

Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and
Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening
Report

North Somerset Council

July 2020



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Contents

Section

1	Introduction-purpose of this report	3
2	Scope of the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan	4
3	SEA screening requirements	7
4	HRA screening requirements	19
5	Conclusions	28

Tables

Table 1	Application of the SEA Directive to the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan - rationale	8
Table 2	Criteria for determining the likely significant effects referred to in Article 3 (5) of Directive 2001/42/EC and assessment of these.	12
Table 3	HRA Categorisation of effects on European wildlife sites	24
Table 4	Assessment of likely significant effects on European sites affecting North Somerset through implementation of the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan	25

Appendices

Appendix 1	Application of the SEA Directive to the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan - flow diagram	30
Appendix 2a	Tidal flood zones 3a and 3b	31
Appendix 2b	Fluvial flood zones 3a and 3b	31
Appendix 2c	Tidal Flood zones 3a and 3b in relation to sites HO1, HO2 and CAF2	32
Appendix 2d	Fluvial Flood zones 3a and 3b in relation to sites HO1, HO2 and CAF2	32
Appendix 3a	Historic environment constraints	33
Appendix 3b	Historic environment constraints in relation to policies HO1 HO2 and CAF2	34
Appendix 4a	European sites in the Neighbourhood Area	35
Appendix 4b	North Somerset and Mendip Bat SAC consultation zones	36
Appendix 4c	Details and qualifying features or Severn Estuary Site and Avon woodlands SAC	37

1 Introduction - purpose of this report

- 1.1 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that one of the basic conditions that will be tested at examination stage is to see if the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with the European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).
- 1.2 As the Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory development plan document, there is a legal requirement to assess the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan against the requirements of European Union Directive 2001/42/EC; also known as the “Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive”. The objective for SEA is: “to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.” (SEA Directive, Article 1). A full SEA is only required if the plan proposals are likely to have significant environmental effects. This screening report assesses the likelihood of this.
- 1.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will only be required for a Neighbourhood Plan if it is likely to cause significant environment effects. Neighbourhood plans that are located near to a European wildlife site may also trigger the Habitats Directive depending on how complex the proposed policies are. The Duty to Cooperate requires the Local Planning Authority (alongside Natural England, Environment Agency, and English Heritage) to advise and assist on SEA and HRA requirements. This involves the Local Planning Authority undertaking a screening assessment of the emerging neighbourhood plan proposals at an early stage to ascertain whether they will trigger any EU directives or Habitat directives and thus to avoid the community and local authority undertaking unnecessary work.
- 1.4 The Habitats Regulations (2010) require an assessment of land use planning proposals associated with neighbourhood plans. The assessment process examines the likely significant effects of the policies on the integrity of the European wildlife sites of nature conservation importance within, close to or connected to the plan area. European wildlife sites are areas of international nature conservation importance that are protected for the benefit of the habitats and species they support. This assessment is known as a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). For the purposes of the HRA, international designated wildlife sites are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Ramsar wetland sites.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

- 1.5 This screening report is in two parts. Section 3 sets out whether or not the contents of the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan (NP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Section 4 looks at whether a full HRA is required under the Habitat Regulations 2010.

2 Scope of the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Pill and District Neighbourhood Area lies to the west of Bristol within North Somerset District and is separated from Bristol by the River Avon. It comprises the two parishes of Abbots Leigh, and Pill and Easton-in-Gordano.
- 2.2 The Plan is being prepared by the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan steering group on behalf of Abbots Leigh and Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Councils and this screening report has been undertaken by North Somerset Council on the consultation draft version of the plan, published in April 2020.
- 2.3 The Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan does not attempt to wholly replace North Somerset Councils Local Plan policies (Core Strategy 2017, Development Management Plan 2016 and Sites and Policies Plan 2017). It seeks to add local context to the existing planning policy framework. Where silent on an issue it is the existing adopted planning policies in the Core Strategy, Development Management Plan and Site Allocations Plan which will be used in consideration of development proposals. The Plans timescale is to 2026 to align with the North Somerset Council Core Strategy.
- 2.4 The Plan specifically considers the following:

Housing

- Allocation of two housing sites one edge of settlement of around 16 affordable housing units and the other a brownfield mixed redevelopment of around 24 mixed tenure homes and 60 bed care home
- A requirement for an energy assessment for new development
- The circumstances in which infill development will be appropriate

Transport

- Encouragement of walking, cycling and public transport
- Consideration of the impact of electric car use and minimisation of air pollution impacts of new development
- Consideration of the impact of re-opening Portishead railway line

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Landscape environment and biodiversity and heritage

- protect high sensitivity landscape, open spaces and grass verges
- new development to respect historic environment setting and commitment to investigate conservation area designation in Abbots Leigh

Economy

- policies to promote small businesses and protection of existing employment uses

Climate emergency

- support for domestic renewable energy proposals

Community facilities

- protection for valued open spaces, new recreational facilities, and redevelopment or enhancement of Pill Precinct

The vision is:-

“A distinctive, stable and sustainable neighbourhood meeting local needs and promoting strong communities”.

The primary objectives of the Plan are to:-

- Contribute to meeting local housing need through a mix of tenure, size and affordability.
- Minimise the impact of road traffic on congestion, parking, safety, and pollution.
- Encourage walking and cycling and ensure the accessibility, convenience and safety of cycle and walking routes
- Sustain and enhance the landscape, ecology and bio-diversity of the area whilst protecting its environmental assets.
- Respect, preserve and protect the history and the heritage of the built environment.
- Support the generation of local jobs for local people.
- Respond to climate change and move towards a carbon neutral neighbourhood
- Protect, maintain and enhance open spaces, rights of way and pathways for walking and cycling.
- Celebrate and sustain the strengths, cohesion and inclusion of the diverse communities of the area.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report



3 SEA requirements

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan which in this case is taken to be the North Somerset Core Strategy. The Core Strategy was subject to a full Sustainability Appraisal which included a SEA assessment. This ensured that there were no likely significant effects which would be produced from the implementation of the Core Strategy and if so ensured mitigation measures were in place. The council considers that there is general conformity between the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan and the Core Strategy and that there are no significant changes introduced by the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan. There is only one area of concern in relation to Core Strategy policy CS3 “Environmental Impacts and flood risk assessment”. Neighbourhood Plan policy CAF 2 “proposals for the redevelopment and enhancement of Improvement Area 4-the Pill Precinct “and this will be discussed later in this screening.
- 3.2 This screening report follows the ODPM guidance on SEA’s on ascertaining whether a full SEA is required. That guidance is set out in a flow diagram which is reproduced in appendix 1.
- 3.3 The process followed to complete the assessment accords with the diagram (Figure 2) of the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (reproduced below). The table which follows sets out the assessment undertaken in accordance with that diagram.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

**Table 1
Application of SEA Directive to the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan**

Stage	Y/N	Reason
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y Go to Q2	The preparation of and adoption of the NP is allowed under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The NP is prepared by Pill and Easton-in-Gordano, and Abbots Leigh Parish Councils (as the "relevant body") and will be made" by NSC as the local authority. The preparation of NPs is subject to The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	N Go to Q3	Communities have a right to be able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, however communities are not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative purposes to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This plan however if adopted, would form part of the statutory development plan, therefore it is considered necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if an SEA is required.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for	N Go to Q4	The Pill and District NP is prepared to set out a framework for town and country planning and the future development of a number of land uses within the combined parishes of Pill & Easton-in-Gordano and Abbots Leigh, however it does not anticipate being the tool to manage development of the scale and nature envisaged by Annex I

