Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Habitats Regulations Assessment

DPD Policy on Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations

Preferred Options

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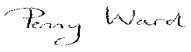
Prepared by:		Penny Ward MCIEEM **Principal Ecologist**
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council – DPD

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC) is situated in the Midlands to the east of Birmingham, in north Warwickshire. NBBC are currently preparing a revised Borough Plan Preferred Options document to replace the existing Local Plan. A separate Development Plan Document (DPD) is currently being developed by NBBC addressing their Policy on gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, including preferred options for site allocations within the Borough, to accompany submission of the revised Borough Plan Preferred Options document. The proposals and policies set out in the Borough Plan and DPDs for NBBC will guide planning decisions and will have statutory status.

WYG was commissioned in August 2015 by NBBC to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of this standalone policy. The aim of this HRA is to establish whether or not there is likely to be any potential impact on Natura 2000 sites as a result of the policy and allocations put forward for gypsy and traveller sites.

1.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Process

1.2.1 Requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment

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

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive establish a requirement for competent authorities to undertake Habitats Regulations Assessment of any plan or project likely to have a significant effect upon Natura 2000 sites. In light of the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment, the competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.

The Habitats Directive is implemented in the UK via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). The Habitats Regulations include a requirement for Appropriate

Assessments to be made for land use plans when such plans are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and are not directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the site.

National planning policy is now covered by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012 which replaces the original Planning Policy Statement (PPS) guidance, including PPS9 on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. This also clearly states that the following wildlife sites should be given the same protection as Natura 2000 sites: potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation; listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites. In addition, regard to the location of proposed Marine Conservation Zones should be taken into account whilst addressing potential effects of the plans.

The purpose of this assessment report is to identify any likely significant effects upon Natura 2000 sites as a result of the policy contained in the gypsy and traveller DPD.

1.2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment at the Plan Level

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed plan on one or more Natura 2000 sites. The *entire process* of investigating the potential effects of a plan or project on Natura 2000 sites is known as HRA, to distinguish it from the term Appropriate Assessment (AA) as referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), which actually refers to *a statement* from the competent authority (in this case Nuneaton and Bedworth District Council) which identifies whether the plan does, or does not affect the integrity of Natura 2000 site(s). This assessment is termed 'Appropriate Assessment' because the assessment should be appropriate to its purpose under the Habitats Directive prescribed in Articles 6(3) and (4) i.e. to assess the implications of the plan in respect of the site's 'conservation objectives'. Article 6(3) states that 'any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications in view of the site's conservation objectives.'

The purpose of HRA of plans is to ensure that the protection of Natura 2000 sites is part of the planning process at both a regional and local level. Assessment of potential in-combination effects with other plans or projects is an important part of the process. Plans and development may still be permitted if there is no reasonable alternative or there are 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI) as to why they should proceed. HRA should be carried out on all plans (and projects)

which are not directly connected to conservation management of the Natura 2000 site or necessary to the site management, and therefore might have implications for the integrity of the site in view of the site's conservation status, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. The aim of HRA is 'to maintain or restore, at favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of community interest'.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. Initially the plan should aim to *avoid* any negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making process and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Secondly, *mitigation measures* should be applied during the process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the plan is still likely to result in adverse effects and no further practicable mitigation is possible then it should not be taken forward. Under such a scenario the plan may have to undergo an assessment of alternative solutions.

Compensatory measures are required for any remaining adverse effects but they are permitted only if (a) there are no alternative solutions; and (b) the plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Acceptable reasons of overriding public interest differ depending on the qualifying feature(s) affected within the Natura 2000 site (the importance of each site is defined through a number of qualifying features, which together make up the integrity of the site).

Some habitats and species are defined as being 'priority' because they are particularly vulnerable and are mainly, or exclusively, found within the European Union. Where the qualifying feature affected is a European priority habitat or species (indicated in the Directive by an asterisk), the only permissible reasons for allowing the plan or project to proceed are those relating to human health or public safety or beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment. Where the qualifying feature affected is not a European priority habitat or species, reasons of a social or economic nature may be accepted.

1.2.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment Guidance

The HRA process undertaken by WYG has been developed in accordance with the following guidance:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended);
- EU Directive 92/43/EC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora;
- David Tyldesley and Associates (2012) habitats Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans : Guidance for Plan-making Bodies in Scotland

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

1.2.4 Habitats Regulations Assessment Stages

The guidance provided under Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, 2006) identifies assessment required under the following stages:

- **Stage 1 - Screening likely significant effects**: this stage identifies potential effects on the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 sites and assesses whether or not these effects will be significant; the precautionary principle has been used in assessing whether effects may be significant so, where there is any uncertainty, the potential effect has been examined in greater detail in the next stage. At this stage, it may be possible to provide mitigation for any significant effects resulting in no significant adverse effects, in which case full Appropriate Assessment will not be required.
- **Stage 2 - Detailed Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity**: where there are likely significant effects, or some uncertainty remains, more detailed information will need to be considered to determine the impact of these effects on the Natura 2000 qualifying features and hence site integrity. This entails considering the adverse effects, both alone and in-combination with other plans and projects, on the 'integrity' of the Natura 2000 site in respect of the site's structure and function, and its conservation objectives. Again, potential for mitigation should be considered to avoid adverse effects on site integrity.
- **Stage 3 - Alternative solutions**: where a plan/policy option has been found to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, these should be mitigated where possible to overcome any adverse/negative effects as stated above. Alternative solutions of achieving the plan objectives should be identified and, where this is not possible, the policy

option should not proceed unless there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest involved.

- **Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest (IROPI):** should the plan be found likely to result in adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, it can only be considered if there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest.

