];*
 - *The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;*
 - *The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;*
 - *The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats;*
 - *The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;*
 - *The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely;*
 - *The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;*
 - *The populations of qualifying species; and,*
 - *The distribution of qualifying species within the site.*
- 3.2.13. For SPAs:
- *With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the ‘Qualifying Features’...), and subject to natural change; ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:*
 - *The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;*
 - *The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;*
 - *The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;*
 - *The population of each of the qualifying features; and*
 - *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.*
- 3.2.14. The conservation objectives for Ramsar sites are taken to be the same as for the corresponding SACs / SPAs (where sites overlap). The conservation objectives are considered when assessing the potential effects of plans and policies on the sites; information on the sensitivities of the interest

features also informs the assessment. Links to the conservation objectives are provided in **Appendix A**.

- 3.2.15. As noted, NE has published ‘*Supplementary advice on conserving and restoring site features*’ for some European sites, which describe in more detail the range of ecological attributes which are most likely to contribute to a site’s overall integrity, and the minimum targets each qualifying feature needs to achieve in order to meet the site’s conservation objectives. These are considered at the screening and appropriate assessment stages, as necessary.

3.3 IN COMBINATION PLANS AND PROJECTS

PLANS

- 3.3.1. The plans identified by the ISA provide the basis for the assessment of ‘in combination’ effects with strategic plans; **these will be set out in the Deposit Plan assessment.**

PROJECTS

- 3.3.2. The assessment will take into account the major projects identified by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) or otherwise identified within approximately 15km of the relevant European sites (**note, these will be confirmed at the Deposit Plan assessment stage**). However, initial examination of the PINS lists shows few NSIPs or DCOs that are likely to interact with the RLDP to affect any European sites in the scope.

4 PREFERRED STRATEGY REVIEW / 'SCREENING'

4.1 PREFERRED STRATEGY SUMMARY

- 4.1.1. The Preferred Strategy is the first statutory consultation stage in the preparation of the Powys Replacement LDP. It identifies Key Issues, a Vision and Objectives for the Replacement LDP plan period up to 2037, and considers Strategic Growth Options for the level and amount of growth – housing, and employment land – and Strategic Spatial Options for where this growth should be distributed across the plan area.
- 4.1.2. The Preferred Strategy is available at <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/12866/Replacement-Local-Development-Plan-2022---2037>. In broad terms the Preferred Strategy includes:
- A vision for Powys supported by 22 Objectives.
 - Provision for 4,810 new homes, 40 ha. of employment and economic development land, and associated infrastructure (note that ~50% of the housing provision already has permission or has been built, so is outside the scope of the HRA).
 - A broad spatial strategy, providing high-level geographical direction for development shaped by a Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy and identified Regional Growth Area Clusters, Local Clusters and Rural Area / Non-Cluster Settlements.
 - Strategic Policies broadly supporting development or other changes, but which do not specify a quantum or location.
 - Various other strategic policies that set out the Council's tests or expectations when considering proposals, such as safeguarding policies, environmental protection policies or policies relating to design or other qualitative criteria.
- 4.1.3. These aspects could affect European sites on their own, through typical development-related mechanisms operating at the local scale in relation to specific allocations (e.g. noise, lighting, etc.; see Table 3.1); or collectively by exacerbating regional pressures (e.g. pressures on water supply or sewerage treatment).
- 4.1.4. However, it should be noted that the Preferred Strategy **does not** identify specific sites for housing or employment development (i.e. allocation sites). PCC is publishing a **Candidate Site Register** for consultation alongside the Preferred Strategy, which will be used to inform the allocation of sites within the Deposit Plan (the next statutory stage). New candidate site submissions may also be made during the consultation period. Consequently, **this stage of the HRA process does not assess individual candidate sites for their potential effects on European sites.**

4.2 REVIEW / INITIAL 'SCREENING' OF PLAN COMPONENTS: POLICIES AND ALLOCATIONS

SPATIAL CONTEXT AND ASSESSMENT LIMITATIONS

- 4.2.1. As noted, the Preferred Strategy **does not** identify specific sites for housing or employment development (i.e. allocated sites). The spatial component of the assessment is therefore limited to the broad distributions identified by the Preferred Strategy, and any other spatially-constraining aspects.

- 4.2.2. However, the Preferred Strategy is not sufficiently explicit to allow meaningful assessment of the likely effects of housing growth in particular areas on particular European sites due to the absence of reasonable geographical context; for example the Preferred Strategy only notes that “*the seven Tier 1 settlements will accommodate approximately 40% of growth*”, “*the ten Tier 2 settlements will accommodate approximately 15% of growth*”, “*the 41 Tier 3 settlements will accommodate approximately 25% of growth*”, and so on.
- 4.2.3. For example, the interest features of the **Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Tanat ac Efyrrwy SAC** may be exposed and sensitive to environmental changes associated with housing development within foraging (etc.) range of the SAC units; however, as there is no precision over likely development locations at the Preferred Strategy stage it is not possible to reasonably assess the relative merits of the options.
- 4.2.4. There is another spatially constraining element, in that the Preferred Strategy notes that “*New development within SAC catchments must achieve nutrient (phosphate) neutrality which acts as a constraint to development. Development is only able to connect to a Waste-Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) with phosphorous reduction technology installed and where capacity exists within the limits of an Environmental Permit for a WWTWs. This constraint is a significant consideration in the preparation of the Replacement LDP and its strategy*”. The *Powys Housing Need and Supply: Housing Supply Background Paper* also notes that new housing development in phosphorus-sensitive river catchments (i.e. the Wye and Usk in Powys) will be located within settlements that are served by wastewater treatment works (WwTWs) that have been identified for improvement (including the installation of phosphorous reduction equipment) in Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water’s (DCWW) seventh Asset Management Programme (AMP 7) 2020 - 2025^{32,33}.
- 4.2.5. This arguably provides some additional geographical specificity for the Wye catchment although this does not really allow more meaningful assessment as key information remains unavailable (e.g. precise locations, housing numbers, etc). As a guide, there are seven European sites within ~5km of the WwTWs identified for improvements in AMP7 (**Coetiroedd Cwm Elan/ Elan Valley Woodlands SAC, Drostre Bank SAC, Elenydd - Mallaen SPA, Llangorse Lake/ Llyn Syfaddan SAC, Rhos Goch SAC, River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC and River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC**) although development distribution leaning towards these locations will not obviously lead to, or increase the risk of, adverse effects on these sites that cannot be avoided irrespective of how development is delivered (i.e. having a strategy that does not direct development to these locations in the Wye catchment would not obviously have a lower risk of affecting European sites, and would arguably be less appropriate for the **River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC**).
- 4.2.6. The absence of geographical specificity therefore limits the assessment achievable at this point in the HRA process.

REVIEW OF PREFERRED OPTIONS POLICIES

- 4.2.7. When considering the likely effects of a policy, it is recognised that some policy ‘types’ cannot usually result in impacts on any European sites. Different guidance documents suggest various

³² Note, this may change as the RLDP is developed and more detail on DCWW’s proposals for AMP8 become available.

³³ The WwTWs identified for improvements in APM7 are at Bronllys, Builth Wells and Llanfihangel, Clyro, Howey, Norton, Presteigne, Rhayader, Llandrindod Wells and Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn.

classification and referencing systems to help identify those policies that can be ‘screened out’ on that basis; the general characteristics of these policy types are summarised in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1 - Policy ‘types’ that can usually be screened out

Broad Policy Type	Notes
General statements of policy / aspiration	The European Commission recognises* that plans or plan components that are general statements of policy or political aspirations cannot have significant effects; for example, general commitments to sustainable development. This may include policies that support development or other changes but which are too general (e.g. locations, scale, quantum etc. not specified below the geographical level of the plan) to allow any specific assessments of effects, provided that the type of development proposed is not such that significant effects would be unavoidable regardless of location etc.
General design / guidance criteria or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development	A general ‘criteria based’ policy expresses the tests or expectations of the plan-making body when it comes to consider proposals, or relates to design or other qualitative criteria which do not themselves lead to development (e.g. controls on building design; requirements for affordable homes; etc); however, policies with criteria relating to specific proposals or allocations should not be screened out.
External plans / projects	Plans or projects that are proposed by other plans or permissions regimes and which are referred to in the plan being assessed for completeness (for example, Highways Agency road schemes; specific waste development proposals promoted by a County Minerals and Waste Plan; DCO applications being advanced separately from the plan at hand); however, these would be considered as part of the plan-level ‘in combination’ assessment.
Environmental protection policies	Policies designed to protect the natural or built environment will not usually have significant or adverse effects (although they may often require modification if relied on to provide sufficient safeguards for other policies).
Policies which make provision for change but which could have no conceivable effect	Policies or proposals that cannot affect a European site (due to there being no impact pathways and hence no effect; for example, proposals for new cycle path several kilometres from the nearest European site; criteria for a development’s appearance; etc.) or which cannot undermine the conservation objectives, either alone or in combination, if impact pathways exist.

* EC (2000). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC*

- 4.2.8. It must be noted that it is inappropriate to uncritically apply a policy classification tool (as in **Table 4-1**) to all policies of a certain type. There will be some occasions when a policy or similar may have potentially significant effects, despite being of a ‘type’ that would normally be screened out. Moreover, many policies will have a number of elements to them which may meet different criteria.
- 4.2.9. The criteria in **Table 4-1** have been applied to a review of the Preferred Strategy policies to identify the following broad policy groups:

- **‘No effect’** policies: policies that will have ‘no effect’ (i.e. policies that, if included as drafted, self-evidently would not have any effect on a European site due to the type of policy or its operation; for example, a policy controlling town centre shop signage; a policy setting out sustainable development criteria that developments must meet). Note that ‘no effect’ policies cannot have in-combination effects.
- **‘No likely significant effect’** policies: policies where impact pathways exist but the effects will not be significant (alone or in-combination).
- **‘Likely significant effect’** policies: policies where the precise effects on European sites (either alone or in combination) are uncertain or significant, or where measures have been incorporated into the policy to mitigate potential effects, and hence require additional investigation (appropriate assessment). Note that further investigation will often demonstrate that there is no significant effect or allow the suitability of any incorporated mitigation measures to be confirmed.

4.2.10. Reflecting these policy groups, a colour coding system (see **Table 4-2**) has been used for the review and initial ‘screening review’ of the Preferred Strategy policies in **Appendix B**.

Table 4-2 - Colour coding for ‘screening review’ of Preferred Strategy policies

	No effect or no LSE – policy will not or cannot affect any European sites and can therefore be screened out (subject to a brief review of the final policy prior to adoption).
	Policies with mitigating/moderating elements that do not have significant effects but which are relied on (at least in part) to ensure that significant or significant adverse effects from specific pathways do not occur; these are examined through AA.
	Policies that have potential pathways for effects that require examination through appropriate assessment; note, this does not imply such policies will have adverse effects or even (potentially) significant effects; rather it is an assessment flag.

4.2.17. It should be noted that the inclusion of a policy in the ‘yellow’ category does not mean that significant effects are inevitable since in many instances the assessments reflect uncertainties that need to be explored through further analysis (and it would be possible to undertake an appropriate assessment stage and still conclude (following a further screening) that there will be no significant effects (i.e. no way that the conservation objectives for the site could be undermined).