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Stage	Y/N	Reason
future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))		
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	N Go to Q5	The HRA screening assessment is undertaken at Section 4 of this report. It concludes that no Appropriate Assessment is required as the implementation of the plan is unlikely to have any significant adverse effects on protected species or their habitats
5. Does the PP Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art 3.3) <i>European Commission guidance suggests that plans which determine the use of small areas at local level might include “a building plan which, for a particular, limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design”</i>	Y Go to Q8	Determines the use of two sites within the plan area larger than individual buildings, but within a contained footprint. One is the redevelopment of an existing brownfield site within the perimeter of the site of a previous hospital within the green belt. The other is an edge of settlement greenfield site within the green belt. The plan also supports the redevelopment or enhancement of a village centre precinct, but does not contain a specific proposal for this.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Stage	Y/N	Reason
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y Go to Q8	The NP is to be used for determining future planning applications.
7. Is the PP's sole role to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7?(Art 3.8, 3.9)	N	n/a
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	A screening exercise has identified that an Appropriate Assessment was not required (see section 4 of this report). No development is proposed in locations which would have a significant adverse effect on heritage assets or landscape or biodiversity interests, however policy CAF2 which supports the redevelopment or refurbishment of the Pill precinct is likely to have implications for flood risk as the site is subject to flood zones 3b fluvial and 3a tidal. In this respect it is considered that an SEA will be required for Policy CAF2

3.4 In relation to 8 in the table above the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC include two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. These relate to: i) the characteristics of the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan and ii) the characteristics of the effects and of

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

the area likely to be affected by the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan. These form the basis for the conclusion set out in 8, that a likely significant effect upon the environment has been identified in relation to policy CAF2 and flood risk.

- 3.5 In making a determination, North Somerset Council has taken into account the criteria specified in Schedule I of the Regulations as set out in table 2 below.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Table 2

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects referred to in Article 3 (5) of Directive 2001/42/EC and assessment of these.

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Significant environmental effects likely?	Response
1) Characteristics of the plan and programmes, having regard, in particular to:-		
a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	<p>The Plan will set a framework for development proposals within the Neighbourhood Area of a level which conforms with the North Somerset Core Strategy which has been subject to SEA.</p> <p>Abbots Leigh is an infill village washed over by the Green Belt, where very limited development will take place. The Plan proposes only conversion of existing rural buildings within this part of the NDP area.</p> <p>Easton-in-Gordano is a service village surrounded by but not within the Green Belt. Service villages have a level of facilities and services which can support some additional development either within or adjacent to the settlement boundary of up to 25 dwellings. The plan allocates two sites for development and supports the redevelopment or refurbishment of another, one greenfield exceptions site for new affordable homes adjacent to the built-up area (but not the settlement boundary) of Pill/Easton-in-Gordano the redevelopment of a brownfield site within an existing hospital redevelopment in the Green Belt. Other policies support the protection of the environment but do not contain specific proposals.; supports redevelopment/refurbishment of the Pill Precinct area.</p>

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Significant environmental effects likely?	Response
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	The Neighbourhood Plan is subordinate to the Core Strategy and will sit alongside the Site Allocations Plan and Development Management Plan. It does not set the framework for lower order plans or programmes.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	<p>The Neighbourhood plan is a land use plan and is required to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Plan itself contains policies to promote sustainable development and the protection of important environmental assets. Development proposals will also need to be in accordance with environmental protection policies of the adopted Core Strategy and NPPF.</p> <p>There are a number of listed buildings within the plan area (Appendix 3a and 3b) although none of the plans policies or proposals are likely to have a significant effect on these.</p> <p>These appendices also show a registered park and garden at Leigh Court the perimeter of which is some 360m distant from the site in policy HO2, but not considered to be significantly impacted by it.</p>

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Significant environmental effects likely?	Response
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	yes	<p>The NDP area lies towards the mouth of the river Avon where it meets the Severn Estuary. Some locations within the NDP area are variously subject to fluvial flood zone 3B and tidal flood zone 3A as shown on the map at appendix 2 a-d. Sea/river defences along the edge of the River Avon and Crockern Pill are in place to protect the central area of Pill and housing around Crockerne Pill and fronting the River Avon, from tidal flooding and fluvial flooding.</p> <p>The area known as Pill Precinct is subject of policy CAF2. Part of this area is within fluvial flood zone 3B and the majority of it is within tidal flood zone 3A. The Precinct area comprises 12 commercial units with flats above, as well as adjacent car parking and garages. A flood risk assessment would be required for any redevelopment.</p>
The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection)	No	The implementation of community legislation is unlikely to be significantly compromised by this Neighbourhood Plan.

(2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:-

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Significant environmental effects likely?	Response
a) The probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects.	No	<p>This narrative concentrates on the impact of CAF2 relating to redevelopment or enhancement of Pill Precinct on flood risk. In general, in respect to the rest of the Plans proposals, in light of the scale and nature of the proposals it is considered very unlikely that other significant effects will result. The plan policies and proposals support only small scale development with the exception of a potential change of use of a site from employment to mixed use. It is improbable therefore that there will be any significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>Part of the western garage/parking area of the Pill Precinct is subject to fluvial 3b hence at significant risk of flooding with a 1:100 year probability. The flood risk comes from the culverted (at this point) Markham Brook.</p> <p>The majority of the site is affected by tidal flood zone 3a with a 1:200 year probability of flooding. The shops at ground floor level are classed as less vulnerable however residential units are located above which are in the vulnerable category.</p> <p>National policy requires that a sequential test and potentially an exceptions test is undertaken prior to any redevelopment proposals being located in this area. This has not been undertaken.</p>
b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	No	None have been identified within the Plan area

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Significant environmental effects likely?	Response
c) The trans boundary nature of the effects.	No	The area affected by fluvial flood zone 3b is contained to the central river channel and does not have cross boundary implications.
d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	No	The Pill and District Neighbourhood plan is unlikely to introduce significant risks to human health in general in light of the nature and scale of the majority of proposals. However there may be localised implications in relation to occupiers of the Pill Precinct at the time any potential flooding occurred.
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely)	No	The scale of development proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan is small and therefore the potential for environmental effects is also likely to be small and localised. It is unlikely that the effects of the proposals within the Plan will be large scale and extensive in themselves in the context of the SEA. See also c) and d) above. However in terms of the Plans proposals, the potential risk to property and persons as a result of flooding could be severe albeit localized to the Precinct area and occupiers.
f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:		
i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HRA screening assessment at section 4 of this report concludes there are unlikely to be significant effects on bats or their habitat (bat SAC). There are a number of listed buildings within the neighbourhood area and an unregistered park and garden, however none of the proposals would adversely affect these

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive	Significant environmental effects likely?	Response
ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a number of nationally or locally protected areas or buildings falling partly within the neighbourhood area (SSSI, SNCI, listed buildings) however none of the plan policies or proposals will have a direct influence on these designated areas or buildings.
iii) Intensive land use	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to result in the exceedance of environmental quality standards, such as those relating to air, water and soil quality, due to the nature and scale of the development. The Plan is unlikely to bring forward development of an extent which would result in significant intensification of local land use.
g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No	There are no such areas of landscape designation within the neighbourhood area.