The HRA process involves the following tasks split according to the DCLG (2006) guidance stages above:

Table 1: Stages of the HRA process (DCLG, 2006)

Stage 1	**Likely significant effects (Screening)** • Collect information on Natura 2000 sites. Consult with Natural England. • Determine whether the plan has potential to have a likely significant effect(s) on qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites. • Adopt mitigation where possible. • Identify other plans and projects with potential for "in combination" effects • Where potential for likely significant effects remains, proceed to full Appropriate Assessment.
Stage 2	**Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on site integrity** • Determine whether, in view of the sites' nature conservation objectives, the plan would have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the sites. • Take account of the plan's effects 'in combination' with other plans and projects. • Incorporate mitigation where possible. • Adopt mitigation where possible • Where there is still potential for adverse effect(s) on site integrity proceed to Stage 3.
Stage 3	**Alternative solutions** • Identify alternatives to ensure that there are no adverse effects upon the integrity of the sites. • If after amendments there is still potential for an adverse effect on site integrity, withdraw the plan/option unless IROPI.

HRA should be an iterative process with counter-acting measures identified throughout the process. The policy and allocation options screened into the AA process as having potential to impact on a Natura 2000 site will be revisited as part of this process and amendments may be possible which would avoid necessity to undertake more detailed assessmentAA. However, if these recommendations and amendments are still unable to exclude risk of a significant effect then full AA will be required. Following full AA and adoption of suitable mitigation, if there is still potential to adversely affect site integrity, alternatives should be sought or the policy withdrawn unless there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest.

In seeking to demonstrate IROPI, guidance is provided by The European Commission's 'Managing Natura' (2000) and through the European Commission's opinion on a number of projects including the expansion of Karlsruhe-Baden airport in 2005, Dibden Bay in 2004 and Bathside Bay in 2005 to name a few. The guiding principles raised include:

- That the project is of national or at least regional significance;
- The project would make a vital contribution to strategic economic development or regeneration; and
- Failure to proceed with the project would have unacceptable social and/or economic consequences.

1.3 Links to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process through which the sustainability of a plan under preparation is assessed. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to carry out SA of their Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, it is also a requirement that all plans and programmes (setting a framework for future development consent and likely to have significant environmental effects) are subject to environmental assessment. It is a requirement that Local Authorities carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of their Local Development Framework documents under these Regulations.

The approach to Sustainability Appraisal for Local Development Frameworks/ Local Plans set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG 2006) advocates a joint approach to Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

As recommended by DCLG (2006), this HRA has been undertaken in conjunction with the SA and the Sustainability Report for the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople site allocations; the SA is currently being produced by WYG. Conclusions made in the SA will be used to inform the HRA and *vice versa*. However, these are distinct processes with different aims:

- The purpose of SA is to identify the key social, economic and environmental effects of the overall growth and spatial options and enable the promotion of sustainability considerations throughout the plan making process.

- HRA has a narrower focus, the aim being to ensure that the overall growth and spatial options do not result in activities which could damage the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

1.4 Information used in the Assessment

The following sources of information have been consulted during the preparation of this report:

- Conservation objectives and favourable condition tables provided by Natural England;
- Information on current importance of different factors in maintaining favourable condition, provided by Natural England;
- Information provided by Environment Agency with regards water quality objectives;
- www.natureonthemap.org.uk;
- www.jncc.org.uk;
- www.magic.gov.uk.

1.5 Professional judgement

Professional judgement has been used throughout this study and is particularly relevant to decisions made in relation to potential impacts. The approach has been to identify risks on the basis of the precautionary principle as far as practicable.

The reliability of professional judgment can be quantified to some extent by reference to the experience of the professional concerned. This report was authored by Penny Ward MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist / Environmental Project Manager, with technical direction from Claire Wilmer MIEEM CEnv, WYG Director of Ecology.

- **Penny Ward - Principal Ecologist/Environmental Project Manager**

  Penny has been a professional ecologist since 1977. She has been involved in assessments of a number of projects and plans with complex technical and legal issues and, as such, has a good understanding of the legislative framework, prevailing guidance and process of Habitats Regulations Assessment.

- **Claire Wilmer – Director and Head of Ecology**

  Claire is an experienced consultant with a focus on protected species and ecological impact assessment. She is a Chartered Environmentalist and, as such, has been recognised for her

knowledge, experience and commitment to the environmental sector. Claire inputs to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), including screening and scoping reports, as well as referring to international Conventions, including the Bern and Bonn Conventions, Claire also interprets European and UK legislation when preparing documents such as Habitats Regulations Assessments to identify impacts on Special Areas of Conservation, Sites Protection Areas and Ramsar sites.

2.0 Methodology for HRA Screening and Appropriate Assessment

2.1 Stage 1 - Screening

The site allocations for the NBBC Borough Plan options have previously been screened in consultation with Natural England, to identify whether the proposed policies, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites. This DPD HRA provides a separate assessment of ten gypsy and traveller site options together with an assessment of the Policy NB10 Gypsy and Traveller Sites, Policy GT 1 Meeting the Requirement for Permanent and Transit Pitches and GT 2 Safeguarded Sites. The following tasks are involved in this initial stage of the assessment.

- Identification of Natura 2000 sites, qualifying features, condition and conservation objectives that may be potentially affected – see Chapter 3;
- Determine whether or not the plan is directly connected with the conservation management of the site(s);
- Screening of the DPD policy site options – Chapter 4;
- Identification of other plans and policies that may, in-combination with this NBBC DPD, have an adverse impact on a Natura 2000 site – Chapter 5;
- Identification of the type and extent of potential effects on qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites;
- Conclusions of screening of plans/policies and recommendations – Chapter 6.

2.1.1 Evidence gathering

The evidence base for the initial stage aims to provide details of the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 sites together with conservation objectives.

In order to determine whether it is likely that the Site Options would have an adverse effect upon Natura 2000 sites, information was collected to establish the following:

- Characteristics of the Natura 2000 sites within the 'zone of influence';
- Reasons why each site has been designated - the qualifying interest features;

- Environmental factors required to sustain the qualifying interest features and integrity of the sites;
- Nature conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites; and
- Existing or predicted environmental conditions and trends which may be affecting the quality of the sites or have the potential to do so.