4.2.18. The review considers the policies collectively and individually, and so takes the non-specific cross-cutting protective policies within the plan into account although cross-cutting or overarching policies are not relied on where specific mitigation for specific effects is considered necessary for the policy (this is particularly relevant for policies that provide broad or non-specific support for development but which are screened out because they do not define or direct particular developments or activities; in these instances the plan’s protective policies will form a key part of the overall decision-making process). The review also considers any internal tensions within the plan that may be relevant to HRA.

4.2.19. **Note that the review assessment does not consider the Development Management Policies in the Adopted Powys LDP (2011-2026) that are subject to ongoing review and amendment by PCC;** these will be subject to the same process as they are developed or reconfirmed in the next stage of plan development.

4.2.20. In summary, the vast majority of the strategic planning policies contained in the Preferred Strategy are categorised as ‘no effect’ or ‘no significant effect’ policies (see **Appendix B**). However, the policies noted in **Table 4-3** may require further consideration through appropriate assessment at the **Deposit Plan** stage.

Table 4-3 - Policy aspects potentially requiring examination through appropriate assessment

Policies	Screening rationale
Strategic Policy SP1 – Scale of Growth	Policy identifies the overall quantum of provision for housing and retail growth in the Powys area; scale of provision likely to be manageable without unavoidable adverse effects (i.e. the quantum is not so great that adverse effects are likely irrespective of how and where the growth is delivered) but requires consideration through appropriate assessment, in combination with policies SP2 - SP4.
Strategic Policy SP2 – Sustainable Growth Strategy	Policy (with SP3) outlines the broad distribution of housing etc. growth within the region so provides some spatial direction for the quantum associated with SP1; allocations are not identified at this stage, however, and the policies are not specific regarding the numbers of homes etc. within or near each settlement, limiting the assessment that can be achieved at the preferred options stage.
Strategic Policy SP3 – Distribution of Growth	Policy (with SP2) outlines the broad distribution of housing etc. growth within the region so provides some spatial direction for the quantum associated with SP1; allocations are not identified at this stage, however, and the policies are not specific regarding the numbers of homes etc. within or near each settlement, limiting the assessment that can be achieved at the preferred options stage.
Strategic Policy SP6 – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	Policy has a spatial component that is not yet defined; requires review as the plan develops, although significant effects very unlikely based on broad location and scale, and proximity / characteristics of nearest European sites.
Strategic Policy SP7 – Employment Growth	Policy for employment growth associated with the overall quantum of development in the area; policy also has a spatial component.

REVIEW OF PREFERRED STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT DISTRIBUTION AND SITE ALLOCATIONS

4.2.21. Typically, allocated sites (housing, employment) proposed by the Council are reviewed to identify those which (if developed) could result in significant effects on a European site that are not obviously avoidable with the standard project-level measures that would be required to meet existing regulatory regimes. The assessment largely focuses on the identification of specific effects that might be associated with specific allocations (and which may therefore require the inclusion of allocation-specific mitigation within the plan) rather than the broader ‘quantum of development’ effects³⁴. The risk of effects is obviously strongly dependent on how a particular development is

³⁴ Effects due to the overall quantum of development are essentially a within-plan ‘in combination’ effect and are considered in relation to specific European sites in Section 4.3.

implemented at the project stage and in most cases potential effects can be avoided using best-practice and standard scheme-level avoidance measures which do not necessarily need to be specified for each allocation.

- 4.2.22. As noted however, the Preferred Strategy **does not** identify specific sites for housing or employment development at this stage. PCC is publishing a **Candidate Site Register** for consultation alongside the Preferred Strategy, which will be used to inform the allocation of sites within the **Deposit Plan** (the next statutory stage). New candidate site submissions may also be made during the consultation period.
- 4.2.23. Consequently, **this stage of the HRA process does not assess individual candidate housing or employment sites for their potential effects on European sites.**
- 4.2.24. With regard to the broad **growth and spatial distribution option** selected by the Preferred Strategy:
- The preferred growth option is the **Higher Growth Option - Dwelling-led 10 Year scenario**, which assumes an annual average build rate of around 265 dwellings over the plan period.
 - The preferred spatial distribution option is the **Regional Growth Area Led (Focused Growth) Spatial Option**; in broad summary this anticipates that the majority of growth will be distributed to the Regional Growth Area Clusters and Local Clusters as follows:
 - Approximately 55% of housing and employment growth anticipated within 23 Regional Growth Area Cluster settlements located across the county.
 - Approximately 25% of housing and employment growth anticipated within 40 Local Cluster settlements located across the county.
 - Approximately 20% of housing and employment growth anticipated within Rural Area / Non-Cluster Settlements or the Open Countryside.
- 4.2.25. Although there are a large number of European sites within Powys it is not possible to meaningfully assess their likely or relative exposure to environmental changes that may result from hypothetical RLDPs based on the spatial distributions proposed by the Preferred Strategy due to the absence of reasonable geographical context. Furthermore, the overall growth proposed for Powys (plus adjacent authorities) is relatively modest and so effects on most European sites are inherently less likely than for some sites and LPAs that need to accommodate several or tens of thousands of homes and consequently large allocation sites.
- 4.2.26. However, as noted there is a catchment-scale spatial component relating to the location of development and wastewater treatment provision, which is addressed in the 'Water Quality' section of **Section 4.3** below.

4.3 REVIEW / 'SCREENING' OF EUROPEAN SITES

- 4.3.1. European sites or interest features within a study area can often be excluded from further assessment at an early stage in the assessment process ('screened out') because the plan or project will self-evidently have either 'no effect' or 'no significant effect' on these sites (i.e. the interest features are not sensitive to the environmental changes associated with the plan or project; or will not be exposed to those changes due to the absence of any reasonable impact pathways); or, if both exposed and sensitive, the effects of the environmental changes will clearly be inconsequential to the achievement of the conservation objectives).

- 4.3.2. At the Preferred Strategy stage it is not appropriate to definitively exclude any sites from further assessment (due partly to the uncertainties associated with site allocations and the geographical specificity of the Preferred Strategy) and so the following sections are intended to provide an indicative ‘direction of travel’ assessment that considers the sensitivity and likely exposure of European sites to those key mechanisms by which local plans (etc.) most commonly operate cumulatively or ‘in combination’ to affect European sites (see **Section 3.1**).
- 4.3.3. When undertaking this review it is appropriate to assume that all relevant lower-tier consents and permissions (etc.) will be correctly assessed and controlled, and that any activities directly or indirectly supported by the Local Plan will adhere to the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and all normal best-practice (e.g. it would be inappropriate to assume that normal controls on, for example, the installation of a new discharge to a watercourse would not be correctly followed). The review also recognises that there are some aspects over which the Local Plan will have no control (e.g. agricultural practices).

RECREATIONAL PRESSURE

- 4.3.4. Many European sites will be vulnerable to some degree of impact as a result of recreational pressure, although the effects of recreational pressure are complex and very much dependent on the specific conditions and interest features at each site. For example: some bird species are more sensitive to disturbance associated with walkers or dogs than others; some habitats will be more sensitive to trampling or mechanical disturbance than others; some sites will be more accessible than others.
- 4.3.5. The most typical mechanisms for recreational effects are through direct damage of habitats, or disturbance of certain species. Damage will most often be accidental or incidental, but many sites are particularly sensitive to soil or habitat erosion caused by recreational activities and require careful management to minimise any effects (for example, through provision and maintenance of ‘hard paths’ (boardwalks, stone slabs etc.) and signage to minimise soil erosion along path margins).
- 4.3.6. Disturbance of species due to recreational activities can also be a significant problem at some sites, although the relationship (again) is highly variable and depends on a range of factors including the species, the time of year and the scale, type and predictability of disturbance. Most studies have focused on the effects on birds, either when breeding or foraging. For example, a long-term monitoring project by Natural England on the Thanet Coast has found that turnstones (a shoreline-feeding waterbird) are particularly vulnerable to disturbance from dogs, which interrupts their feeding behaviour and can prevent them from gaining sufficient body fat for overwintering or migration. Finney *et al.* (2005), meanwhile, noted that re-surfacing the Pennine Way significantly reduced the impact of recreational disturbance on the distribution of breeding Golden plover, by encouraging walkers to remain on the footpath.
- 4.3.7. In contrast, some species are largely unaffected by human disturbance (or even benefit from it) which can result in local or regional changes in the composition of the fauna. The scale, type and predictability of disturbance is also important; species can become habituated to some disturbance (e.g. noise), particularly if it is regular or continuous. Unpredictable disturbance is most problematic.
- 4.3.8. Most recreational activities with the potential to affect European sites are ‘casual’ and pursued opportunistically (e.g. walking, walking dogs, riding) rather than structured (e.g. organised group activities or trips to specific discrete attractions), which means that it can be difficult to quantify or

predict either the uptake or the impacts of these activities on European sites and (ultimately) harder to control or manage effects. It also means that it is difficult to explore in detail all of the potential aspects of visitor pressure at the strategy level. However, it is possible for plans and strategies to influence recreational use of European sites through the planning process, for example by increasing the amount of green space required within or near developments if potentially vulnerable European sites are located nearby.

- 4.3.9. Attempts to predict the effects of increased recreation on European sites that may be associated with development or allocations derived from strategic plans typically aim to identify the distance within which a certain percentage of visits originate. These are then used to identify ‘buffer zones’ or ‘zones of influence’ within which new development would be considered likely to have significant effects on a site. However, it should be noted that this approach does not determine whether a site is likely to be significantly affected by visitor pressure, or not; it effectively assumes that the site is already being adversely affected (such that any additional visitors will prevent the achievement of favourable conservation status), with the ‘zone of influence’ then being used primarily as a mechanism for identifying areas in which developer contributions would be sought (i.e. such surveys would rarely, if ever, conclude that the subject European site was not being significantly affected).
- 4.3.10. It is also important to note that there is no standard method for defining the ‘zone of influence’ and a range of approaches have been adopted for different sites. For example, in a study for Canterbury City Council, Fearnley *et al.* (2014) suggested several possible options for a ‘zone of influence’ around the Thanet Coast SAC, on which mitigation proposals could be based; these ranged from 4.9km (the distance within which 75% of all ‘regular visitors’³⁵ live) to 7.2km (the distance within which 90% of all ‘regular visitors’ live), to 9.8km (the distance within which 75% of all visitors live). Indeed, Fearnley *et al.* (2014) note that “*The identification of a ‘zone of influence’ is really an exercise in identifying a boundary which seems pragmatic, representative of visitor patterns to the site, the physical features of the site, infrastructure, current housing distribution and the nature of the surrounding area*”. The South-East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy (Liley *et al.* 2014) identifies several alternative approaches for determining the a ‘zone of influence’ around the Exe Estuary SPA (and hence the appropriate area for seeking developer contributions towards mitigation); these ranged from 7.8km from the SPA boundary to 14.3km, with a distance of 10km ultimately selected for the purposes of seeking developer contributions.
- 4.3.11. Probably the most common metric now used for ‘buffer zones’ or ‘zones of influence’ is the distance within which approximately 75% of visitors live. This is obviously strongly influenced by the location of the nearest large population centres (i.e. sites that are further from population centres will inevitably have larger 75% distances) but based on various surveys over recent years the distance within which 75% of visitors live is typically less than 7km (although coastal sites are often more attractive with larger distances). Some visitor surveys (particularly for sites that are regional attractions, hence likely to attract occasional visitors travelling relatively far) use the area within which 90% of ‘regular visitors’ (i.e. once a week or more) live; this results in smaller Zols (vs the 75% metric) that reflect the relatively greater impact of these users.
- 4.3.12. Many of the European sites in Powys will have either a low sensitivity and/or a low exposure to visitor pressure from local development. This is often because they are small sites with limited public access (either formal or informal) that are some way from the nearest population centres,

³⁵ People visiting at least once a week.

although some large well-visited sites may also have relatively low sensitivity or exposure (due to their size, characteristics or active visitor management – for example, sites associated with National Parks). Reporting of visitor pressure issues is quite variable within the NRW Core Management Plans (some of which have not been recently updated), although these have been reviewed to identify those for which ‘visitor pressure’ is identified as an issue.