Conclusions with respect to SEA Screening

3.6 On the basis of the SEA screening assessment set out in tables 1 and 2 above, the conclusion is that the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects in relation to flood risk and Policy CAF2. Although refurbishment of the Precinct is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, any proposals for the redevelopment of the Precinct area would need to be the subject of a flood risk sequential test and possibly an exceptions test. These have not been carried out to date. The affected policy CAF2 relates to a localised area however the current uses include residential uses which are classed as vulnerable.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

3.7 Options for Neighbourhood Plan Group:

- 1 amend policy CAF2 to remove the reference to support for redevelopment. Revise the SEA screening.
- 2 undertake SEA on policy CAF2

4 HRA Screening

- 4.1 The North Somerset Core Strategy was adopted in April 2012 and was subject to a high level HRA assessment. The Pill and District Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policy approach of the Core Strategy, in terms of nature and location of development and therefore broadly complies with the HRA undertaken at that time.
- 4.2 The Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan looks at a much more local level than the Core Strategy and therefore it is necessary to consider whether any policies or proposals arising from the Plan differ materially from the Core Strategy. Policy CS4 of Core Strategy seeks to protect, connect and enhance important habitats, particularly designated sites, ancient woodlands and veteran trees.
- 4.3 Development Management Policies Plan adopted in July 2016 contains policy DM8 on nature conservation which requires proposals to take account of their impact on local biodiversity including Sites of National and International importance, local nature reserves and site and legally protected species and habitats.
- 4.4 The Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to replicate these policies, or to suggest a different approach.
- 4.5 The maps at Appendix 4 demonstrate the extent of European protected sites in relation to the area covered by the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan. These designations extend beyond the neighbourhood area and outside North Somerset Councils area into Bristol City Council area. Consistent with the regulations, the screening exercise has taken account of whether significant effects are likely from the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan alone, and also whether in-combination effects are likely (taking account of other plans and projects in combination with it).
- Relevant designations are:-
- RAMSAR-Severn Estuary
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Severn Estuary SAC
 - Avon Gorge Woodlands; and
- 4.6 The Severn Estuary RAMSAR SAC and SPA are referred to collectively as the Severn Estuary Site.
- 4.7 Additional considerations-North Somerset and Mendips Bat SAC. No part of the neighbourhood area falls within the Bat SAC itself-the consultation zones are

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

set out in the North Somerset Council Bat SAC guidance on development SPD adopted 2018. The SPD is intended as a guide to developers at project level, however regard has also been had to it in the formulation of this screening exercise.

Severn Estuary Site

- 4.8 Qualifying features for the Severn Estuary Ramsar overlap with those of the SAC and the SPA. The qualifying features are provided in Appendix 4c.
- 4.9 The RAMSAR designation intermittently overlaps the neighbourhood area along the north western edge within the Severn Estuary and the north eastern edge of the neighbourhood area along the banks of the River Avon.
- 4.10 In summary the Severn Estuary site is a large estuary with extensive Intertidal mud flats and sand flats, rocky platforms and islands. Saltmarsh fringes the coast backed by grazing marsh with freshwater ditches and occasional brackish ditches. The site is of importance during the spring and autumn migration periods for waders, as well as in winter for large numbers of waterbirds, especially swans, ducks and waders. The fish fauna is very diverse and the site also supports marine worms forming an important food source for waders and fish. The site is of particular importance for migratory fish.
- 4.11 The Severn Estuary Site Improvement Plan (SIP) identifies a number of issues of which the ones most likely to relate to development is (1) public access/disturbance to wildfowl and (2) impacts of development. The identified measures for these are to 1) identify/reduce impacts of disturbance to birds and damage to habitats, and 2) inform strategic planning decisions to minimise impact of development. Account of those points has been taken in table 4 below.
- 4.12 The Neighbourhood Area boundary and North Somerset District Boundary lie along the southern side of the River Avon. The designations are however also continued across the River Avon within the Bristol City Council Boundary. This HRA screening acknowledges that effect on the designations within the neighbourhood area and also the wider designations must both be taken into account.
- 4.13 The Royal Portbury Dock has extensive landholdings on the edge of the Severn Estuary and abutting the Severn Estuary site. None of the Neighbourhood Plan proposals affect the area of the Port.

Special Areas of Conservation outside the Severn Estuary Site

Avon Gorge Woodlands

- 4.14 Part of the Avon Gorge Woodland SAC lies within the south eastern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area. Screening for the Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC description and priorities are taken from the Site Improvement Plan (SIP).
- 4.15 The Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC is good example of Tilio-Acerion forests in south-west England. It is important because of the high concentration of Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and the presence of rare whitebeams *Sorbus* spp., including at least two which are unique to the Avon Gorge (*S.bristolensis* and *S. wilmottiana*), and other nationally scarce plants, such as Angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum*.
- 4.16 The associated species-rich transitions to scrub and herb-rich calcareous open limestone grassland often found on cliff ledges support a high number of Nationally Rare and Scarce species, such as Bristol rock-cress *Arabis scabra*, round-headed leek ('Bristol onion') *Allium sphaerocephalon* and honewort *Trinia glauca*.
- 4.17 Part of the Leigh Woods side of the SAC is considered to be an important remnant wood pasture habitat which was managed as a wood pasture for many hundreds of years. This is shown by the presence of large numbers of veteran pollards, which are also highly likely to be important for saproxylic invertebrates.
- 4.18 The SIP identifies the following priorities and issues: invasive species, undergrazing, public access/disturbance, disease, changes in species distributions, and air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition.
- 4.19 It is not considered that the priorities and issues relate to policies or proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

North Somerset and Mendips Bat SAC consultation zones

- 4.20 No part of the neighbourhood area falls within the Bat SAC itself-the consultation zones are set out in the North Somerset Council Bat SAC guidance on development SPD adopted 2018. The SPD is intended as a guide to developers at project level.
- 4.21 The SPD was adopted in 2018 and therefore postdates the adoption of the North Somerset Core Strategy.
- 4.22 The Bat SAC is important for two bat species, Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats. The SAC itself comprises component SSSIs which in North Somerset include, for example, the two maternity roosts at the Brockley Hall Stables SSSI and King's Wood SSSI, and also hibernation roosts like the Banwell Bone

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Caves and, in Somerset, the maternity and hibernation roosts in the Cheddar Complex SSSI and the hibernation roosts at Wookey Hole SSSI.

- 4.23 However the landscapes around the SAC itself are also important in providing foraging habitat needed to maintain the favourable conservation status of the horseshoe bats. Therefore the SPD guidance sets out strong requirements for consultation, survey information and appropriate mitigation, to demonstrate that development proposals will not adversely impact on the designated bat populations.
- 4.24 The “Bat Consultation Zone” are areas where horseshoe bats may be found, divided into bands reflecting the density at which horseshoe species may be found at a distance from a roost site-A (most sensitive/greater density), B and C (potentially least sensitive lower densities), reflecting the likely importance of the habitat for the bats and proximity to maternity and other roosts. These are largely based on the distances recorded through radio tracking studies at Brockley Hall Stables and Cheddar Caves and research into densities of occurrence throughout the species range. Within the Consultation Zone development is likely to be subject to particular requirements, depending on the sensitivity of the site. It sets out where surveys will be needed to identify likely impacts on bat populations.
- 4.25 The Conservation Objectives for the SAC2 are: With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the ‘Qualifying Features’ which include the bat species listed above), 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:
- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
 - The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
 - The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
 - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
 - The populations of qualifying species; and,
 - The distribution of qualifying species within the site.
- 4.26 The habitats and features which support the populations of SAC bats outside the designated site are considered a material consideration in ensuring the integrity of the designated site.
- 4.27 Within the Bat Consultation Zone, where SAC bats would be affected or potentially affected by development appropriate mitigation will be required. The

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

aim should be to retain and enhance habitat and features of value to horseshoe bats. Where this is not possible replacement habitat may be needed.