The following data and information was also sought:

- Latest Natural England condition surveys of the Natura 2000 sites;
- Recent surveys of the sites undertaken by or on behalf of the local authorities or other relevant bodies;
- Protected species and priority habitat data for the sites; and
- Other relevant data held by Natural England including conservation objectives.

It was agreed that the Natura 2000 sites to be included in the evidence gathering stage comprise:

- All Natura 2000 sites within NBBC's borough boundary;
- Any Natura 2000 sites which lie outside the boundary of NBBC but could potentially be impacted by plans and projects in NBBC through pathways of effect/linkages such as watercourses and airborne pollution; and
- Natura 2000 sites where the qualifying species make use of land outside the site but within NBBC for parts of the day/season/year.

More detailed information relating to the Natura 2000 sites considered is included in Chapter 3 of this report.

2.1.2 Screening Exercise

Stage 1 HRA screening involves consideration of the DPD Policy NB10, Policy GT 1 Meeting the Requirement for Permanent and Transit Pitches, GT 2 Safeguarded Sites and the gypsy and traveller site allocation options in relation to any potential impacts on the natural environment either alone or in-combination with other plans/policies. This allows for a more detailed assessment of those sites which are strictly relevant to the HRA, namely those which could potentially result in a significant impact on any of the listed Natura 2000 sites. In relation to the actual policy, this assessment will

address the wording and intention of the policy and screen in or out of further assessment as required.

Following this, a more detailed screening exercise will be carried out to determine whether any of the potential effects of the gypsy site allocations identified during the initial stage are likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site. This involves evaluation of individual sites and their potential impact on the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites. Summary baseline information has been provided in Chapter 3.0 which includes the Natura 2000 sites and further information outlined in Section 2.1.1 such as reasons for designation, conservation management issues and potential impact pathways.

Assessment of the DPD Gypsy Policy itself and each site allocation will be achieved by comparing the likely impact of the option against each of the factors and issues important for maintenance of the Natura 2000 site qualifying features at favourable status. In the case of Natura 2000 sites which are not presently in favourable condition, the assessment will still be based on conditions which would be able to maintain the qualifying interest of the site. Those options for which it is not possible to demonstrate with a reasonable level of certainty that they will have no effect on Natura 2000 site(s), and for those for which a possible impact may be identified, will require further assessment at Stage 2.

The scope for Stage 2 (if required) will be determined during Stage 1 Screening.

2.2 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment requires more detailed analysis of any sites with the potential, even after mitigation, to have a significant effect on qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites, to establish whether or not these effects are likely to result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.

Potential impacts of any screened-in sites will be assessed in detail at this stage making use of expert knowledge, professional judgement and available guidance and legislation. If there are still outstanding concerns over adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site as a result of certain site allocations within the DPD, alone or in-combination with other plans, then Stage 3 will follow.

2.3 Stage 3 Alternatives and IROPI

Where adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site remain, even given mitigation, alternatives will need to be identified. If none are available, consideration can be given to 'imperative reasons of over-riding public interest' (IROPI) and identifying appropriate compensatory measures. This is unlikely to be an option for gypsy site allocations within this DPD, as there will always be alternative sites to explore which will not impact on Natura 2000 designated sites.

2.4 Consultation

Consultation with Natural England regarding the HRA process and implications for Natura 2000 sites was carried out previously in connection with the HRA for the Borough Plan. Natural England provided an update on their concern with regards Ensor's Pond SAC. They are presently investigating the potential to re-introduce white clawed crayfish to the pond, which has suffered a marked decline in crayfish population during the last two years, and may no longer have this qualifying species present. Therefore, they have requested that the SAC should be addressed as if supporting white-clawed crayfish. NBBC were therefore advised to seek further information from the allocation site landowners (Arbury Estate) regarding groundwater flow (rate/volume) and direction in the vicinity of the SAC, due to the vulnerability of the crayfish to changes in water quality.

3.0 Evidence Gathering - Natura 2000 Sites

The following section lists the Natura 2000 sites which have been considered in this assessment, including those which occur within NBBC and those sites which, through various pathways, could potentially be impacted by this DPD outside NBBC, for example, through water or air pollution which could potentially adversely affect sites many kilometres from the site(s) itself.

3.1 Zone of Influence

In order to provide a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts of the policy and site allocations, all Natura 2000 sites within a distance of 20 kilometres from the NBBC Borough boundary have been included, whether or not obvious pathways are present (referred to as the 'zone of influence of effect'). Appendix A provides an overview map of the Natura 2000 sites included in this report. It should be noted that, in certain circumstances, there is a possibility that a proposal could cause an adverse impact outside the predicted zone of influence; potential for this DPD to impact on more distant Natura 2000 sites is addressed in the assessment in Section 4.0. The zone of influence from the gypsy sites is not anticipated to actually be this wide-ranging but the two SAC sites within the zone of influence have been included at this stage in case there are any less obvious pathways of effect.

As Natural England has provided detailed information on how the 'favourable condition' of Natura 2000 sites should be assessed (using Favourable Condition Tables), specific attributes of each Natura 2000 site within the zone of influence have been examined in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 below.

3.2 Sites within, or partly within, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

There is only one Natura 2000 sites within the NBBC boundary; this is Ensor's Pool Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

3.2.1 Ensor's Pool SAC

Ensor's Pool SAC is located approximately 2km from the centre of Nuneaton, on the south-western boundary of the built area at Heath End (OS NGR SP 348903) in north Warwickshire. The large pool measures about 220 metres by 50 metres, with an average depth of 8 metres and is fed primarily by groundwater. The site is presently managed as a Local Nature Reserve by NBBC, under lease since 1995. The pool overlies Etruria Marl which was used for brick making in the early 1900s.