- 4.3.13. Based on the above, **Table 4-4 identifies those sites that are within 10km³⁶ of a Tier 1 – 3 settlement** identified in Strategic Policy SP2 (i.e. where the majority of future housing development is likely to be located), and provides a brief summary of their likely exposure and sensitivity to recreational / visitor pressure that may be associated with development in Powys, based on the NRW Core Management Plans and other freely-available data (e.g. accessibility from PRowS). Sites not noted in Table 4-4 are unlikely to be significantly affected through this mechanism, based on currently available information (although this will be reviewed as the plan is developed further).

Table 4-4 – Sites within 10km of a Tier 1 – 3 settlement and notes on likely sensitivity / exposure to recreational pressure associated with local housing growth

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Berwyn a Mynyddoedd de Clwyd/ Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC	Recreation noted as an issue in the CMP (notably in relation to blanket bog and off-road vehicles); likely to be some distance from most development in Powys however; need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Berwyn SPA	Recreation noted as an issue in the CMP (notably in relation to blanket bog and off-road vehicles); likely to be some distance from most development in Powys however; need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Cadair Idris SAC	Visitor pressure (from people, livestock and vehicles including bicycles) noted as an issue in the CMP; large numbers visit Cadair Idris summit annually (CMP notes 168,000 in 2007). Likely to be some distance from most development in Powys however, and part of a wider national park that actively manages visitors to the area; unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys (particularly relative to current visitor numbers); need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Coed Cwm Einion SAC	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; small woodland site with limited PRow access ~8km SW of Machynlleth.; very unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

³⁶ 10km is used as a suitably precautionary proxy / generic ‘zone of influence’, based on visitor surveys at other European sites.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Coedydd Llwr-y-glyn SAC	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; small woodland site with no PRow access ~3km W of Trefeglwys; will not be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SAC	Visitor pressure noted as an issue in the CMP (“high levels visitor usage, erosional problems are widespread”); woodland site ~4km W of Coelbren; need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Coetiroedd Cwm Elan/ Elan Valley Woodlands SAC	Visitor pressure noted as an issue in the CMP, although impact from access on foot is limited (vehicles a more notable issue); small areas of woodland ~4km SW of Rhayder associated with the Elan reservoirs (visitor attraction). Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys (particularly relative to current visitor numbers); need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; area within 10km of Machynlleth is area of estuary and saltmarsh; will not be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Cwm Doethie - Mynydd Mallaen SAC	Visitor pressure noted as an issue in the CMP, although impact from access on foot is limited (vehicles a more notable issue); exposure of this site likely to be low however. Small areas of woodland ~10km W of Llanwrtyd Wells. Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys (particularly relative to current visitor numbers); need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Drostre Bank SAC	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; small woodland site with no PRow ~5.6km SW of Bronllys; will not be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Dyfi Estuary / Aber Dyfi SPA	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; area within 10km of Machynlleth is area of estuary and saltmarsh; will not be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Elenydd - Mallaen SPA	Visitor pressure noted as an issue in the CMP, although impact from access on foot is limited (vehicles a more notable issue); upland site W of Rhayder associated with the Elan reservoirs (visitor attraction). Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys (particularly relative to current visitor numbers); need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Elenydd SAC	Visitor pressure noted as an issue in the CMP, although impact from access on foot is limited (vehicles a more notable issue); upland site W of Rhayder associated with the Elan reservoirs (visitor attraction). Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys (particularly relative to current visitor numbers); need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Granllyn SAC	Recreational use of site noted in CMP but no evidence of any impact on the site interest features. Site immediately adjacent to Guilsfield so potentially vulnerable to development pressure generally, but unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys; need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Llangorse Lake/ Llyn Syfaddan SAC	Site is popular recreation destination ~7km S of Bronllys, Visitor pressure noted as potential issue in the CMP although significant management occurs and a balance between recreational use and the interest features appears to be met. Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys based on location and existing visitor management.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar	Only unit within 10km is Marton Pool, Chirbury SSSI which has no public access. Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar	Only unit within 10km is Morton Pool and Pasture SSSI which has no public access. Unlikely to be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Montgomery Canal SAC	Recreational pressure noted in CMP, principally from boat and fisheries management. Need for additional assessment to be reviewed at Deposit Stage	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Mynydd Epynt SAC	Small upland site in the Sennybridge Training Area. Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; will not be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Pen Llyn a`r Sarnau/ Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC	Will not be exposed to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys due to distance / site characteristics; closest point associated with Dyfi estuary.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Rhos Goch SAC	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; area is Access Land ~6.5km from Hay-on-Wye, but is unlikely to be exposed/sensitive to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC	Recreational use noted in CMP, principally from water-based activities at Bala (which is over 15km from the nearest cluster); the areas of the Dee within 10km are west of Chirk. General recreational pressure likely to be limited due to characteristics of watercourse, and site is unlikely to be exposed/sensitive to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC	Recreational use noted in CMP, principally from angling. General recreational pressure likely to be limited due to characteristics of watercourse, and site is unlikely to be exposed/sensitive to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC	Recreational use noted in CMP. General recreational pressure likely to be limited due to characteristics of watercourse, and site is unlikely to be exposed/sensitive to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystumod Tanat ac Efyrynwy SAC	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the CMP; roost sites generally have controlled access and features will not otherwise be exposed / sensitive to general recreational pressure.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC	Visitor pressure not noted as an issue in the SIP; upland site ~6km E of Churchstoke / Kingswood; site is unlikely to be exposed/sensitive to potentially significant increases in visitor pressure from development in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

URBANISATION

- 4.3.14. Urbanisation is generally used as a collective term covering a suite of often disparate risks and impacts that occur due to increases in human populations near protected sites. Typically, this would include aspects such as fly-tipping or vandalism, although the effects of these aspects again depend on the interest features of the sites: for example, predation of some species by cats is known to be sizeable (Woods *et al.* 2003) and can be potentially significant for some European sites. Recreational pressure is arguably one type of effect associated with urbanisation, although this is usually considered separately as it is less closely associated with proximity; as a broad guide, urbanisation effects are more likely when developments (etc.) are within a few hundred metres of a designated site, whereas people will typically travel further for recreation.
- 4.3.15. Where sensitive sites are involved, development buffers of around 400m are typically used to minimise the effects of urbanisation: for example, Natural England has identified a 400m zone around the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA within which housing development should not be located due to the potential effects of urbanisation (particularly, the risk of chick predation by cats, which cannot be mitigated). Similarly, LPAs near the Thames Basin Heaths SPA have adopted a 400m zone around the SPA boundary where there is a presumption against new residential development as the impact on the SPA is considered likely to be adverse.

- 4.3.16. In the absence of allocation information it is not possible to reasonably assess the risk of urbanisation effects for a given European site; however, there are few significant population centres in Powys, and only six European sites are within 500m of any of the settlements identified in Strategic Policy SP2 (**Berwyn SPA, Berwyn a Mynyddoedd de Clwyd/ Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC, Granllyn SAC, Montgomery Canal SAC, River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC, and Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Tanat ac Efyrnwy SAC**).
- 4.3.17. The risk of urbanisation effects is therefore likely to be low, although this aspect will be reviewed as the plan is developed further.

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

- 4.3.18. A number of pollutants have a negative effect on air quality; however, the most significant and relevant to habitats and species (particularly plant species) are the primary pollutants sulphur dioxide (SO₂, typically from combustion of coal and heavy fuel oils although this has declined substantially), nitrogen oxides (NO_x, mainly from vehicles) and ammonia (NH₃, principally from agriculture, although catalytic converters are a significant source³⁷), which (together with secondary aerosol pollutants³⁸) are deposited as wet or dry deposits. These pollutants affect habitats and species mainly through acidification and eutrophication.
- 4.3.19. Acidification increases the acidity of soils, which can directly affect some organisms and which also promotes leaching of some important base chemicals (e.g. calcium), and mobilisation and uptake by plants of toxins (especially metals such as aluminium).
- 4.3.20. Air pollution contributes to eutrophication within ecosystems by increasing the amounts of available nitrogen (N)³⁹. This is a particular problem in low-nutrient habitats, where available nitrogen is frequently the limiting factor on plant growth, and results in slow-growing low-nutrient species being out-competed by faster growing species that can take advantage of the increased amounts of available N.
- 4.3.21. Overall in the UK, there has been a significant decline in SO_x and NO_x emissions in recent years and a consequential decrease in acid deposition. In England, SO_x and NO_x have declined by 97% and 72% respectively since 1970 (Defra, 2018) which is the result of a switch from coal to gas, nuclear and renewables for energy generation, and increased efficiency and emissions standards for cars. These emissions are generally expected to decline further in future years. In contrast, emissions of ammonia have remained largely unchanged; they have declined by 10% in England since 1980 (Defra, 2018), but since 2008 have started to increase slightly.
- 4.3.22. The effect of SO_x and NO_x decreases on ecosystems has been marked, particularly in respect of acidification; the key contributor to acidification is now thought to be deposited nitrogen, for which the major source (ammonia emissions) has not decreased significantly. Indeed, eutrophication from

³⁷ Although the expectation is that this source will decline over the plan period due to the uptake of EVs; this is consistent with traffic modelling and UK government guidance.

³⁸ Secondary pollutants are not emitted, but are formed following further reactions in the atmosphere; for example, SO₂ and NO_x are oxidised to form SO₄²⁻ and NO₂⁻ compounds; ozone is formed by the reaction of other pollutants (e.g. NO_x or volatile organic compounds) with UV light; ammonia reacts with SO₄²⁻ and NO₂⁻ to form ammonium (NH₄⁺).

³⁹ Nitrogen that is in a form that can be absorbed and used by plants.

N-deposition (again, primarily from ammonia) is now considered the most significant air quality issue for many habitats.