- 4.28 Much of North Somerset is covered by the consultation zones with the zones in the vicinity of the Avon Gorge also including areas within Bristol City Council.
- 4.29 As the Bat SAC consultation zones are intended to be a project level tool they are of relevance to any development occurring within the neighbourhood plan area which lies within these zones. The Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan does not directly propose any development within these zones. The two site allocations for housing lie outside the horseshoe bat zone C. Policy CAF2 which supports the development or refurbishing of the Pill precinct lies within zone C as does the majority of the western side of pill and Easton-in-Gordano.

HRA Screening of the Pill and District Plan

- 4.30 Section 2 above sets out the scope of the Pill and District Plan. Considering the existing policy context and scope of the plan, it is unlikely that Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan policies could potentially have a significant effect on any of the above designations.
- 4.31 An explanation of the categorisation of effects is set out in table 3. The screening assessment of each policy is shown below in table 4.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Table 3
Categorisation of effects

Category	Sub category	Description
1. No negative effect	A	Policy/proposal will not lead directly to development in that it relates to design or other qualitative criteria, or it is not a land-use planning policy.
	B	Policy/proposal intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European Site.
	C	Policy/proposal is similar to existing Local Plan policy which has been assessed as having no negative effects by an HRA.
2. No significant effect		No significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, because effects are trivial or minimal.
3. Likely significant effect alone		Policy could indirectly affect a European Site, because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it, or it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressure.
4. Likely significant effect in combination		The policy alone would not be likely to have significant effects but its effects are combined with the effects of other policies or proposals provided for or coordinated by the relevant plans or projects the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Table 4

Assessment of likely significant effects on European sites affecting North Somerset through implementation of the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan

Plan Policy and proposals		Severn Estuary site (RAMSAR, SPA, SAC)	Avon Gorge Woodland SAC	Bat consultation zones
HO 1 Site Allocation	Brownfield site Care Home + 24 houses	2	2	2
HO 2 Site allocation	Affordable Housing exception site	2	2	2
HO 3	Requirement for energy assessment	1.A	1.A	1.A
HO4	Appropriate infill development	1.C	1.C	1.C
T1	Walking and cycling	1.A	1.A	1.A
T2	Public bus transport	1.A	1.A	1.A
T3	Minimise pollution impacts from new development	1.B	1.B	1.B
T4	Protection of public rights of way	1B	1.B	1.B
T5	Electric vehicle use	1.A	1.A	1.A
T6	Pedestrian and cyclist's safety in areas 3 and 4	1.A	1.A	1.A

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Plan Policy and proposals		Severn Estuary site (RAMSAR, SPA, SAC)	Avon Gorge Woodland SAC	Bat consultation zones
T7	Considerations of re-opening of Portishead rail link	1.C	1.C	1.C
Env1	Protect sensitive landscape area above Crockerne Drive and Brookside	1.B	1.B	1.B
Env2	Protection of open space, rich grassland and verges as wildlife habitats	1.B	1.B	1.B
Env3	Protection of natural environment of Royal Portbury Dock	1.B	1.B	1.B
Her 1	Consideration of historic environment in development proposals	1.B	1.B	1.B
Her 2	Potential conservation area for Abbots Leigh	1.B	1.B	1.B
Emp 1	Domestic extensions for homeworking	1.A	1.A	1.A
Emp 2	Conversion and re-use of redundant	1.C	1.C	1C

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Plan Policy and proposals	Severn Estuary site (RAMSAR, SPA, SAC)	Avon Gorge Woodland SAC	Bat consultation zones
buildings for employment uses			
Emp 3 Protection of existing employment uses	1.C	1.C	1.C
Emp 4 Redevelopment of Brownfield site Orchard View	1.D	1.D	1.D
Emp 5 Upgrading of digital infrastructure	1.A	1.A	1.A
CC 1 Support for proposals to enhance carbon capture and ecological biodiversity	1.B	1.B	1.B
CC 2 Domestic solar panels	1.B	1.B	1.B
CC 3 Renewable energy incorporated into development proposals	1.A	1.A	1.A
CC 4 Investigation of local wind-turbine generation	2 Policy only suggests investigation which would include environmental considerations	2 Policy only suggests investigation which would include environmental considerations	2 Policy only suggests investigation which would include environmental considerations

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Plan Policy and proposals		Severn Estuary site (RAMSAR, SPA, SAC)	Avon Gorge Woodland SAC	Bat consultation zones
CAF 1	Protection of open spaces	1.B	1.B	1.B
CAF 2	Support for Improvement of Pill Precinct	1.B	1.B	1.B
CAF 3	Support for further sports/recreational uses on Beggar Bush Lane	1.C	1.C	1.C

Conclusion with respect to HRA screening

4.32 As set out in table 4 there are unlikely to be any significant adverse effects on SAC, SPA or RAMSAR sites from the Pill and District neighbourhood plan.

5 Conclusions - screening outcomes

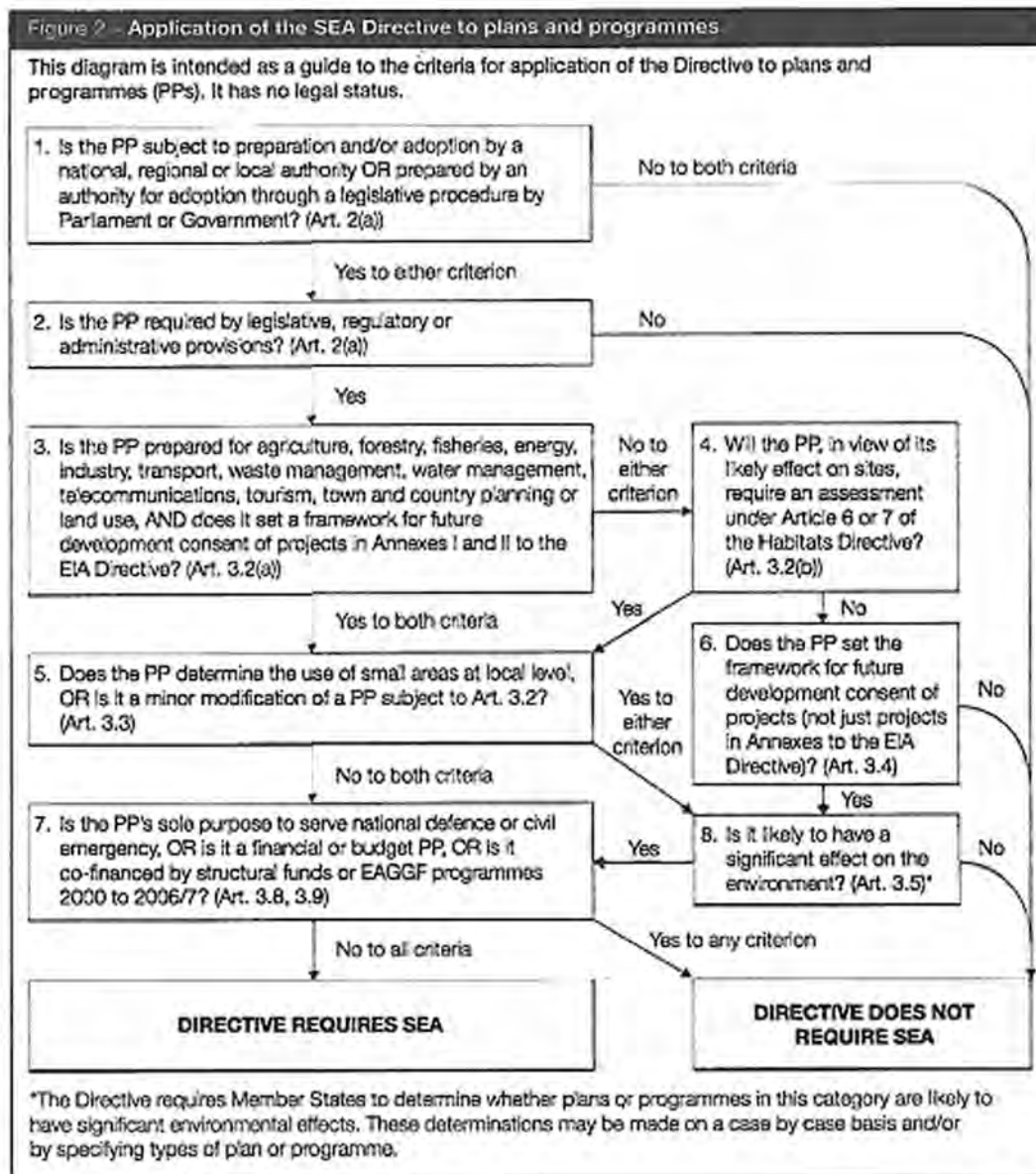
- 5.1 **SEA-**As a result of the assessment in section 3 above it can be concluded that there are only likely to be significant environmental effects arising from the Pill and District Neighbourhood plan in relation to policy CAF. As such the Plan would require a full SEA to be undertaken in relation to policy CAF only.
- 5.2 Options for Neighbourhood Plan Group:
1. amend policy CAF2 to remove the reference to support for redevelopment. Revise the SEA screening.
 2. undertake SEA on policy CAF2
- 5.3 **HRA-**As a result of the assessment in section 4 above it is unlikely that there will be any significant effects on protected species or their habitats and therefore a full HRA is not required.
- 5.4 These assessments have been undertaken at draft plan stage and therefore if any changes are made to the plan post consultation then these should be considered and a revised screening completed as necessary.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report**

