

**HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT
OF THE CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN**

**SCREENING REPORT FOR CONSULTATION WITH THE
SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN**

NOVEMBER 2013

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of a Habitat Regulations Assessment is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of sites protected by European law. The assessment must determine whether the Local Plan would adversely affect the integrity of the sites in terms of their nature conservation objectives. Where negative effects are identified, other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.
- 1.2 Whilst there are no European Sites within Crawley, there are three sites within 15 kilometres of the b

5.0 The relevant European Sites

- 5.1 There are no European Sites within Crawley itself; however, the table below lists those sites within 760.92 5o2t.2hies

research (see Appendix B further details) it was considered that it was unlikely that the Local Plan would impact upon the conservation objectives of this European site, either on its own or in combination with other plans. This conclusion reflects the distance of the site from Crawley and also that the and discharge consent processes should avoid impacts to water levels and quality.

- 5.5 Consequently, the council considers that none of the sites beyond the 15km boundary will be significantly affected by the Local Plan. The remainder of this Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report will therefore concentrate on the three sites located within the 15km buffer.

6.0 The Local Plan

- 6.1 The review of the Core Strategy will result in a Local Plan for Crawley that will set out the c borough over the period to 2030

Likely key outcomes and impacts of the plan

6.8 It is expected that the Local Plan will have to provide for:

At least 3,800 new homes delivered through several significant developments, some of which are already allocated in the adopted Core Strategy (2008) (e.g. the North East Sector). The developments will include an appropriate housing mix with a 30% proportion of affordable housing, as well as provision of jobs, shops, cultural and recreational facilities, education, health and community facilities and other necessary infrastructure, particularly transport. The developments will be located and designed to enable accessibility by all members of the community, and must facilitate the use of sustainable resources and minimise their carbon footprint. Environmental constraints and opportunities will be taken into account, and the Plan includes improvements and extensions to areas designated for their nature conservation interest;

Additional employment land, particularly within the Manor Royal Business Estate.
The Town Centre North redevelopment.

6.9 As such, the potential impacts of the Local Plan are to be in the form of:

Increased traffic leading to increased air pollution, which could affect species that are sensitive to air quality (e.g. lichens);

Increased recreational visits possibly with associated disturbance of fauna and impacts on the habitats (e.g. through trampling);

Changes to water levels along the Mole Valley; and

Changes to water quality along the Mole Valley.

In combination effects

6.10 Between the Local Plan period between 2015 and 2030, there are also likely to be a number of developments (notably additional housing) in local authorities adjoining and close to Crawley that could negatively impact upon the three European Sites

6.11 A number of Local Authorities are reviewing their local housing targets and development proposals in light of the Localism Bill, the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and revocation of the South East Plan in 2013.

Mid Sussex

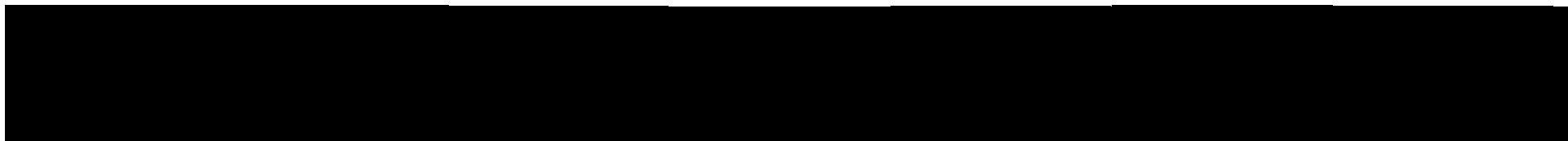
10,600 between 2011-2031 or
530 p.a.

Submission District Plan
(May

Table 7.1: Screening for Ashdown Forest SAC for the Crawley Local Plan

| Site | Qualifying Features | Key environmental conditions to support site integrity | Possible impacts arising from the Core Strategy Review | Is there a risk of a significant effect? | Possible impacts from other trends, plans etc. | Is there a significant risk of 'in combination' effects? |
|--------------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Ashdown Forest SAC | Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath Dry heaths Great crested newt | Minimal air pollution (nitrogen deposition can cause compositional changes over time) Use of grazing management to prevent succession Balanced hydrological regime to maintain wet heath. | Potential air pollution emissions from development and additional traffic. | No - The Site is 10km away from the administrative boundary of Crawley | Developments in Wealden, Mid Sussex, Tandridge and Sevenoaks could result in increased air pollution. | Difficult to asses. See Section 8 below. |
| | | Low recreational disturbance Absence of urbanisation Suitable foraging and refuge habitat within 500m of ponds. Relatively unpolluted water of roughly neutral pH. Some ponds deep enough to retain water throughout February to August at least one year in every three. Great crested newts require good connectivity of landscape features (ponds, hedges etc) as they often live as metapopulations in a number of ponds. | New development in Crawley could potentially increase traffic and recreational pressure in the forest. | No - Evidence suggests that very few existing Crawley residents access the site on a regular basis. | Developments in Wealden, Mid Sussex, Tandridge and Sevenoaks could all increase traffic levels and recreational visits. In particular, an East Grinstead Relief Road could result in A22 becoming a more attractive route for traffic | Plans for Mid Sussex and Wealden have been shown to have an impact and are therefore taking necessary steps to ensure that there is no conflict. Whilst new development in Crawley would result in some increase in visitors to Ashdown Forest, these numbers are predicted to be relatively small. |