- 4.3.23. In practice, the principal source of air pollution associated with the RLDP will be related to changing patterns of vehicle use due to the promotion of new development (since the Preferred Strategy does not provide for any new significant point-sources). The Department of Transport's *Transport Analysis Guidance*⁴⁰ states that "beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roadside to local pollution levels is not significant" and therefore this distance is used to determine the potential exposure of the European sites to any local effects associated with the Local Plan. Environment Agency (EA) guidance (EA, 2007) also states that "Where the concentration within the emission footprint in any part of the European site(s) is less than 1% of the relevant long-term benchmark (EAL, Critical Level or Critical Load), the emission is not likely to have a significant effect alone or in combination irrespective of the background levels".
- 4.3.24. Highways England's *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB) sets out an approach for assessing the effect of emissions from specific road schemes on designated sites; this suggests that a quantitative air quality assessment may be required if a European site is within 200m of an affected road and the predicted change in annual average daily traffic (AADT) is over 1,000.
- 4.3.25. This approach has some limitations when considering the effects of a Local Plan (rather than a specific road scheme) although in the absence of any other specific guidance or thresholds it has typically been applied to main or strategic roads⁴¹ within 200m of a European site, with case law⁴² indicating that changes in AADT on particular roads should be determined 'in combination' with other plans and projects.
- 4.3.26. Recent JNCC guidance⁴³ recommends that "For the purpose of decision-making, unless local circumstances support a wider zone, plan HRA should take account of the potential effects of traffic emissions on European sites located within 10 km of the plan boundary. This zone is based on professional judgment recognising that the effects of growth from development beyond 10 km will have been accounted for in the Nitrogen Futures [refer to Refer <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/nitrogen-futures>] modelling work business as usual scenario."
- 4.3.27. It should be noted that N deposition from agricultural ammonia is a significant issue in some parts of the county, although this is an aspect that the RLDP has little scope to control or influence except more broadly through planning conditions for associated development; this aspect will be reviewed as appropriate as the RLDP is developed.

⁴⁰ See <http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/documents/expert/unit3.3.3.php#013>; accessed 15/06/14.

⁴¹ i.e. trunk roads, A-roads and some B-roads. Changes in the number of vehicles using minor roads in the region will be too small to meaningfully assess using the industry standard approaches to AADT modelling that can be applied at the strategy-level (i.e. without substantial additional data collection including field monitoring at specific locations – this may be appropriate for a specific development or allocation but not for traffic-growth generally).

⁴² *Wealden District Council v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government*, Lewes District Council and South Downs National Park Authority [2017] EWHC 351.

⁴³ JNCC (2021). *Guidance on Decision-making Thresholds for Air Pollution* [online]. JNCC, Peterborough. Available at: <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/6cce4f2e-e481-4ec2-b369-2b4026c88447/JNCC-Report-696-Main-FINAL-WEB.pdf>

- 4.3.28. GIS analysis identifies 28 European sites both within 10km of the LPA area and within 200m of an A-road or motorway (see **Table 4-5**). However, many of these will not be sensitive to air quality changes associated with transport; for example, for most wetland habitats (particularly waterbodies) eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant than air pollution, and available-N is rarely a limiting factor in these ecosystems; aquatic and estuarine/marine sites may therefore be screened out due to the limited sensitivity of the features.
- 4.3.29. **Table 4-5** provides a brief summary of the site and feature sensitivity, a broad characterisation of the current air quality baseline where roads are within 200m (based on the Air Pollution Information System (APIS)⁴⁴), and other potentially relevant information from the Core Management Plan (CMP) including whether air quality is identified as a 'performance issue' for the site (recognising that many CMPs were completed some years ago and are being updated). The table then indicates whether the air pollution associated with vehicles is likely to be a notable or substantive issue for the site (hence providing an initial qualitative assessment of whether 'screening out' a site may be possible).
- 4.3.30. Additional screening assessment (potentially to include assessments of AADT where achievable and appropriate) will be undertaken as the RLDP is developed further.

Table 4-5 - Summary of European site initial screening review in relation to air quality

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Afon Teifi/ River Teifi SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Afon Tywi/ River Tywi SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Berwyn a Mynyddoedd de Clwyd/ Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC	Within 200m of A458 / A5 / A542; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport inconsequential based on APIS source apportionment data however.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Berwyn SPA	Within 200m of A458 / A5; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport inconsequential based on APIS source apportionment data however.	Uncertain – may require additional data.

⁴⁴ Available at <https://www.apis.ac.uk/app>.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Blaen Cynon SAC	Within 200m of A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road); features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 5% based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely to be limited however based on location.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Brecon Beacons/ Bannau Brycheiniog SAC	Within 200m of A470; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 3.5% based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Cadair Idris SAC	Within 200m of A487; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 3.6% based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Coed Cwm Einion SAC	Within 200m of A487; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 3.5% based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely. Closest point of site 155m from road. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Coedydd a Cheunant Rheidol/ Rheidol Woods and Gorge SAC	Within 200m of A4120 and A44; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 3.4% based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystlumod Meirion/ Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat Sites SAC	Within 200m of A487, A470 and A4085; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport negligible based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SAC	Within 200m of A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road); features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 4% based on APIS source apportionment data. Contribution of vehicles from PCC area likely. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Cors Caron Ramsar	Within 200m of A485; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport inconsequential based on APIS source apportionment data.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Cors Caron SAC	Within 200m of A485; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport inconsequential based on APIS source apportionment data.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar	Air quality sensitive component of site (Cors Fochno) not within 200m of A-road. Dyfi Estuary habitats not considered sensitive to eutrophication from transport sources.	Not a notable issue for site.
Cwm Clydach Woodlands / Coedydd Cwm Clydach SAC	Within 200m of A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road); features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 4% based on APIS source apportionment data. Air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Dyfi Estuary / Aber Dyfi SPA	Offshore / estuarine site not sensitive to eutrophication from transport sources.	Not a notable issue for site.
Elenydd - Mallaen SPA	Within 200m of A470; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport negligible based on APIS source apportionment data. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small. Air quality identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Llyn Tegid Ramsar	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SAC	Within 200m of A494 and A4212; features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around negligible based on APIS source apportionment data. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SPA	Within 200m of A494 and A4212; supporting habitats sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around negligible based on APIS source apportionment data. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small and air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Uncertain – may require additional data.
Montgomery Canal SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Pen Llyn a`r Sarnau/ Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC	Offshore / estuarine site not sensitive to eutrophication from transport sources.	Not a notable issue for site.
River Clun SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC	Aquatic features relatively insensitive to eutrophication from transport sources (eutrophication via agricultural run-off and flood water is overwhelmingly more significant; available N rarely limiting factor).	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Tanat ac Efyrrwy SAC	One unit (Alt y Main Mine SSSI) within 200m of A495; supporting habitats at this SSSI not sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution. Air quality not identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Usk Bat Sites / Safleodd Ystlumod Wysg SAC	Within 200m of A465 (Heads of the Valleys Road); features sensitive to eutrophication from air pollution; maximum critical load for N exceeded for some features, based on APIS; ammonia critical level not exceeded; contribution of local road transport around 3.6% based on APIS source apportionment data. Proportion of site potentially exposed very small. Air quality identified as a performance issue in CMP.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

WATER RESOURCES

- 4.3.31. The exploitation and management of water resources is connected to a range of activities, most of which are not directly controlled or influenced by the Local Plan; for example, agriculture, flood defence, recreation, power generation, fisheries and nature conservation. Much of the water supply to water-resource sensitive European sites is managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.32. Development supported or managed by the Local Plan is likely to increase demand for water, which could indirectly affect some European sites in the study area. When assessing the potential effects of increased water demand it is important to understand how the public water supply (PWS) system operates and how it is regulated with other water resource consents.
- 4.3.33. Water is supplied to the PCC area by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and Hafren Dyfrdwy Severn Dee (HDSD), a subsidiary of Severn Trent Water. The complexity of the supply system means that direct and specific supply relationships (i.e. “*abstraction from source X supplies Newtown*”) cannot necessarily be made and it is rarely possible or appropriate to identify a particular ‘source’ for water supply to a specific area.
- 4.3.34. More importantly, however, the water resources planning process helps to ensure that growth in water demand does not affect European sites. The *Water Industry Act 1991*, as amended by the *Water Act 2003* and *Water Act 2014*, requires that all water companies must publish a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) that sets out their strategy for managing water resources across their supply areas over the next 25 years and beyond. WRMPs use calculations of Deployable Output (DO) to establish supply/demand balances; this enables water companies to identify those Water Resource Zones (WRZs) with potential supply deficits over the planning period⁴⁵. The calculations account for any reductions in abstraction that are required to safeguard

⁴⁵ Forecasts are completed in accordance with the Water Resources Planning Guidelines (published by the Environment Agency) and take into account (inter alia) economic factors (economic growth, metering, pricing), behavioural factors (patterns of water use), demographic factors (population growth, inward and outward migration, changes in occupancy rate), planning policy (LPA land use plans), company policies (e.g. on leakage control and water efficiency measures) and environmental factors, including climate change. The WRMP therefore accounts for these demand forecasts based on historical trends, an established growth forecast model and through review of local and regional planning documents.

European sites⁴⁶ and so the WRMP process (with other regulations) helps ensure (as far as is achievable) that future changes in demand will not affect any European sites⁴⁷.

- 4.3.35. DCWW and HDSD accounted for the growth predicted by the Council and other LPAs in forecasting for their current (2019) WRMPs. The 2019 WRMPs were subject to HRA, which concluded that they would have no adverse effects on any European sites, including those water-resource sensitive sites and features within the Local Plan HRA study area.
- 4.3.36. DCWW has published its revised draft WRMP24 (essentially the final step before adoption) and HDSD has published its draft WRMP24. In summary:
- The DCWW revised draft WRMP24 indicates that all WRZs that coincide with the PCC area will be in surplus for the planning period, with the exception of Twyi Gower WRZ (which overlaps the south-western corner of Powys) and the South East Wales Conjunctive Use (SEWCUS) WRZ (which overlaps the south-western corner of Powys). Predicted deficits in these WRZs will be resolved with demand-management measures and amendments to the existing network.
 - The HDSD draft WRMP24 indicates that both of the WRZs that coincide with the PCC area (Llanfyllin WRZ and Llandinam and Llanwrin WRZ) will be in surplus for the planning period.
- 4.3.37. The HRA for the DCWW revised draft WRMP concludes that it will have no adverse effects on any European sites, alone or in combination. The HRA for HDSD's WRMP24 has not yet been published.
- 4.3.38. The WRMPs provide the best estimate of future water resource demand, and therefore **it is reasonable to assume that the growth predicted within the Local Plan can be accommodated without significant effects on any European sites due to PWS abstractions**. Furthermore, since the WRMPs explicitly account for the growth predicted by the Council and other LPAs⁴⁸, 'in combination' effects between the Local Plan and the WRMP on water resources will not occur. Having said that, the Local Plan can obviously help manage demand and promote water efficiency measures through its policy controls.

WATER QUALITY

- 4.3.39. Most waterbodies and watercourses in the county are affected to some extent by point or diffuse sources of pollutants, notably nitrates and phosphates from agriculture. Point sources are usually discrete discharge points, such as wastewater treatment works (WwTW) outfalls, which are generally managed through specific consenting regimes that are independent of the Local Plan.

⁴⁶ For example, sustainability reductions required by the Review of Consents (RoC) or the Environment Agency's Restoring Sustainable Abstractions (RSA) programme. It should be noted that, under the WRMP process, the RoC changes (and non- changes to licences) are considered to be valid over the planning period. This means that the WRMP (and its underlying assumptions regarding the availability of water and sustainability of existing consents) is compliant with the RoC and so the WRMP can only affect European sites through any new resource and production-side options it advocates to resolves deficits, and not through the existing permissions regime.