Until recently, the pool supported the largest population of white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* in the UK, estimated to be around 50,000 individuals. However, in recent years, the population has declined and, in November 2014, a survey of Ensor's Pool took place which did not record any signs of white-clawed crayfish. Since that time, an additional assessment has been completed and the key conclusions are:

- Crayfish plague is the most likely cause of the population decline.
- More data needs to be gathered during April-Sept 2015 to confirm this.
- It is still possible that crayfish plague is not the cause of the population decline. No further mitigation measures should be implemented until results of the proposed investigations during 2015 are complete and have been reviewed.

Natural England are updating NBBC with regards the white-clawed crayfish investigations, and restocking proposals, as further information becomes available.

The SAC itself measures approximately 3.8 hectares in area and, aside from the open water, comprises humid grassland/mesophile grassland. This includes abundant marginal vegetation such as hard rush *Juncus inflexus,* common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris,* water horsetail *Equisetum fluviatile* and lesser bulrush *Typha angustifolia* as well as aquatic species such as spiked milfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum* and broad-leaved pondweed *Potamogeton natans.*

Qualifying Features

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- **1092** White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish ***Austropotamobius pallipes***

This lowland site in central England represents white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* in standing water. The 1 hectare marl pit (until recently) supported a very large population, estimated at 50,000. Although crayfish plague outbreaks have occurred in the Midlands, this waterbody is isolated from river systems and is a good example of a 'refuge' site in an important part of the species' former range.

This description of the qualifying features of the SAC provide the reason why the site was designated in 2005. Since then there has been a recent loss of the qualifying feature but it is intended to re-introduce white-clawed crayfish following investigations to see if crayfish plague is present in the Pool.

This HRA has been based on the Pool supporting white-clawed crayfish and therefore on the favourable environmental conditions required to support this species.

Conservation Objectives

The Conservation Objectives for this SAC include avoidance of any deterioration of the natural habitats of qualifying species, or any disturbance to qualifying species. These are to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and to ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, subject to natural change, through maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying features;
- 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.

Vulnerability

White-clawed crayfish are vulnerable to pollution of the water, particularly to organophosphates, and to the introduction of non-native crayfish which predate on the native species, compete and carry the crayfish plague which is deadly to the native species. The white-clawed crayfish has specific water quality and habitat requirements, favouring a pH within the range of 6.5-9 (alkaline) with calcium levels generally exceeding 5mg per litre. Ammonia and reduced oxygen levels through nutrient rich discharges and diffuse pollution can result in significant mortalities of the white-clawed crayfish.

There is no control over access to this pool so contamination and introduction of diseases to the water is possible. Illegal fishing has potential to introduce disease and invasive species to the pool through fishing equipment and wellington boots. In addition, there is potential for white-clawed crayfish to be illegally exploited as a food source. Other species predate on white-clawed crayfish including mink, rat, otter, heron, crow, perch, chub, trout, pike and eel.

Condition Assessment

The most recent Condition Assessment for this SAC online is dated 11th December 2012. At this time, 262 white-clawed crayfish were captured, with 2.3% showing signs of porcelain disease

Thelohaniasis, and only 30% of the 10 laboratory specimens examined had some degree of epibiont infestations *Vorticella sp.* There was no evidence of crayfish plague which has been introduced elsewhere due to invasion by the American signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus,* which also competes with the native species. Isolated waterbodies tend to be refuges from this disease unless there is illegal introduction of American crayfish. The condition of the SAC at this time was assessed as being 'Favourable'.

However more recently there has been a marked decline in the population. Natural England are presently investigating the potential for restocking of the pool, once they have identified whether or not crayfish plague was the cause of the population decline.

3.3 Sites outwith NBBC boundary

There is only one Natura 2000 site up to 20km outside the NBBC Borough boundary, River Mease, located around 15km north. There are no other Natura 2000 sites within the predicted zone of influence.

3.3.1 River Mease SAC

River Mease SAC is located 15.4km to the north of NBBC Borough boundary. Although located a considerable distance from the Borough boundary, there are hydrological and wildlife corridor linkages between this river corridor and NBBC via, for example, the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal. This links the Mease to Nuneaton via Shackerton, Congerstone, Market Bosworth, Shenton, Stoke Golding to Hinckley and then into Nuneaton via the Coventry Canal, situated around 20km pstream of the Mease. However, in terms of water quality pathways of effect, the Mease is located some distance way from potential pollution sources in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, running from Packington to the south of Ashby-de-la-Zouch approximately 12km west into the River Trent.

The EA and Natural England have produced a River Mease SAC restoration plan to rehabilitate and restore this river corridor (*River Mease SSSI/SAC Restoration Plan Technical Report*, Jacobs March 2012).

Qualifying Features

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- **3260** Watercourses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- **1149** Spined loach *Cobitis taenia*

The River Mease supports a good example of a riverine population of spined loach *Cobitis taenia*. It is a small tributary of the River Trent and has retained a reasonable degree of channel diversity compared to other similar rivers containing spined loach populations. It has extensive beds of submerged plants along much of its length which, together with its relatively sandy sediments (as opposed to cohesive mud) provides good habitat opportunities for the species.

- **1163** Bullhead *Cottus gobio*

The Mease is an example of bullhead *Cottus gobio* populations in the rivers of central England. Bed sediments are generally not as coarse as other sites selected for the species, reflecting the nature of many rivers in this geographical area, but are suitable in patches due to the river's retained sinuosity. The patchy cover from submerged macrophytes is also important for the species.