Appendices

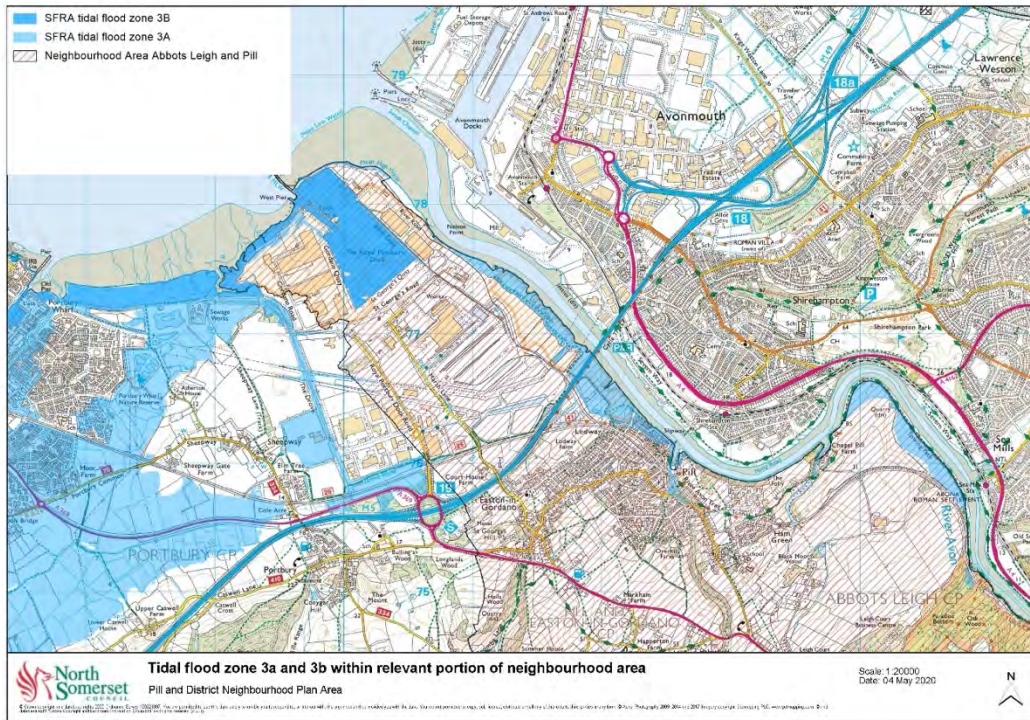
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 1 Application of the SEA Directive to the Pill and District Neighbourhood Plan

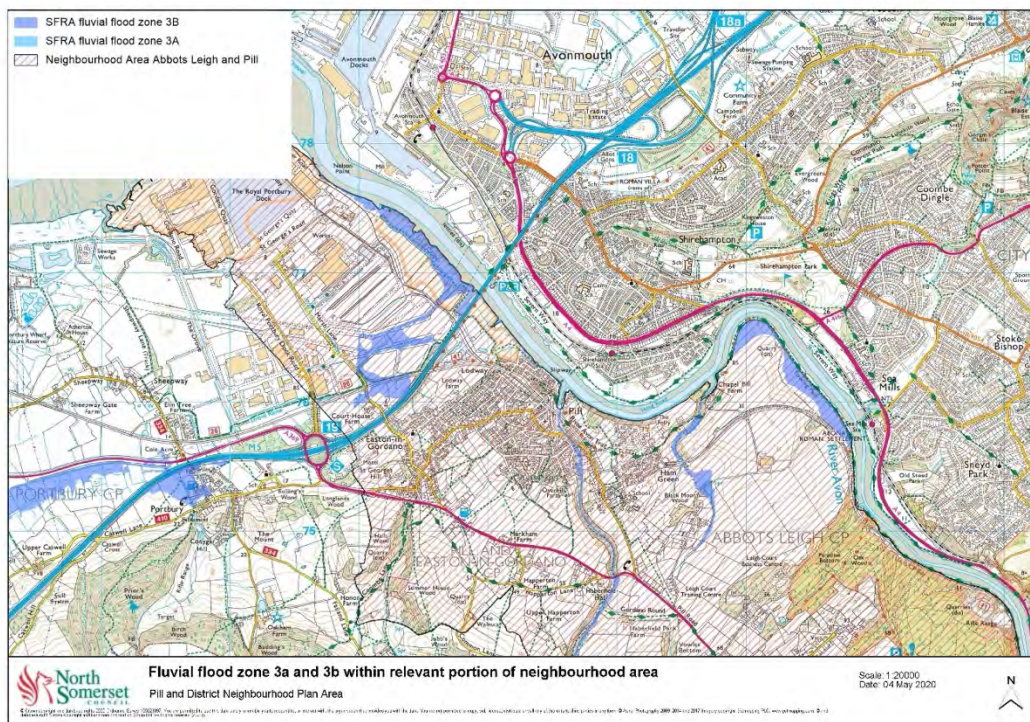


Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 2a Tidal flood zones 3a and 3b