⁴⁷ Calculations of DO include for Target Headroom (precautionary 'over-capacity' in available water) to buffer any unforeseen variation in predicted future demand; the WRMP is also reviewed on a five-yearly cycle to ensure it is performing as expected and to account for any variations between predicted and actual demand.

⁴⁸ Defra/ EA guidance on WRMPs requires that forecast population and property figures be based, wherever possible, upon plans published by local authorities (including 'adopted', 'emergent', 'consultation' and 'draft' local plans).

Diffuse pollution is derived from a range of sources (e.g. agricultural run-off; road run-off) that cannot always be easily traced or quantified.

- 4.3.40. Development promoted or supported by the Local Plan is likely to increase demand on wastewater treatment works and potentially increase non-agricultural run-off. However it should be noted that the Local Plan has limited capacity to control or influence the major source of nutrients in local rivers, i.e. agriculture (notably, in Powys, phosphates associated with spreading of manure from poultry farming) except through the planning system.
- 4.3.41. Run-off from impermeable surfaces can have considerable effects on waterbodies and watercourses, and is a notable issue in both urban and rural areas. Development has traditionally sought to capture and divert rain and run-off to the nearest watercourse or treatment facility as quickly as possible, and extensive drainage networks have been developed to facilitate this. However, as developed areas have increased so have the total volumes and flow rates of run-off. This has two principal effects: firstly, impermeable surfaces provide very little resistance to the mobilisation and transport of pollutants within run-off; and secondly, flow rates and volumes often exceed the capacity of the receiving drains or watercourses, causing localised flooding or the operation of combined sewer overflows (CSOs)⁴⁹. The effect of run-off from developed areas can be mitigated or reduced by the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and by increasing the area of permeable surfaces (both natural and artificial) within developed areas. These measures offer effective attenuation by reducing the volumes of surface run-off. They also increase the retention of pollutants and, in the case of some SuDS, can allow for treatment of pollutants.
- 4.3.42. However, it should also be recognised that the water quality effects of the Local Plan are ultimately either controlled by existing consents regimes (which must undergo HRA) or have diffuse ‘in combination’ effects that are difficult to quantify, and so the HRA process typically aims to ensure that suitable mitigating policy that will minimise the impacts of plan-supported development on water quality generally is provided.
- 4.3.43. With regard to nutrient loading from housing this is more generally associated with the overall quantum of development within a catchment and so strategic choices over housing distribution have the potential to affect this aspect. NRW has published guidance on phosphorus sensitive SACs and nutrient neutrality⁵⁰ (note that none of the rivers on the equivalent NE list have catchments in Wales); of the European sites identified by NRW the following have catchments partly within Powys:
- Afon Tywi/ River Tywi SAC
 - River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC
 - River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC
 - River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC

⁴⁹ All sewerage pipes have a certain capacity, determined by the size of the pipe and the receiving water treatment works. At times of high rainfall, this capacity can be exceeded, with the risk of uncontrolled bursts. CSOs provide a mechanism to prevent this, by allowing untreated sewerage to mix with surface water run-off when certain volumes are exceeded. This is then discharged to the nearest watercourse.

⁵⁰ <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/planning-and-development/our-role-in-planning-and-development/advice-to-planning-authorities-for-planning-applications-affecting-phosphorus-sensitive-river-special-areas-of-conservation/?lang=en>

4.3.44. In addition the following groups of coastal and estuarine European sites have catchments partly within Powys:

- Afon Tywi catchment (note, minor contribution from Powys):
 - Bae Caerfyrddin/ Carmarthen Bay SPA
 - Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries/ Bae Caerfyrddin ac Aberoedd SAC
- Afon Dyfi catchment:
 - Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar
 - Dyfi Estuary / Aber Dyfi SPA
 - Pen Llyn a`r Sarnau/ Lley Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC
 - West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC
- Afon Rheidol catchment:
 - Northern Cardigan Bay / Gogledd Bae Ceredigion SPA
 - Pen Llyn a`r Sarnau/ Lley Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC
 - West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC
- River Dee catchment
 - Dee Estuary/ Aber Dyfrdwy SAC
 - The Dee Estuary Ramsar
 - The Dee Estuary SPA
- Severn / Wye / Usk catchments:
 - Severn Estuary Ramsar
 - Severn Estuary SPA
 - Severn Estuary/ Môr Hafren SAC

4.3.45. Of these, the catchments of the **Afon Tywi**, the **Afon Rheidol** and the **River Dee** only overlap very marginally with the PCC area along their watersheds; additional housing within Powys is therefore extremely unlikely to be located within these catchments⁵¹ (certainly at any meaningful scale). **Water quality effects on European sites associated with these catchments are therefore likely to be ‘screened out’ in future iterations of the RLDP HRA**, although the potential effects of the RLDP on these European sites will be reviewed and assessed as the plan evolves.

4.3.46. With regard to the remaining European site catchments (Wye, Severn and Usk), it is not currently possible to precisely determine the housing growth anticipated within each catchment as the Local Housing Market Areas (LHMAs) used to inform the Preferred Strategy may overlap more than one European site catchment. **Table 4-6** provides a broad guide to the total housing need in each LHMA and hence the catchments associated with the European sites (river or estuarine) noted above.

Table 4-6 – Anticipated housing need by LHMA and principal / secondary catchments associated with European sites

⁵¹ It is theoretically possible that Welsh Water may elect to treat sewerage at wastewater treatment works (WwTWs) located in a different catchment from the development, although this is unlikely based on the locations of current WwTWs.

Housing Market Area	Total Provision [†]	Main catchment	Other overlapping catchments
Brecon	73	Usk/Wsyg	Twyi*, Usk/Wsyg*
Builth Wells and Llanwrtyd Wells	418	Wye/Gwy	Twyi*
Crickhowell	5	Usk/Wsyg	Wye/Gwy (RANCS)
Hay on Wye and Talgarth	243	Wye/Gwy	Usk/Wsyg*
Knighton and Presteigne	406	Wye/Gwy	Severn/Hafren (LCS)
Llandrindod Wells and Rhayader	628	Wye/Gwy	Severn/Hafren*
Llanfair Caereinion	174	Severn/Hafren	Dyfi*
Llanfyllin	268	Severn/Hafren	Dee/Dyfrdwy*
Llanidloes	371	Severn/Hafren	Wye/Gwy (RGAS)
Machynlleth	148	Dyfi	Severn/Hafren (LCS) Rheidol*
Newtown	738	Severn/Hafren	Wye/Gwy*
Welshpool and Montgomery	968	Severn/Hafren	-
Ystradgynlais	370	Neath/Nedd	-

Key:

† Note that ~50% of the provision already has permission or has been built, so is outside the scope of the HRA.

* Marginal overlaps at catchment boundary where development is very unlikely to occur.

RANCS – catchment overlaps with a Rural Area / Non-Cluster settlement identified in Policy SP2

LCS – catchment overlaps with a Rural Area / Non-Cluster settlement identified in Policy SP2

RGAS – catchment overlaps with a Regional Growth Area settlement identified in Policy SP2

4.3.47. When considering potential effects the following should be recognised:

- The maximum number of homes proposed is relatively modest (so meeting nutrient neutrality requirements based on NRW guidance is inherently more achievable than for areas where several thousand new homes are needed (and so policy controls and development-level assessment / mitigation are not unrealistic options (rather than a need to precisely quantify effects and identify strategic mitigation solutions at the plan level)).
- The Preferred Strategy notes that “*New development within SAC catchments must achieve nutrient (phosphate) neutrality which acts as a constraint to development. Development is only able to connect to a Waste-Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) with phosphorous reduction technology installed and where capacity exists within the limits of an Environmental Permit for a WWTWs. This constraint is a significant consideration in the preparation of the Replacement LDP and its strategy*”.
- The *Powys Housing Need and Supply: Housing Supply Background Paper* also notes that new housing development in phosphorus-sensitive river catchments (i.e. the Wye and Usk in Powys) will be located within settlements that are served by wastewater treatment works (WwTWs) that

have been identified for improvement (including the installation of phosphorous reduction equipment) in Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's (DCWW) seventh Asset Management Programme (AMP 7) 2020 - 2025^{52,53}.

- 4.3.48. On this basis there are no fundamental HRA-related reasons why the Preferred Option should not be pursued from a water quality perspective (i.e. adverse effects are not obviously unavoidable irrespective of how housing is delivered at the project stage, although this will be reviewed further as the plan is developed to ensure that appropriate controls are incorporated into the plan).

FLOODING / WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

- 4.3.49. The implementation of the European Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC) in England and Wales is being co-ordinated with the Water Framework Directive. Catchment Flood Management Plans (prepared by NRW), Shoreline Management Plans (prepared by coastal local authorities and NRW), River Basin District Flood Risk Management Plans (RBMPs, prepared by NRW) and Local Flood Risk Management Strategies set out long term policies for flood risk management. The delivery of the policies from these long-term plans will help to achieve the objectives of these plans and the RBMPs.
- 4.3.50. Development supported by the Local Plan is unlikely to significantly alter regional flood risk levels, but may exacerbate the effects of local flooding. Run-off from impermeable surfaces can have considerable effects on waterbodies and watercourses, meaning that flow rates and volumes often exceed the capacity of the receiving drains or watercourses. This can lead to local water quality impacts on European sites. The effect of run-off from developed areas can be reduced by the use of SuDS and by increasing the area of permeable surfaces (both natural and artificial) within developed areas.
- 4.3.51. Some sites and features may be dependent on water levels being maintained by surface water or groundwater inputs, which may in turn be affected by abstraction (see 'Water Resources', above) or local development (e.g. through dewatering of excavations, which can be an issue for groundwater levels). However, these pathways (particularly dewatering) tend to only operate over relatively short distances and hence are predominantly addressed in relation to individual allocations.
- 4.3.52. None of the sites are therefore likely to be exposed to potentially notable changes in water levels as a result of the RLDP.

EFFECTS ON FUNCTIONAL HABITATS OR SPECIES AWAY FROM EUROPEAN SITES

- 4.3.53. The provisions of the Habitats Regulations ensure that 'direct' (encroachment) effects on European sites as a result of a land use plan (i.e. the partial or complete destruction of a European site) are extremely unlikely under normal circumstances, and this will not occur as a result of the RLDP. However, many European interest features (particularly more mobile animal species) may use or be reliant on non-designated habitats outside of a European site during their life-cycle. Developments some distance from a European site can therefore have an effect on the site if its population of interest features is reliant on the habitats being affected by a development and sufficient numbers

⁵² Note, this may change as the RLDP is developed and more detail on DCWW's proposals for AMP8 become available.

⁵³ The WwTWs identified for improvements in APM7 are at Bronllys, Builth Wells and Llanfihangel, Clyro, Howey, Norton, Presteigne, Rhayader, Llandrindod Wells and Llanfihangel Tal-y-llyn.

are exposed to the environmental changes. All of the above aspects (recreation, water resources, etc.) can therefore also affect European site integrity indirectly through effects on functional habitats outside of the designated site boundary.