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

- **1092** White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*
- **1355** Otter *Lutra lutra*

Conservation Objectives

The Conservation Objectives for this SAC include avoidance of any deterioration of the natural habitats of qualifying species, or any disturbance to qualifying species. These are to ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and to ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, subject to natural change, through 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 features;
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Vulnerability

The River Mease is presently subject to point discharges and diffuse pollution resulting in failure to meet the CQG phosphorus levels. Any additional pollutant input would further exacerbate the problem. The ecological value of the river is also vulnerable to physical modification as a result of river works, dredging, installation of weirs, etc. Other threats include introduction of non-native plant and animal species and disease, over-abstraction and reduction in freshwater inputs to the watercourse. The river lacks a rich macrophyte species composition and abundance, and has sparse bankside vegetation cover. The density of qualifying fish species is presently not favourable.

3.4 Summary of Potential Pathways of Effect on Qualifying Features of Natura 2000 sites

The lists below summarise potential pathways of effect to be investigated when considering assessment of likely significant effect arising from individual site options. These have been identified as potential issues through personal experience. As most of these can only arise from impacts close to the SAC, most or all of these effects may be scoped out following consideration of the location of individual site allocations.

3.4.1 Ensor's Pool SAC

- Changes to water quality through surface water run-off/direct discharges.
- Changes in water quality through groundwater pollution/diffuse pollution.
- Changes in water quality through direct contamination as a result of spillages, leakages, chemicals, washing products, car engine oil, direct application of pollutants, etc.
- Changes in water quality through dumping of material/rubbish in pool.
- Physical alteration in habitats and hazards to wildlife due to illegal dumping/litter/rubbish/fly-tipping in pool and windblown rubbish from surrounding area.
- Damage to habitats through illegal use of motorbikes etc around pool, including potential damage and collapse of banks.
- Changes in water quality through illegal fishing and/or swimming.
- Changes in hydrology as a result of installation of hard surfacing or surface water outfalls.

- Introduction of diseases to the water through fishing equipment, footwear, etc.
- Introduction of American signal crayfish.
- Introduction of other invasive, non-native plant and animal species.
- Illegal extraction and/or killing of freshwater white-clawed crayfish for sale or food.
- Air pollution from increases in vehicles.
- Eutrophication due to dog faeces, food disposal.
- Increased recreational use.

3.4.2 River Mease SAC

- Changes in water quality – pathway of effect scoped out as the river drains a separate catchment outside the NBBC area.
- Changes in hydrology – again scoped out as river is flowing in a different catchment outside NBBC.
- Introduction of non-native plants and animals through fishing, etc.
- Potential for impacts on otter *Luta lutra* outside the SAC due to connectivity of watercourses via the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal and Coventry Canal through Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, and wide natural range of otter territory.
- Increased fishing further depleting the density of SAC qualifying fish.
- Disturbance, death or injury to otter both within the SAC boundary and outside.
- Disturbance, destruction of and damage to otter holts or lie-ups.

4.0 Stage 1 Screening - NBBC DPD Policy NB10, Policy GT 1and GT 2 together with the Preferred and Alternative Site Options

4.1 Screening of Policy NB10

The aim of this screening of the Policy itself is to identify whether or not the policy text as it presently stands could potentially give rise to decisions which may result in a likely significant effect(s) on a Natura 2000 site. Policy NB10 Gypsy and Traveller Sites suggest the criteria to be used when identifying suitable sites for 40 residential and 15-20 transit pitches in a Gypsy and Travellers Site Allocations Plan and in determination of future planning applications relating to the need for such sites. This Policy is not related to the conservation management of the Natura 2000 sites. Comments are made following each criterion listed below:

a) *The number of pitches or plots is relative to the size and scale of the site.*

No pathway of effect on Natura 2000 sites.

b) *The number of pitches or plots is relative to the size and density of the surrounding settled community.*

No pathway of effect on Natura 2000 sites.

c) *The site is not located in areas of high flood risk.*

No pathway of effect on Natura 2000 sites.

d) *The site avoids adverse impact on historic and important open spaces, landscape or local nature conservation designations, ecology and biodiversity assets.*

Potential for adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites.

This criterion includes reference to local nature conservation designations only. There should be reference to European and national nature conservation designations here including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites as presently it leaves potential for the site choice to lead to adverse effects on the most important nature designations including Natura 2000 sites which are covered by this HRA.

Mitigation – addition of text to this criterion to include 'avoidance of adverse impact on European

and national nature conservation designations including SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, and SSSIs'. In the event of any doubt the proposed site should be subject to Appropriate Assessment.

If this text is added, the criterion will offer protection to Natura 2000 sites and should then be compliant with the Habitats Regulations, and will require no further assessment.

e) *The site is located where the privacy, visual and residential amenity for both the site residents and the neighbouring land uses are protected.*

No pathway of effect on Natura 2000 sites.

f) *The site has suitable access to the highway network.*

No pathway of effect on Natura 2000 sites.

g) *The site is located where air or noise pollution will not affect the health and well being of site residents and neighbouring uses will not be affected by air pollution or noise pollution as a result of the Gypsy and Traveller development.*

No pathway of effect likely on Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of NBBC Borough boundary. However, both noise and air pollution arising from a gypsy site could potentially adversely affect ecology and, depending on its location, a Natura 2000 site. Addition of text to include avoidance of ecological receptors is advised.

h) *The site is accessible to town and district centres, local services and facilities such as school and health facilities, fresh food and employment, by walking, cycling and public transport.*

No pathway of effect on Natura 2000 sites

i) *Give preference to sites where derelict or contaminated land is brought back into use.*

Potential for indirect adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites, through loss of supporting biodiverse habitats and habitat linkages

In terms of the biodiversity of the local area and supporting habitats and wildlife corridors for Natura 2000 sites (and SSSIs), this criterion has potential to adversely affect biodiversity. Many of the derelict brownfield sites are extremely biodiverse and of high ecological value so this contradicts Criterion (d) above. Contaminated land may also support unusual habitats and species.

Mitigation – addition of text to infer that each site will be addressed on its merit and those with ecological value will not be selected as 'preferred' sites for gypsies. The preference should be for sites with negligible ecological value only.