Table 7.3: Screening for Ashdown Forest SPA for the Crawley Local Plan



- 8.7 The findings confirm that Ashdown Forest is a well-used resource with annual visits to the Forest estimated at around 1.35 million, with the majority of people (60.0%) visiting for the primary purpose of dog-walking. Nearly 85% of the people visiting the forest by car, travelled 10km or less, indicating significant usage by the local population.

semi-natural spaces and what their preferred mode of transport would be. The majority indicated that they were willing to travel up to 10 minutes to access a natural or semi-natural green space, with around 45% of people walking and only 30% traveling by car. This indicates that residents within Crawley do want natural areas close t

9.0 Conclusions of the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report

9.1 The council considers that the possible effects of the Local Plan will not have a the European Sites considered as part of this Screening Report.

Ashdown Forest SAC

9.2 It was considered that increased air pollution would be the main adverse impact of the Local Plan on this particular site. However, it has been indicated that the increases in traffic flows (particularly on the A22, A275, A26 and B2110) resulting from development proposed within the Local Plan would not adversely affect air quality in the Ashdown Forest.

Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC

9.3 The Screening Report reveals there to be no risk of significant effects on the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC, either directly or in combination with other plans. In terms of air pollution, this is more easily dealt with at other scales. With regards to water levels and quality, will ensure that the Local Plan will not significantly impact upon conservation objectives. In addition, Crawley is not a significant source of visitors to the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment, primarily because there are so many other locations to undertake recreational activities in and around the borough.

Ashdown Forest SPA

9.4 Recreation pressure was identified as being the greatest potential adverse impact of the Local Plan on this site. The HRA (2013) and supporting documents developed on behalf of Mid-Sussex District Council and Wealden District Council demonstrates that the Local Plan is objectives. The c Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment indicates not only that there are sufficient accessible natural and semi-natural green spaces within the town for the local population prefer to access such spaces by foot. There is therefore, no evidence to suggest that the Local Plan will increase the incidence of leisure visits to the Ashdown Forest to a significant degree.

10.0 Consultation Arrangements

10.1 This Screening Report has been published alongside the Crawley Borough Council Submission of its Local Plan and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report, for a statutory six week public consultation period, which starts on 13th January 2014 and concludes on the 24th February 2014. All comments received on the Screening Report are welcomed. Should you wish to comment on this document, please do so on or before **5pm on 24th February 2014**.

10.2 There are three ways in which representations can be submitted:

- Electronically using the dedicated webpage: www.crawley.gov.uk/crawley2029
- Electronically by email to forward.plans@crawley.gov.uk
- By post to Forward Planning, Crawley Borough Council, Town Hall, The Boulevard, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1UZ.

10.3 For further information about the Habitat Regulations Assessment, please contact James Webster on (01293) 438450 or e-mail forward.plans@crawley.gov.uk

10.4 The Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report can be viewed on the council's website at www.crawley.gov.uk/crawley2029

10.5 Hard copies of the documents are also available to view at:

Town Hall: The Boulevard, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1UZ. Phone 01293 438000
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8.30 am - 5.00 pm.

Crawley Library: Southgate Avenue, Southgate, Crawley, RH10 6HG.
Phone 01293 651744. Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.00 am -7.00 pm Saturday
9.00 am -5.00 pm

Broadfield Library: 46 Broadfield Barton, Broadfield, Crawley, RH11 9BA
Phone 01293 543298 Opening hours: Monday

APPENDIX A: Location of European sites in relation to Crawley Borough's Boundaries

APPENDIX B: Other sites considered

Table B.1: Screening for South West London Waterbodies SPA for the Crawley local plan

| Site | Qualifying Features | Key environmental conditions to support site integrity | Possible impacts arising |
|------|---------------------|--|--------------------------|
|------|---------------------|--|--------------------------|