- 4.3.54. With regard to the European sites within the scope, most functional land will be located relatively close to the site (e.g. typically less than 5km from the boundary), associated with foraging or roosting behaviours of the bird or bat interest features, although it is arguable that some non-designated rivers will provide ‘functional habitat’ associated with distant sites (for example, the River Severn and twaite shad associated with the **Severn Estuary/ Môr Hafren SAC**). Note that ‘functionally-linked’ is not intended as a speculative catch-all covering any habitat that might be occasionally used by, or suitable for, a particular species⁵⁴
- 4.3.55. To some extent this issue can only be examined once site allocations are known; however development in Powys is very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects on functional land based on the likely locations of development, the habitat requirements of the qualifying features, and distance to the sites from settlements; and any residual risk can almost certainly be managed appropriately at the development-level through policy controls.
- 4.3.56. Note also that the Preferred Strategy approach to wind energy (Strategic Policy SP25) defers to the Future Wales National Plan 2040 and the ‘Pre-Assessed Areas’ (PAAs) for wind energy identified Policy 17 of Future Wales, and does not identify sites or locations beyond this. The Future Wales National Plan 2040 has been subject to HRA, which found that there would be no adverse effects on any European sites due to Policy 17 due to incorporated safeguards. The Preferred Strategy does not create a presumption in favour of developments that could affect the integrity of European site bird populations.

Table 4-7 – Sites with mobile features within 10km of a Tier 1 – 3 settlement, or more distant sites with migratory fish

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Berwyn SPA	Features will utilise habitats outside the site boundary and populations will be dependent on robust wider Welsh population including in areas of Powys, but development in Powys very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects on functional land based on the likely locations of development, the habitat requirements of the qualifying features, and distance to the site from nearest settlements. Guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage ⁵⁵ suggests the following ‘core’ ranges for foraging birds during the breeding season: red kite 4km; hen harrier and peregrine 2km; merlin <5km. There are six small settlements (Tier 3 or Tier 5) within 5km of this site and so potentially notable disruption to functional land is extremely unlikely.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

⁵⁴ Case law notes that such land should be necessary to the conservation of the protected habitat types and species (*Holohan v An Bord Pleanala C-461/17*) or play an important role in maintaining or restoring the population of qualifying species at favourable conservation status.

⁵⁵ SNH (2016) *Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs)* [online]. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2022-12/Assessing%20connectivity%20with%20special%20protection%20areas.pdf>

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar	Features (Greenland white fronted geese) will utilise habitats outside the site boundary but development in Powys very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects on functional land based on the likely locations of development, the habitat requirements of the qualifying features, and distance to the site from nearest settlements. Data from the Greenland White Fronted Goose Study ⁵⁶ suggests that the population remains on or very close to the Ramsar / estuary when feeding and roosting, and that potentially notable areas of functional land away from the immediate estuary are not present.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Dyfi Estuary / Aber Dyfi SPA	Features (Greenland white fronted geese) will utilise habitats outside the site boundary but development in Powys very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects on functional land based on the likely locations of development, the habitat requirements of the qualifying features, and distance to the site from nearest settlements. Data from the Greenland White Fronted Goose Study (see above) suggests that the population remains on or very close to the SPA / estuary when feeding and roosting, and that potentially notable areas of functional land away from the immediate estuary are not present.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Elenydd - Mallaen SPA	Features will utilise habitats outside the site boundary and populations will be dependent on robust wider Welsh population including in areas of Powys, but development in Powys very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects on functional land based on the likely locations of development, the habitat requirements of the qualifying features, and distance to the site from nearest settlements. Guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage (see above) suggests the following 'core' ranges for foraging birds during the breeding season: red kite 4km; merlin <5km. There are seven settlements (all Tier 2 – Tier 6) within 5km of this site and so potentially notable disruption to functional land is extremely unlikely.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.
Granllyn SAC	Site immediately adjacent to Guilsfield so potentially vulnerable to development pressure generally. Features will likely use non-designated habitats locally; may require policy notes but existing legislation likely to be sufficient to manage this aspect.	Review at Deposit Stage
Pen Llyn a`r Sarnau/ Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC	Mobile features will not be functionally dependent on habitats in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site
River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC	Mobile features will not be functionally dependent on habitats in Powys.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site

⁵⁶ Available at: <https://greenlandwhitefront.org/gb-site-inventory/england-wales/78-dyfi-estuary-dyfed/>

Site	Notes	RLDP effects?
River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC	Mobile features will utilise non-designated rivers in Powys, but development in Powys very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects from fundamental aspects such as scale.	Review at Deposit Stage
River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC	Mobile features will utilise non-designated rivers in Powys, but development in Powys very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects from fundamental aspects such as scale.	Review at Deposit Stage
Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Tanat ac Efyrnwy SAC	Features will utilise habitats outside the site boundaries although the Bat Conservation Trust defined Core Sustenance Zones (CSZs) – “the area surrounding a communal bat roost within which habitat availability and quality will have a significant influence on the resilience and conservation status of the roost” – is 2km for lesser horseshoe bats (there is one settlement, Llangynog, within 2km of a unit of this site); in general, therefore, unavoidable adverse effects would not be expected unless significant permanent land-take within those zones is likely; virtually all other potential effects are avoidable with normal good practice in planning and design, and with established mitigation measures that are known to be effective – although these inevitably cannot be defined above the project level.	Unlikely to be notable issue for site.

OTHER EFFECT PATHWAYS

4.3.57. No other pathways for likely significant effects as a result of the Preferred Options Local Plan implementation have been identified.

4.4 PREFERRED STRATEGY REVIEW SUMMARY

4.4.1. Powys County Council is preparing its Replacement Local Development Plan (2022-2037) which will replace the Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) (2011-2026). PCC has developed its **Preferred Strategy** for the RLDP, and is issuing this for consultation. In broad terms the Preferred Strategy includes:

- A vision for Powys supported by 22 Objectives.
- Provision for 4810 new homes, 40 ha. of employment and economic development land, and associated infrastructure.
- A broad spatial strategy, providing high-level geographical direction for development shaped by a Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy and identified Regional Growth Area Clusters, Local Clusters and Rural Area / Non-Cluster Settlements.
- Policies broadly supporting development or other changes, but which do not specify a quantum or location.
- Various development control policies that set out the Council’s tests or expectations when considering proposals, such as safeguarding policies, environmental protection policies or policies relating to design or other qualitative criteria.

- 4.4.2. Local Plans require an assessment against Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations. The process by which Regulation 105 is met is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). An HRA determines whether there will be any ‘likely significant effects’ (LSE) on any European site as a result of a plan’s implementation (either on its own or ‘in combination’ with other plans or projects) and, if so, whether there will be any ‘adverse effects on site integrity’. The Council has a statutory duty to prepare the Local Plan and is therefore the Competent Authority for an HRA.
- 4.4.3. There is no statutory requirement for HRA to be undertaken on draft plans or similar developmental stages (e.g. issues and options; preferred options). However, it is accepted best-practice for the HRA of strategic planning documents to be run as an iterative process alongside plan development, with the emerging policies or options reviewed during development to ensure that potentially adverse effects on European sites can be identified at an early stage, and avoided or mitigated through the plan development process.
- 4.4.4. This report therefore accompanies the Preferred Strategy RLDP that is being published for consultation. **It does not constitute a formal ‘HRA screening’ or Appropriate Assessment** as the plan is still in development and so any screening or appropriate assessment conclusions would be premature; however, the principles of HRA are applied to the Preferred Strategy to (a) provide an initial assessment of the likely HRA conclusions, were the plan adopted as currently drafted; (b) indicate the ‘direction-of-travel’ of the HRA; and (c) identify additional data requirements and/or additional measures that may be required to ensure that the Deposit Draft Plan has no adverse effects on any European sites.
- 4.4.5. The HRA of the Preferred Strategy considers potential effects on:
- all European sites within 15km of Powys LPA’s area (see **Table 3-2, Section 3**);
 - any additional sites that may be hydrologically linked⁵⁷ to the Local Plan’s zone of influence; and
 - any additional sites identified by NRW or NE following the HRA Scoping Report consultation.
- 4.4.6. The Preferred Strategy **does not** identify specific sites for housing or employment development (i.e. allocation sites). PCC is publishing a **Candidate Site Register** for consultation alongside the Preferred Strategy, which will be used to inform the allocation of sites within the Deposit Plan (the next statutory stage). New candidate site submissions may also be made during the consultation period. Consequently, **this stage of the HRA process does not assess individual candidate sites for their potential effects on European sites.**
- 4.4.7. With regard to the broad **growth and spatial distribution option** selected by the Preferred Strategy, although there are a large number of European sites within Powys it is not possible to meaningfully assess their likely or relative exposure to environmental changes that may result from hypothetical RLDPs based on the spatial distributions proposed by the Preferred Strategy due to the absence of reasonable geographical context. Furthermore, the overall growth proposed for Powys (plus adjacent authorities) is relatively modest and so effects on most European sites are inherently

⁵⁷ Typically downstream sites that are receptors for pollutants (etc.) although other sites might be considered depending on the linkages – for example, upstream sites with migratory fish that would utilise rivers within the LPA area.

less likely than for some sites where LPAs need to accommodate several or tens of thousands of homes and consequently have large allocation sites.

- 4.4.8. The assessment completed to date indicates that the majority of the **Preferred Strategy Strategic Policies** will have ‘no effect’ (either alone or in combination) on any European sites, typically because either they are policy types that do not make provision for changes or because they relate to areas of Powys that are a considerable distance from the nearest European sites (with no known or reasonable effect pathways).
- 4.4.9. With regard to **specific European sites**, the vast majority will not be significantly affected by the RLDP, and (where significant effects cannot be obviously excluded at the Preferred Strategy stage) no potential effects are obviously of a magnitude or type that cannot be avoided through normal strategy-level policy controls and lower tier project-level mitigation measures that are known to be available, achievable and effective (i.e. the need for the plan to identify ‘strategic mitigation’ for in combination effects that cannot be addressed at the project-level is not evident).
- 4.4.10. The most common ‘in combination’ issues for Local Plans, and the likely effect of the RLDP on these, are as follows:
- **Recreational pressure:**
 - Although many sites are noted as being sensitive and exposed to recreational pressures by the NRW CMPs, these pressures are almost invariably either very local in nature (i.e. specific effects on specific parts of urban-edge European sites (which might also be described as urbanisation effects)), or associated with regionally or nationally notable attractions (for example, Cadair Idris SAC, which is within the Eryri National Park); the proposed levels of housing growth within Powys are unlikely to substantively alter recreational pressure at any European sites, based on a review of their location, accessibility, feature characteristics and the vulnerabilities noted in the CMPs.
 - **Urbanisation:**
 - As above, some European sites (notably those closer to the larger population centres in south Wales) are currently being affected by urbanisation aspects (fires, vehicle damage, etc.); however, this is typically a ‘short-range’ issue and so cannot be fully assessed without information on candidate sites for allocation. However, there are few significant population centres in Powys, and only six European sites are within 500m of any of the settlements identified in Strategic Policy SP2. The risk of urbanisation effects is therefore likely to be low, although this aspect will be reviewed as the plan is developed further.
 - **Air Quality:**
 - The assessment of air quality effects from Local Plans typically focuses on transport emissions at specific locations (since this is an aspect that Local Plans can have some influence over through the site allocation process⁵⁸).

⁵⁸ N deposition from agricultural ammonia is a significant issue in some parts of the country, although this is an aspect that the RLDP has limited scope to control or influence except more broadly through planning conditions for associated development; this aspect will be reviewed as appropriate as the RLDP is developed, however.