4.2 Screening of Policy GT 1: Meeting the Requirement for Permanent and Transit Pitches

This Policy refers to the need for permanent residential pitches as evidenced by the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment for North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth 2013. The policy then identifies which sites have been identified for permanent pitches and states that these have been assessed as most appropriate against the Gypsy and Traveller criteria in Policy NB10. At present this Policy is not sound and could result in sites being selected which have a likely significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. . This Policy refers to the need for 15-20 gypsy and traveller transit pitches between now and 2031 as evidenced by the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment for North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth 2013. The policy then identifies which sites have been identified for permanent pitches and states that these have been assessed as most appropriate against the Gypsy and Traveller criteria in Policy NB10. At present this Policy NB10 is not sound and could result in sites being selected which have a likely significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. Once the mitigation described in 4.1 has been addressed, the contents of Policy GT 1 will be unlikely to have any significant effect on Natura 2000 sites and will then be screened out of any further assessment.

4.3 Screening of Policy GT 2: Safeguarded Sites

This policy relates to the safeguarding of existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites, new allocated sites and windfall sites with permanent permission. Provided these are selected based on the **revised** criteria in Policy NB10 there should be no risk of likely significant effect of Policy GT 2, as new allocated sites and windfall sites would be subject to selection under this Policy NB10. However there is a slight chance that existing authorised sites may not have undergone any Habitats Regulations Assessment in the past. If this is the case, these existing sites should be subject to HRA to ascertain whether or not there is any likely significant effect before granting permanent permission.

4.4 Screening of Preferred Site Options and Alternatives

There are five preferred options provided in the DPD document on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations, and another five which were initially selected. These will be considered separately and assessed against the Habitats Regulations. Any site which is found likely to have a significant effect on any qualifying feature of a Natura 2000 site will be screened in to further, more detailed Appropriate Assessment if required. For the purposes of this assessment, it has been assumed that the gypsy and traveller sites will be provided with a hard level pitch surface with surface water drainage.

In assessing the potential for effect arising from these options, the Natural England 'Impact Risk Zones' have been used. These have been created around each SSSI (at varying distances) and are dependent upon the sites' notified features and its sensitivity to impacts, such as disturbance, air and water pollution, and water abstraction. As the vast majority of European sites are underpinned by SSSIs, they therefore share the same IRZs. In addition, certain European sites may also have wider IRZ distances, depending upon the European site features and their sensitivities. A 'typical' biological SSSI will have 9 IRZs set at different distances ranging from 50m to 20km from the SSSI. Each IRZ indicates the types of proposals/developments which at that distance are likely to have an impact on the site and therefore considered to be medium or high risk.

A map showing all 10 sites together with the two SACs screened into the assessment is provided in Appendix A. Summary matrices of the assessment are provided in Tables 2 and 3 below.

4.4.1 GT A Land off Mancetta Road, Tuttle Hill, Nuneaton (15 pitches)

This is located on the north-eastern side of Nuneaton within, but on the edge of, the built area. It lies approximately 2.85 km north of Ensor's Pool SAC with the intervening land being urban. There is no surface hydrological linkage with the pool, and is considered to be outside the potential zone of impact on groundwater movement feeding this pool (further information on groundwater movement has been sought by NBBC).

This option lies about 400m as the crow flies from the Coventry Canal or 700m along the adjacent track, to the west of the waterway. Coventry Canal is linked via the Ashby-de-la-Zouch canal to the River Mease around 20km to the north. Although easily accessible from the proposed gypsy site, the only qualifying feature of the River Mease SAC which could potentially range over this distance is the otter. It is not considered that the provision of 15 pitches at this location is likely to have any significant effect on otter and will not adversely affect the otter population and hence the integrity of the River Mease SAC, even if they are found ranging along this canal.

Immediately to the south of this site is Poor's Piece Nature Reserve which is an area most likely to be disturbed and suffer from litter, use of motorbikes, fishing, etc, but although supporting the local biodiversity network within NBBC, this reserve is not linked to Ensor's Pool SAC via wildlife corridors, and there is no pathway of effect.

It is concluded that use of site GT A Land off Mancetter Road, Tuttle Hill, Nuneaton is unlikely to have a significant effect on any qualifying features of Ensor's Pool SAC or River Mease SAC and can be screened out of further assessment.

4.4.2 GT B Burbages Lane, Ash Green (15 pitches)

This is a small site located on the southern edge of Ash Green within the Green Belt, and surrounded by land which has potential to be designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

Ensor's Pool SAC is located about 6.5km to the north-west. There is no pathway of effect linking the proposed site to the pool and it is located well outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ), used to help assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England) There are no linkages to watercourses connected to the River Mease SAC via the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal. As the surrounding area is of biodiversity value, this provides supporting habitat and wildlife /green corridors within NBBC, but these are several kilometres away from Ensor's Pool and the canal.

No pathways of effect on Ensor's Pool or River Mease SACs have been found; therefore, GT B Burbages Lane, Ash Green has been screened out of any further assessment.

4.4.3 GT C Bottom Meadow, Mile Tree Lane, Coventry (3 pitches)

GT C is located 5.5km to the south-east of Ensor's Pool, with the urban complex of Beckworth in-between. The site is linked to the Coventry Canal which is 1.3km to the north-west via a bridleway, but it is not considered that this could result in any significant effect on qualifying features of the River Mease SAC (i.e. otter) which may possibly range along this watercourse. It is a small 0.05 hectare site with plans to support three pitches and there appear to be no pathways of effect linking it to the Ensor's Pool or the River Mease SACs. It is also well outside the SSSI Natural England Planning Consultation Zone, and has therefore been screened out of any further assessment.