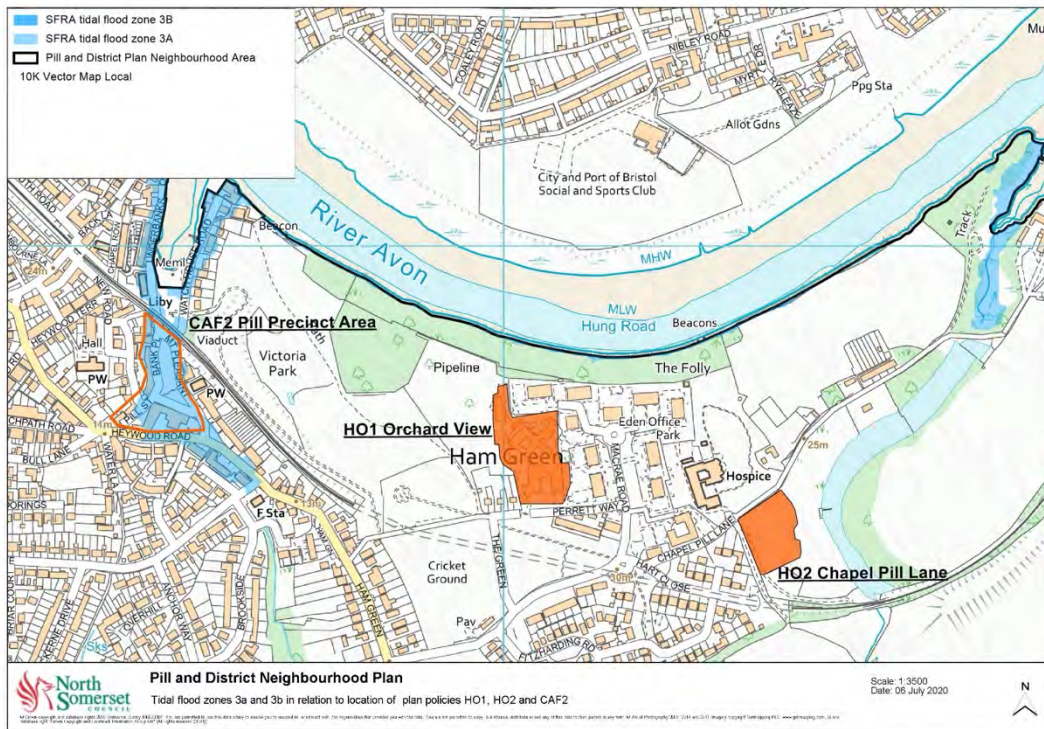
Appendix 2b Fluvial Flood zones 3a and 3b