- Based on current practice and guidance, there are 28 European sites both within 10km of the LPA area and within 200m of an A-road or motorway (i.e. most likely to have potentially notable increases in traffic volumes over the plan period). Some of these sites can be excluded from more detailed consideration (e.g. where interest features are not sensitive to airborne eutrophication) although the potential effects of air quality changes on other sites may need to be reviewed as the plan is developed and candidate sites for allocation are identified.
- Water Resources
 - Water is supplied to the PCC area by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and Hafren Dyfrdwy Severn Dee (HDSD), which take account of housing and employment growth predicted in Local Plans in their Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs).
 - Based on these companies' emerging WRMPs for the next 25 years, all of the water resource zones (WRZs) associated with Powys will be in surplus for the planning period with the exception of two DCWW zones in the south of the county where minor deficits will be resolved through demand-management measures and amendments to the existing network that will not affect any European sites.
 - Significant strategic or 'in combination' effects on European sites due to water resource demands associated with housing or employment growth supported by the RLDP are not therefore expected.
- Water Quality
 - Development promoted or supported by the RLDP is likely to increase demand on wastewater treatment works and potentially increase non-agricultural run-off, although the Local Plan has relatively limited scope to control or influence the major source of nutrients in local rivers, i.e. agriculture. Strategic choices over housing distribution have the potential to affect this aspect.
 - NRW has published guidance on phosphorus sensitive SACs and nutrient neutrality, and the Preferred Strategy reflects this.
 - It is not currently possible to precisely determine the housing growth anticipated within each European site catchment as the Local Housing Market Areas (LHMAs) used to inform the Preferred Strategy may overlap more than one catchment. This aspect will therefore be reviewed as the plan is developed, although adverse effects are not obviously unavoidable irrespective of how housing is delivered at the project stage (i.e. nutrient neutrality is likely to be achievable at the project stage with policy controls, without the need for direct 'strategic' provision of mitigation).
- Flooding / Water Level Management
 - No European sites are likely to be exposed to potentially notable changes in water levels as a result of the RLDP.
- Functional Habitats
 - This issue can only be examined once site allocations are known; however development in Powys is very unlikely to result in unavoidable adverse effects on functional land based on the likely locations of development, the habitat requirements of the mobile qualifying features, and distance to the sites from settlements; and any residual risk can almost certainly be managed appropriately at the development-level through policy controls.



4.4.11. However, it will be necessary to review these initial assessments as the RLDP is developed further (including once candidate sites are identified).

Appendix A

EUROPEAN SITES IN SCOPE





APPENDIX A – EUROPEAN SITES IN SCOPE

Table A-1 - Type Caption Here

Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Aberbargoed Grasslands SAC	UK0030071	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030071.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/670637/Aberbargoed%20Grasslands%20Core%20SAC%20plan%20jan08.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) - S1065: Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas</i> (<i>Eurodryas</i>, <i>Hypodryas</i>) <i>aurinia</i>
Afon Eden - Cors Goch Trawsfynydd SAC	UK0030075	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030075.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/670687/afon-eden-wes32-plan-english.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H7110: Active raised bogs - S1029: Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> - S1106: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> - S1831: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>
Afon Teifi/ River Teifi SAC	UK0012670	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012670.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/682845/afon-teifi-river-teifi-management-plan.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3130: Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i> - H3260: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1096: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1106: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - S1163: Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> - S1831: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>

Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Afon Tywi/ River Tywi SAC	UK0013010	Within 15km / D/S site	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0013010.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/670732/afon_tywi_-_man-plan-english.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1096: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1102: Allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i> - S1103: Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> - S1163: Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
Berwyn a Mynyddoedd de Clwyd/ Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC	UK0012926	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012926.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/670888/Berwyn%20man%20plan%20(E)%20(table%20revisions%2010.09.09).pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H6210: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) - H7130: Blanket bogs (* if active bog) - H7140: Transition mires and quaking bogs - H8120: Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) - H8210: Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
Berwyn SPA	UK9013111	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9013111.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/670888/Berwyn%20man%20plan%20(E)%20(table%20revisions%2010.09.09).pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A074r: Red kite <i>Milvus milvus</i> - A082r: Hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> - A098r: Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> - A103r: Peregrine falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Blaen Cynon SAC	UK0030092	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030092.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671013/Blaen%20Cynon%20core%20management%20plan.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1065: Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas (Eurodryas, Hypodryas) aurinia</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Brecon Beacons/ Bannau Brycheiniog SAC	UK0030096	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030096.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671043/Brecon%20Beacons%20SAC%20plan%20_Eng_.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H6430: Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels - H8210: Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation - H8220: Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation
Cadair Idris SAC	UK0030104	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030104.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671054/Cadair%20Idris%20SAC%20Plan%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3130: Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i> - H4010: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> - H4030: European dry heaths - H6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) - H6430: Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels - H7130: Blanket bogs (* if active bog) - H7230: Alkaline fens - H8110: Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) - H8210: Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation - H8220: Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles - S1065: Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas</i> (<i>Eurodryas</i>, <i>Hypodryas</i>) <i>aurinia</i> - S1393: Slender green feather-moss <i>Drepanocladus</i> (<i>Hamatocaulis</i>) <i>vernicosus</i>

Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries/ Bae Caerfyrddin ac Aberoedd SAC	UK0020020	D/S site	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0020020.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/688104/sac_uk0020020_enreg_37.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H1110: Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - H1130: Estuaries - H1140: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - H1160: Large shallow inlets and bays - H1310: <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand - H1330: Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1102: Allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i> - S1103: Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
Coed Cwm Einion SAC	UK0030117	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030117.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/691800/coed_cwm_einion_sac_mangement_plan_english.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines
Coed y Cerrig SAC	UK0012766	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012766.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671319/Coed%20y%20Cerrig%20SAC%20Managment%20Plan%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H91E0: Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Coedydd a Cheunant Rheidol/ Rheidol Woods and Gorge SAC	UK0012748	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012748.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671374/Coedydd%20A%20Cheunant%20Rheidol%20SAC%20Plan%20English.pdf	- H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystlumod Meirion/ Meirionnydd Oakwoods and Bat Sites SAC	UK0014789	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0014789.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672832/mow-sac-plan.pdf	- H3260: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation - H4010: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> - H4030: European dry heaths - H9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles - H91D0: Bog woodland - H91E0: Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) - S1303: Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
Coedydd Llaur-y-glyn SAC	UK0030119	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030119.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671414/Coedydd%20Llaur-y-glyn%20SAC%20MPEnglish.pdf	- H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Coedydd Nedd a Mellte SAC	UK0030141	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030141.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671444/Coedydd%20Nedd%20a%20Mellte%20SAC%20plan%2018%20April%202008%20_English_.pdf	- H9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Coetiroedd Cwm Elan/ Elan Valley Woodlands SAC	UK0030145	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030145.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671965/Elanydd_cSAC_core_English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Cors Caron Ramsar	UK14003	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK14003.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671524/Cors%20Caron-Plan%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crit. 2 - supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened eco. communities - Crit. 3 - supports populations of plant/animal species important for maintaining regional biodiversity - Crit. 6 - regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species/subspecies of waterbirds
Cors Caron SAC	UK0014790	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0014790.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671524/Cors%20Caron-Plan%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H7110: Active raised bogs - H7120: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration - H7140: Transition mires and quaking bogs - H7150: Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> - H91D0: Bog woodland - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
Cors Fochno and Dyfi Ramsar	UK14004	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK14004.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671544/Cors%20Fochno%20SAC%20management%20plan.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types
Cors Fochno SAC	UK0014791	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0014791.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671544/Cors%20Fochno%20SAC%20management%20plan.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H7110: Active raised bogs - H7120: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration - H7150: Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Craig yr Aderyn (Bird's Rock) SPA	UK9020283	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9020283.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/674084/Craig%20yr%20Aderyn%20SPA%20core%20plan%20(Eng).pdf	- A346r: Red-billed chough <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i> - A346w: Red-billed chough <i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Crymlyn Bog Ramsar	UK14006	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK14006.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/675011/crymlyn-bog-sac-english.pdf	- Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types - Crit. 2 - supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened eco. communities - Crit. 3 - supports populations of plant/animal species important for maintaining regional biodiversity
Crymlyn Bog/ Cors Crymlyn SAC	UK0012885	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012885.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/675011/crymlyn-bog-sac-english.pdf	- H7140: Transition mires and quaking bogs - H7210: Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> - H91E0: Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)
Cwm Cadlan SAC	UK0013585	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0013585.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/675014/cwm-cadlan-sac-plan-english.pdf	- H6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) - H7230: Alkaline fens
Cwm Clydach Woodlands / Coedydd Cwm Clydach SAC	UK0030127	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030127.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/675017/cwm-clydach-sac-plan-english.pdf	- H9120: Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with <i>Ilex</i> and sometimes also <i>Taxus</i> in the shrublayer (<i>Quercion robori-petraeae</i> or <i>Ilici-Fagenion</i>) - H9130: <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Cwm Doethie - Mynydd Mallaen SAC	UK0030128	Within 15km	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030128.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671965/EIenydd_cSAC_core_English.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Dee Estuary/ Aber Dyfrdwy SAC	UK0030131	D/S site	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030131.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673576/dee-estuary-reg33-volume-1-english-091209_1.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6124489284780032?category=4582026845880320</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK0030131</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H1130: Estuaries - H1140: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - H1210: Annual vegetation of drift lines - H1230: Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts - H1310: <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand - H1330: Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) - H2110: Embryonic shifting dunes - H2120: Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes") - H2130: Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes") - H2190: Humid dune slacks - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1395: Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Downton Gorge SAC	UK0012735	Within 15km	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012735.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5808315439251456?category=5134123047845888</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0012735.pdf</p>	- H9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines
Drostre Bank SAC	UK0012878	Within Powys	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012878.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671765/drostre-bank-sac-plan-jan-08-a.pdf</p>	<p>- H6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)</p> <p>- H91E0: Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)</p>
Dyfi Estuary / Aber Dyfi SPA	UK9020284	Within Powys	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9020284.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671834/Dyfi%20SPA-Plan%20English.pdf</p>	- A395w: Greenland white-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>
Elenydd - Mallaen SPA	UK9014111	Within Powys	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9014111.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671965/Elenydd_cSAC_core_English.pdf</p>	<p>- A074r: Red kite <i>Milvus milvus</i></p> <p>- A098r: Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i></p>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Elenydd SAC	UK0012928	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012928.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/671965/Elenydd_cSAC_core_English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3130: Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i> - H4030: European dry heaths - H6130: Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> - H7130: Blanket bogs (* if active bog) - S1831: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>
Granllyn SAC	UK0030158	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030158.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672352/Granllyn%20SAC%20Management%20Plan%202021.4.08%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1166: Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>
Grogwynion SAC	UK0030160	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030160.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672442/Grogwynion%20SAC%20Plan%20English%20(edit).pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H6130: Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i>
Johnstown Newt Sites SAC	UK0030173	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030173.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672594/Johnstown%20Newt%20Site%20Management%20Plan%20April%202008%20_English_.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1166: Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Llangorse Lake/ Llyn Syfaddan SAC	UK0012985	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012985.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672671/Llangorse%20lake%20core%20management%20plan.pdf	- H3150: Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation
Llyn Tegid Ramsar	UK14008	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK14008.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673374/river-dee-bala-lake-32-plan.pdf	- Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types - Crit. 2 - supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened eco. communities
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar	UK11043	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11043.pdf NE Data: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteGeneralDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK11043	- Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types - Crit. 2 - supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened eco. communities
Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar	UK11080	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11080.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672011/fens-and-whixhall-wes-english.pdf NE Data: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteGeneralDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK11080	- Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types - Crit. 2 - supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened eco. communities