4.4.4 GT D Land at Attleborough (15 pitches)

This 1.75 hectare site lies approximately 2.7 km to the east-north-east of Ensor's Pool SAC and is the closest gypsy and traveller site proposed in the DPD; however, it is located on the opposite side of Nuneaton with built up urban areas and roads in-between. The nearby River Anker flows in a westerly

direction (east of the site) at this point but there are no potential surface hydrological linkages with Ensor's Pool SAC. The Coventry Canal and the River Werm flow northwards in-between the site and Ensor's Pool SAC so there is no pathway for surface water impacts arising through development of the gypsy site to impact on the SAC.

It is not known at the present time whether or not the groundwater flows are also to the west in this area which could potentially be a pathway of effect linking the site to the pool. However, as the site is located over 2.5km away on the opposite side of the town and to the east of two watercourses, it is not anticipated that any diffuse pollution or spillages to the ground would be likely to have a significant effect on the water quality of this SAC, as this would involve considerable lateral movement of groundwater westwards beneath Nuneaton. It has been assumed in this assessment that the gypsy and traveller sites will be sited on hard standings with surface water drainage provided in which case it is considered even more unlikely that there would be any risk of contamination to the pool as a result of this option, unless drainage passes to a soakaway. Actual hydrological evidence would be useful to support this assessment, but it is considered unlikely that GT D could give rise to significant effects on the Ensor's Pool SAC, even if there is a regional groundwater with connectivity present below the site.

The nearby River Anker flows to the west and then northwards through Nuneaton, eventually running very close and parallel to the Coventry Canal. Although there is connectivity to the River Mease SAC, it is considered that the distance along these waterways to the site is so great that there could be no adverse effect on this SAC as a result of siting gypsy and traveller pitches at this location.

It is concluded that GT D can be screened out of further HR assessment.

4.4.5 GT E Two Trees Farm, Mile Tree Lane, Coventry (6 pitches)

This site is located within 100m of GT C and as such the conclusions in respect of HRA are the same. Therefore, this site has therefore been screened out of any further assessment.

4.5 Screening of Alternative Sites

4.5.1 GT F Land at Ash Green/Blackberry Lane (15 pitches)

This is a site of 1.5 hectares located to the south-west of Ash Green on the edge of the settlement. It is 5.25km south south-west of Ensor's Pool SAC and outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones.. It is about 1km south of site GT B and can similarly be screened out of further assessment.

4.5.2 GT G Land South of Wilsons Lane (7 pitches)

GT G is another small site of 0.76ha located near to the M6. It lies 5.75km south of Ensor's Pool SAC, but only 450m from the Coventry Canal, although it is separated from this waterway by the M6, the railway and Longford Road. It is not considered likely that the development of this site as a gypsy and traveller site could have any significant effect on the otter (qualifying feature of the River Mease SAC) due to the distance along the watercourses from the Mease and the lack of easy access to the canal. It is well outside of the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for the both of the SACs.

Site GT G has been screened out of further assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

4.5.3 GT H Land Rear of 22 Coventry Road, Bulkington (15 pitches)

This site is located 5.5km to the south-east of Ensor's Pool SAC and well outside the SSSI Natural England Planning Consultation Zones**.** The closest point of the Coventry Canal is 1.7km to the west so it is considered that there is no pathway of effect on qualifying features (i.e. otter) of the River Mease even if present in the Coventry Canal.

Site GT H has therefore been screened out of further assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

4.5.4 GT I Land off Hawkesbury Lane (3 pitches)

This small site lies to the south-west of GT C and GT E. It is 5.7km to the south south-east of Ensor's Pool SAC and well outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones. There is a footpath on the opposite side of the Coventry Road leading to the Coventry Canal which lies 0.9km away to the west. It is therefore considered that there is unlikely to be any significant effect on qualifying features (i.e. otter) of the River Mease SAC due to the distance from the river and distance of the linked waterway from the gypsy site.

4.5.5 GT J Land at Top Farm (15 pitches)

This site is located on the eastern side of Nuneaton at a distance of 4.75 km from Ensor's Pool SAC which is to the south-east. The site is presently very large at 94.6 ha, but could be reduced to only 1.69ha. The site lies outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones. It is also separated from Ensor's Pool by the River Ankar which flows northwards through Nuneaton so there is no surface water hydrological connectivity to the SAC. The Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal lies about 3.5km to the east so the site lacks any connectivity with the River Mease through other waterways.

It is considered that there are no potential pathways of effect on Natura 2000 sites as a result of GT J and this site has been screened out of further assessment.

4.6 Screening Matrix for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Show people Site Allocations

Key

✓✓ High probability adverse impact (no mitigation)

✓✓ High probability adverse impacts (mitigation possible)

✓ Low probability adverse impact (mitigation possible)

✓ Beneficial impact

× No impact

Table 2: Screening Assessment – Likely Significant Effects on Ensor's Pool SAC

GYPSY SITE	DISTANCE FROM SAC	POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	MITIGATION	RESIDUAL EFFECTS
GT A Land off Mancetter Road, Tuttle Hill	2.85 km to N	• On the opposite side of Nuneaton urban complex with no surface hydrological linkages to the pool. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** from increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • ~1.5km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool SAC.	N/A	×
GT B Burbages Lane, Ash Green	6.5 km to S	• Over 6km from the SAC with no surface hydrological linkages to the pool. • **No likely significant effects** from increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • Site is over 3km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool SAC.	N/A	×
GT C	5.5km to SE	• This lies on the eastern side of Bedworth with no surface hydrological linkages with the SAC.	N/A	×