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

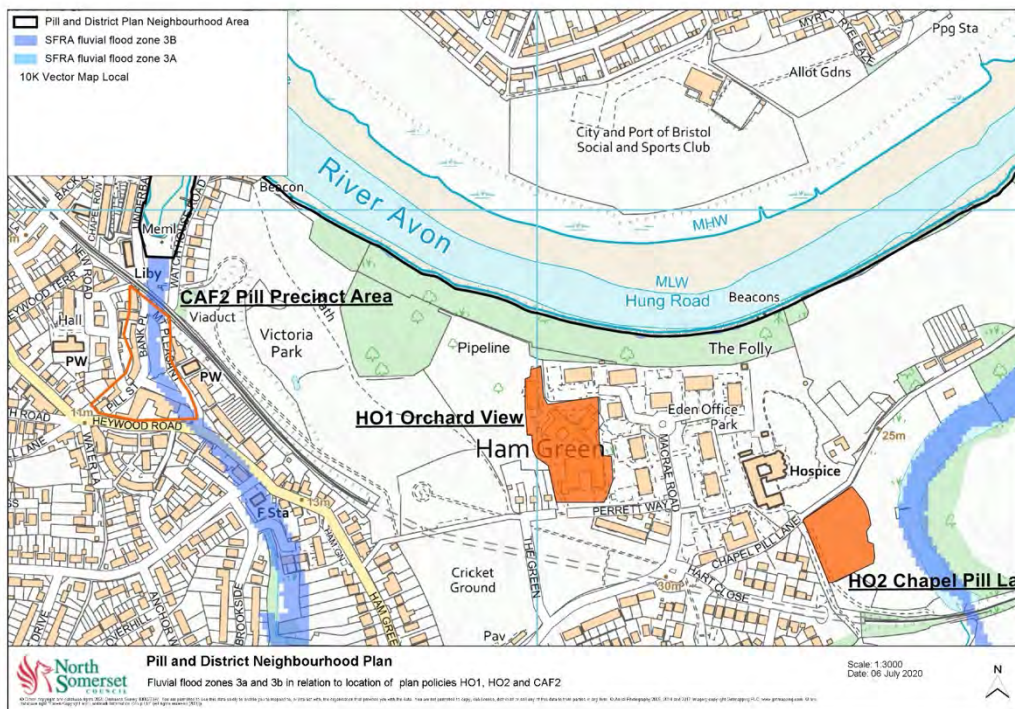
Appendix 2c

Tidal flood zones 3a and 3b in relation to sites HO1 HO2 and CAF2



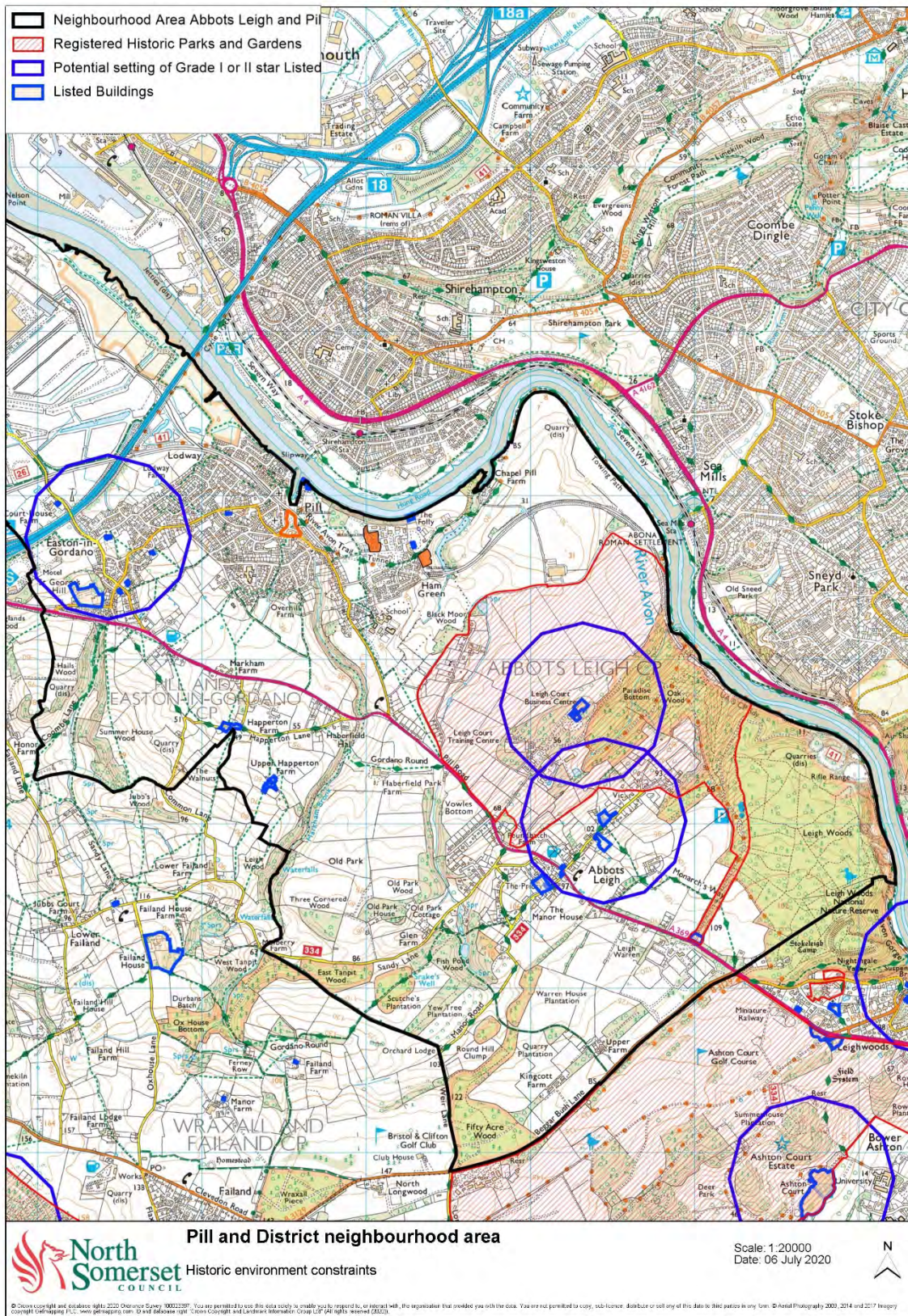
Appendix 2d

Fluvial flood zones 3a and 3b in relation to sites HO1 HO2 and



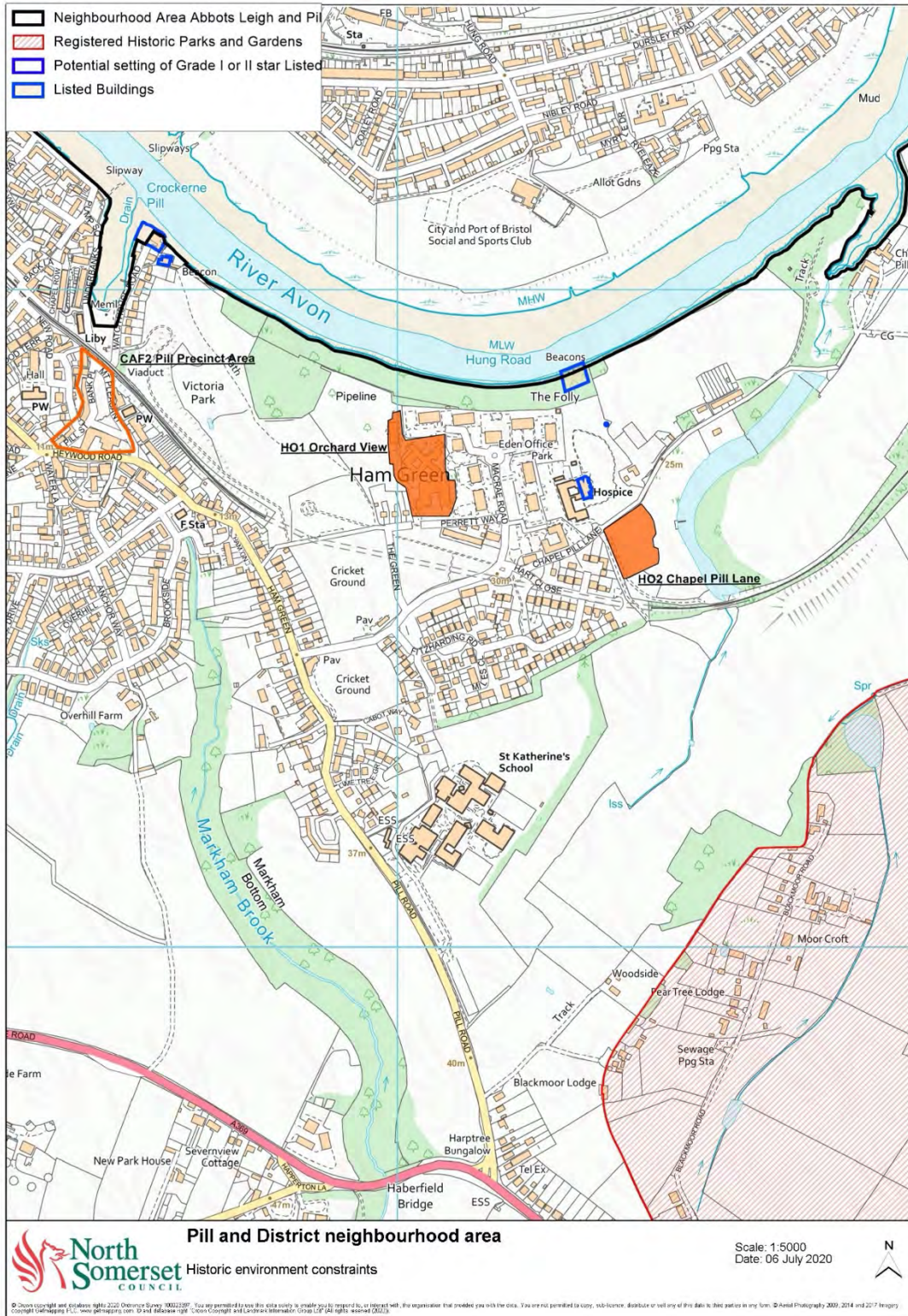
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 3a Historic environment constraints



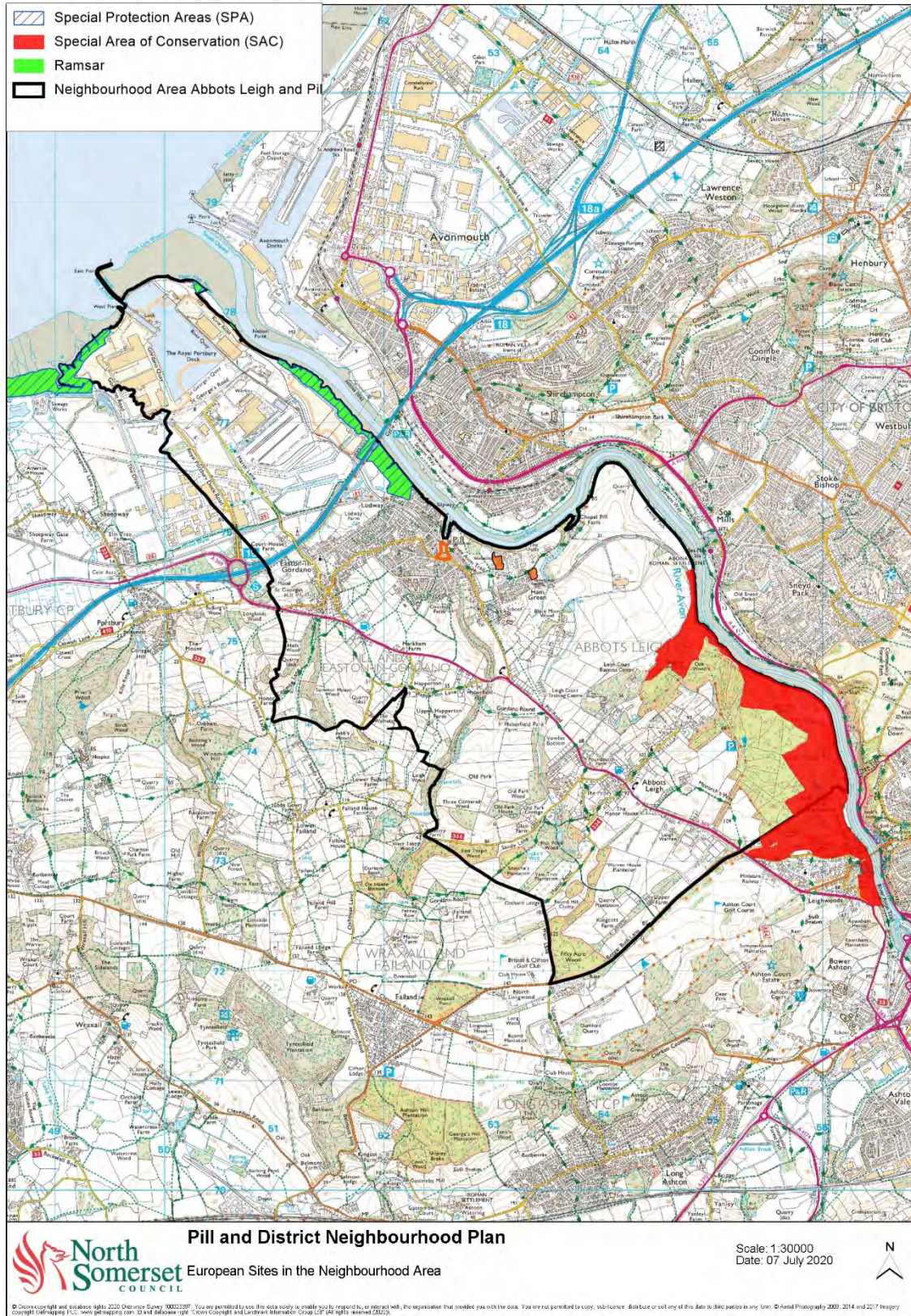
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 3b
Historic environment constraints in relation to policies HO1, Ho2
and CAF3