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SAC	UK0030205	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030205.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672797/MigneintADd%20WES32%20plan%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3130: Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoëto-Nanojuncetea</i> - H3160: Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds - H4010: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> - H4030: European dry heaths - H7130: Blanket bogs (* if active bog) - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Migneint-Arenig-Dduallt SPA	UK9013131	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9013131.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672797/MigneintADd%20WES32%20plan%20English.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A082r: Hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> - A098r: Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> - A103r: Peregrine falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Montgomery Canal SAC	UK0030213	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030213.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/672802/Montgomery%20Canal%20SAC%20Management%20Plan%20_English_.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1831: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>
Mynydd Epynt SAC	UK0030221	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030221.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673042/Mynydd%20Epynt%20SAC%20%20Management%20Plan%20April%202008%20_English_A_.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1393: Slender green feather-moss <i>Drepanocladus (Hamatocaulis) vernicosus</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Northern Cardigan Bay / Gogledd Bae Ceredigion SPA	UK9020327	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9020327.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/688112/spa_uk9020327_enreg_37.pdf	- A001w: Red-throated diver <i>Gavia stellata</i>
Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau/ Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC	UK0013117	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0013117.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/694977/pen-llyn-ar-sarnau-reg-37-report-2018-english.pdf	- H1110: Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - H1130: Estuaries - H1140: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - H1150: Coastal lagoons - H1160: Large shallow inlets and bays - H1170: Reefs - H1310: <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand - H1330: Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) - H8330: Submerged or partially submerged sea caves - S1349: Bottlenose dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> - S1364: Grey seal <i>Halichoerus grypus</i>
Rhos Goch SAC	UK0014792	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0014792.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/682753/rhos-goch-sac-core-management-plan-english.pdf	- H6410: <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) - H7110: Active raised bogs - H7140: Transition mires and quaking bogs - H91D0: Bog woodland - H91E0: Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
River Clun SAC	UK0030250	Within 15km	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030250.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6453431740923904?category=5134123047845888</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030250.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1029: Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
River Dee and Bala Lake/ Afon Dyfrdwy a Llyn Tegid SAC	UK0030252	Within 15km / D/S site	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030252.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673374/river-dee-bala-lake-32-plan.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4660149109129216?category=4582026845880320</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0030252.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3260: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1096: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1106: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - S1163: Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> - S1831: Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>
River Usk/ Afon Wysg SAC	UK0013007	Within Powys	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0013007.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673384/river-usk-sac-core-plan.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3260: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1096: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1102: Allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i> - S1103: Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> - S1106: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - S1163: Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
River Wye/ Afon Gwy SAC	UK0012642	Within Powys	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012642.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/a0ooioqx/river-wye-sac-core-management-plan-approved.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6096799802589184?category=5134123047845888</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/TerrrestrialAdvicePDFs/UK0012642.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H3260: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation - H7140: Transition mires and quaking bogs - S1092: White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1096: Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1102: Allis shad <i>Alosa alosa</i> - S1103: Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> - S1106: Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - S1163: Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> - S1355: Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
Severn Estuary Ramsar	UK11081	D/S site	#N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types - Crit. 3 - supports populations of plant/animal species important for maintaining regional biodiversity - Crit. 4 - supports plant/animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge - Crit. 5 - regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds - Crit. 6 - regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species/subspecies of waterbirds - Crit. 8 - important source of food for fishes, spawning ground, nursery and/or migration path

Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Severn Estuary SPA	UK9015022	D/S site	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9015022.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673887/severn-estuary-sac-spa-and-ramsar-reg-33-advice-from-ne-and-ccw-june-09.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5601088380076032?category=5374002071601152</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9015022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A037w: Tundra swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> - A048w: Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> - A051w: Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i> - A162w: Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> - A394w: Greater white-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i> - A672w: Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> - WATR: Waterbird assemblage
Severn Estuary/ Môr Hafren SAC	UK0013030	D/S site	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0013030.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673887/severn-estuary-sac-spa-and-ramsar-reg-33-advice-from-ne-and-ccw-june-09.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6081105098702848?category=5374002071601152</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK0013030</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H1110: Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - H1130: Estuaries - H1140: Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - H1170: Reefs - H1330: Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) - S1095: Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1099: River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1103: Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i>



Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
Sugar Loaf Woodlands SAC	UK0030072	Within 15km	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030072.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/674063/sugar_loaf_woodlands_core_management_plan_mar_2008- a .pdf	- H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Tanat and Vyrnwy Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Tanat ac Efyrrwy SAC	UK0014783	Within Powys	JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0014783.pdf NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/674205/tanat-and-vyrnwy-bat-sites-sac-mp-15-april-2008-english.pdf	- S1303: Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
The Dee Estuary Ramsar	UK11082	D/S site	#N/A	- Crit. 1 - sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types - Crit. 2 - supports vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened eco. communities - Crit. 5 - regularly supports 20,000 or more waterbirds - Crit. 6 - regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species/subspecies of waterbirds

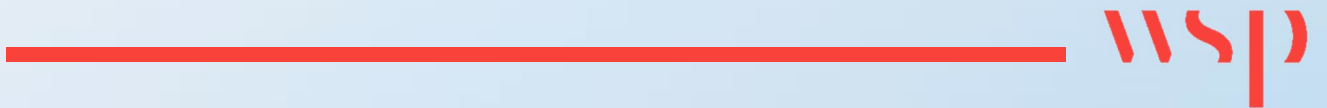


Site	Code	Location	Site Information	Qualifying Features
The Dee Estuary SPA	UK9013011	D/S site	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9013011.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/673576/dee-estuary-reg33-volume-1-english-091209_1.pdf</p> <p>NE Cons. Obj. & SIP: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6557770283220992?category=4582026845880320</p> <p>NE Supp. Adv: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9013011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A048w: Common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> - A052w: Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i> - A054w: Northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> - A130w: Eurasian oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> - A141w: Grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> - A143w: Red knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> - A157w: Bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> - A160w: Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> - A162c: Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> - A162w: Common redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> - A191c: Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> - A193r: Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> - A195r: Little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> - A616w: Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> - A672w: Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> - WATR: Waterbird assemblage
The Stiperstones and The Hollies SAC	UK0012810	Within 15km	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0012810.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H91A0: Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Usk Bat Sites/ Safleoedd Ystlumod Wysg SAC	UK0014784	Within Powys	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0014784.pdf</p> <p>NRW Core Mgmt. Plan: https://naturalresources.wales/media/674281/Usk%20Bat%20Sites%20Management%20Plan%20Feb%202008.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H4030: European dry heaths - H7120: Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration - H7130: Blanket bogs (* if active bog) - H8210: Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation - H8310: Caves not open to the public - H9180: <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines - S1303: Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>
West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC	UK0030397	Within 15km / D/S site	<p>JNCC Data Form: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030397.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S1351: Harbour porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>



Appendix B

PREFERRED STRATEGY POLICY
REVIEW



APPENDIX B – PREFERRED STRATEGY POLICY REVIEW

Table B-1 – ‘Screening’ review of Preferred Strategy policies

Policy	Initial 'screening' at PS stage	Screening Notes
Strategic Policy SP1 – Scale of Growth	Uncertain	Policy identifies the overall quantum of provision for housing and employment growth in the Powys LPA area; scale of provision likely to be manageable without unavoidable adverse effects (i.e. the quantum is not so great that adverse effects are likely irrespective of how and where the growth is delivered) but requires consideration through appropriate assessment, in combination with policies SP2 - SP4.
Strategic Policy SP2 – Sustainable Growth Strategy	Uncertain	Policy (with SP3) outlines the broad distribution of housing etc. growth within the LPA area so provides some spatial direction for the quantum associated with SP1; allocations are not identified at this stage, however, and the policies are not specific regarding the numbers of homes etc. within or near each settlement, limiting the assessment that can be achieved at the preferred strategy stage.
Strategic Policy SP3 – Distribution of Growth	Uncertain	Policy (with SP2) outlines the broad distribution of housing etc. growth within the LPA area so provides some spatial direction for the quantum associated with SP1; allocations are not identified at this stage, however, and the policies are not specific regarding the numbers of homes etc. within or near each settlement, limiting the assessment that can be achieved at the preferred strategy stage.
Strategic Policy SP4 – Housing Growth	No LSE	Policy outlining breakdown of anticipated housing provision. Note that ~50% of the provision already has permission or has been built, so is outside the scope of the HRA.
Strategic Policy SP5 – Affordable and Specialist Homes	No LSE	Policy identifies the overall target for affordable housing in the Powys LPA area and measures for delivery. Policy outlines further requirements / expectations for affordable and specialist housing.
Strategic Policy SP6 – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation	Uncertain	Policy has a spatial component that is not yet defined; requires review as the plan develops, although significant effects very unlikely based on broad location and scale, and proximity / characteristics of nearest European sites.
Strategic Policy SP7 – Employment Growth	Uncertain	Policy for employment growth associated with the overall quantum of development in the area; policy also has a spatial component.
Strategic Policy SP8 – Retail Growth	No LSE	Policy does not allocate retail sites and therefore is a general statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development.

Policy	Initial 'screening' at PS stage	Screening Notes
Strategic Policy SP9 – Town Centre Hierarchy	No LSE	Directs retail development towards town centres but does not specify location or quantum, therefore general statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development.
Strategic Policy SP10 – Sustainable Tourism	No LSE	Policy does not allocate tourism sites or suggest a quantum of provision and therefore is a general statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development.
Strategic Policy SP11 – Infrastructure	No LSE	Policy does not identify specific infrastructure or suggest a quantum of provision and therefore is a general statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development.
Strategic Policy SP12 – Climate Change	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP13 - Sustainable Transport in Regional Growth Area Cluster and Local Cluster Settlements	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP14 - Sustainable Transport in Non-Cluster / Rural Settlements and the Open Countryside	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP15 – Flood Risk	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP16 – Good Design	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP17 – Creating Healthy Places	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP18 – Nature Recovery	No LSE*	Protective policy; no pathway for effects but contains mitigating elements that are examined through AA.

Policy	Initial 'screening' at PS stage	Screening Notes
Strategic Policy SP19 – Natural Environment	No LSE*	Protective policy; no pathway for effects but contains mitigating elements that are examined through AA.
Strategic Policy SP20 – Green Infrastructure	No LSE*	Protective policy; no pathway for effects but contains mitigating elements that are examined through AA.
Strategic Policy SP21 – Built and Historic Environment	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP22 – Protecting Strategic Resources	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP23 – Welsh Language and Culture	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP24 – Social and Community Facilities	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP25 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction. Note that policy defers to Policies 17 and 18 of Future Wales regarding potential broad locations for renewable energy proposals.
Strategic Policy SP26 – Mineral Resource Management	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.
Strategic Policy SP27 – Waste Management	No LSE	General statement of policy / general design / guidance criteria, or policies that cannot lead to or trigger development; does not provide explicit spatial direction.



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