GYPSY SITE	DISTANCE FROM SAC	POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	MITIGATION	RESIDUAL EFFECTS
Bottom Meadow, Mile Tree Lane, Coventry		• Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • Over 2.4km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool.		
GT D Land at Attleborough	2.7km to ENE	• On the eastern side of Nuneaton so separated from the SAC by built urban area, with no surface hydrological linkages with Ensor's Pool. • Lack of direct access indicates no likely significant effects from increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • On the edge of the boundary for SSSI Low Impact Risk Zone for Ensor's Pool SAC. • Although there have been concerns over groundwater linkages, a gypsy site at this distance from the SAC is not likely to have any significant effect through groundwater impacts even if there is some hydrological connectivity, as there would have to be significant lateral movement of any contamination under the urban area to reach the pool. The site is also separated from the pool by the Coventry Canal and River Werm which would effectively cut off any shallow groundwater movements westwards. • **Highly unlikely that this site could result in a significant effect on the SAC.**	N/A	✖
GT E Two Trees Farm, Mile Tree Lane, Coventry	5.5km to SE	• Lies on the eastern side of Bedworth with no surface hydrological linkages with the SAC. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • Site lies over 2.4km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool SAC.	N/A	✖
GT F Land at Ash Green/Blackberry Lane	5.25km to SSW	• SW of Ash Green on the edge of this settlement with no hydrological linkages to Ensor's Pool. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc	N/A	✖

GYPSY SITE	DISTANCE FROM SAC	POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	MITIGATION	RESIDUAL EFFECTS
		• Site lies over 2km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool SAC.		
GT G Land South of Wilsons Lane	5.75km to S	• South of Bedworth with no surface hydrological linkages to Ensor's Pool. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • Located around 2.2km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool..	N/A	✖
GT H Land Rear of 22 Coventry Road Bulkington	5.5km to SE	• On the SW side of Bulkington with no surface hydrological linkages with the SAC. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • This site is located about 2.5km outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool SAC.	N/A	✖
GT I Land off Hawkesbury Lane	5.7 km to SSE	• SE of Bedworth with no surface hydrological connectivity with Ensor's Pool SAC. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • This lies well outside the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool. •	N/A	✖
GT J Land at Top Farm	4.75 to NE	• NE of Weddington with no hydrological linkages with Ensor's Pool SAC. • Lack of direct access indicates **no likely significant effects** as a result of any increased recreational access, fly-tipping, fishing, pollution etc • The site is located about 0.75km outside from the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Ensor's Pool SAC.	N/A	✖

Table 3: Screening Assessment – Likely Significant Effects on River Mease SAC

GYPSY SITE	Approx. DISTANCE FROM SAC	POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	MITIGATION	RESIDUAL EFFECTS
GT A Land off Mancetter Road, Tuttle Hill	15km to S	• Nearest canal at 400m to E. • Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but **no significant effect** on qualifying species (otter).	N/A	✖
GT B Burbages Lane, Ash Green	28 km to S	• No potential wildlife corridor linkages identified. • No significant effect.	N/A	✖
GT C Bottom Meadow, Mile Tree Lane, Coventry	25 km to S	• Nearest canal is 1.3km to NW • Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but **no significant effect** on qualifying species (otter).	N/A	✖
GT D Land at Attleborough	19km to S	• Distances via smaller watercourse and canals considered too great to have any effects on qualifying features of the River Mease SAC. • **No significant adverse effect.**	N/A	✖
GT E Two Trees Farm, Mile Tree Lane, Coventry	25km to S	• Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but **no significant effect** on qualifying species otter identified. • Nearest canal is 1.3km to NW	N/A	✖
GT F Land at Ash Green/Blackberry Lane	29km to S	• No potential wildlife corridor linkages identified. • **No significant effect.**	N/A	✖
GT G Land South of Wilsons Lane	28km to S	• Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but **no significant effect** on qualifying species(otter). • 450m from canal but separated by M6, Railway and main road.	N/A	✖
GT H	23km to S	• Closest canal is 1.7km to W.	N/A	✖

GYPSY SITE	Approx. DISTANCE FROM SAC	POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS	MITIGATION	RESIDUAL EFFECTS
Land Rear of 22 Coventry Road Bulkington		• Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but **no significant effect** on qualifying species otter identified.		
GT I Land off Hawkesbury Lane	26km to S	• Closest canal is 0.9km to W. • Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but **no significant effect** on qualifying species (otter).	N/A	✖
GT J Land at Top Farm	17km to S	• Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal is 3.5km to E, so no direct access from site and no likely significant effect. • Potential wildlife corridor linkage via Coventry Canal and Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal but no significant effect on qualifying species(otter).	N/A	✖

5.0 Other Relevant Plans and Projects

Other relevant plans and policies, which have been considered in terms of potential in-combination effects acting together with this NBBC DPD on Natura 2000 sites, have been listed in the NBBC Core Strategy Scoping Report April 2014. However as the gypsy and traveller sites options are so small and generally situated at some distance from the SACs, it is difficult to identify any possible in-combination effects on the Ensor's Pool Sac or on the River Mease SAC.

6.0 Conclusions

The screening of the Policy NB10 on Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations demonstrated that the existing text has potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites to arise through use of the guidance criteria for site selection. Suggestions have been made on how to amend the text so as to avoid any adverse effect arising as a result of the site selection criteria. If this mitigation is adopted the Policy is considered to have no potential for significant effect on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans, projects and policies. No further assessment under the Habitats Regulations Assessment is then considered necessary for this policy.

Policies GT 1 and GT 2 rely on the criteria stated in Policy NB10, but are considered to have no likely significant effect on Natura 200 sites provided that Policy NB10 text is amended as recommended. Advice is provided on undertaking HRA for any existing sites prior to safeguarding these as permanent sites.

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Preferred Options and Alternatives have all been assessed and it is concluded that none of these sites could have a likely significant effect on Ensor's Pool SAC or River Mease SAC, either alone or in-combination with other plans, projects and policies. No further assessment is considered necessary under the Habitats Regulations Assessment for the preferred option or alternative site allocations.

7.0 References

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APPENDIX A

Figure 1 Site Options and Location of SACs

Gypsy and traveller and SAC sites

Scale
0 1 2 3 4 km

Scale 1:70000