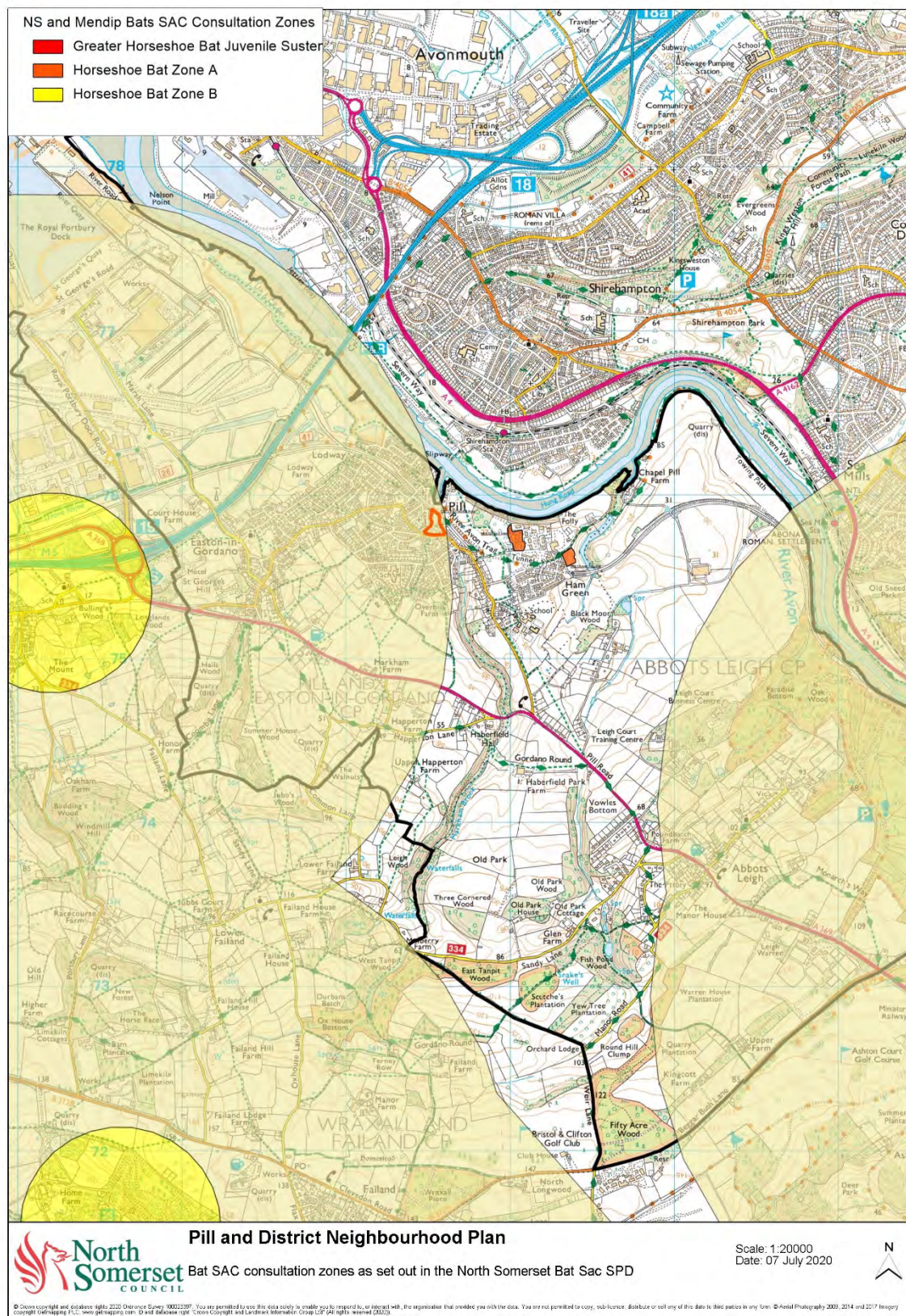
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 4a European sites in the Neighbourhood Area



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Appendix 4b North Somerset and Mendip Bat SAC consultation zones



Appendix 4c

Details and qualifying features or Severn Estuary Site and Avon woodlands SAC

Details on the Severn Estuary site (SAC, SPA, Ramsar)

Conservation objectives for SAC, SPA

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

Qualifying features for SAC:

- H1110. Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time; Subtidal sandbanks
- H1130. Estuaries
- H1140. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; Intertidal mudflats and sandflats
- H1170. Reefs
- H1330. Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*); Atlantic salt meadows
- S1095. *Petromyzon marinus*; Sea lamprey
- S1099. *Lampetra fluviatilis*; River lamprey
- S1103. *Alosa fallax*; Twaite shad

Qualifying Features for SPA:

- A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)
- A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)
- A051 *Anas strepera*; Gadwall (Non-breeding)
- A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)
- A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)
- A394 *Anser albifrons albifrons*; Greater white-fronted goose (Non-breeding)
- Waterbird assemblage

Details on Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC

EC Directive 92/43 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora

Citation for Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Name: Avon Gorge Woodlands

Unitary Authority/County: City of Bristol, North Somerset

SAC status: Designated on 1 April 2005

Grid reference: ST560741

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

SAC EU code: UK0012734

Area (ha): 152.35

Component SSSI: Avon Gorge SSSI

Site description:

The Avon Gorge is in south-west England. Natural cliffs, quarries and scree of Carboniferous limestone dramatically rise about 100m either side from the tidal River Avon, with grassland and woodland where slopes are less sheer. The site is important because of the small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* woodland and the associated species-rich transitions to scrub and herb-rich calcareous grasslands. The open limestone grassland and cliff ledges support a high number of uncommon species, including rare whitebeams *Sorbus spp.*, with two unique to the Avon Gorge, *S. bristoliensis* and *S. wilmottiana*, and other important plants, such as Bristol rock-cress *Arabis scabra* and honewort *Trinia glauca*. Small groves of yew *Taxus baccata* also occur on some of the stonier situations.

Qualifying habitats: The site is designated under article 4(4) of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines (mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes)*
- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone)

Annex I priority habitats are denoted by an asterisk (*)

Conservation objectives

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), 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;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Supplementary Advice document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Qualifying Features:

- H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (**Festuco-Brometalia**); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone
- H9180. **Tilio-Acerion** forests of slopes, screes and ravines; Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes*