



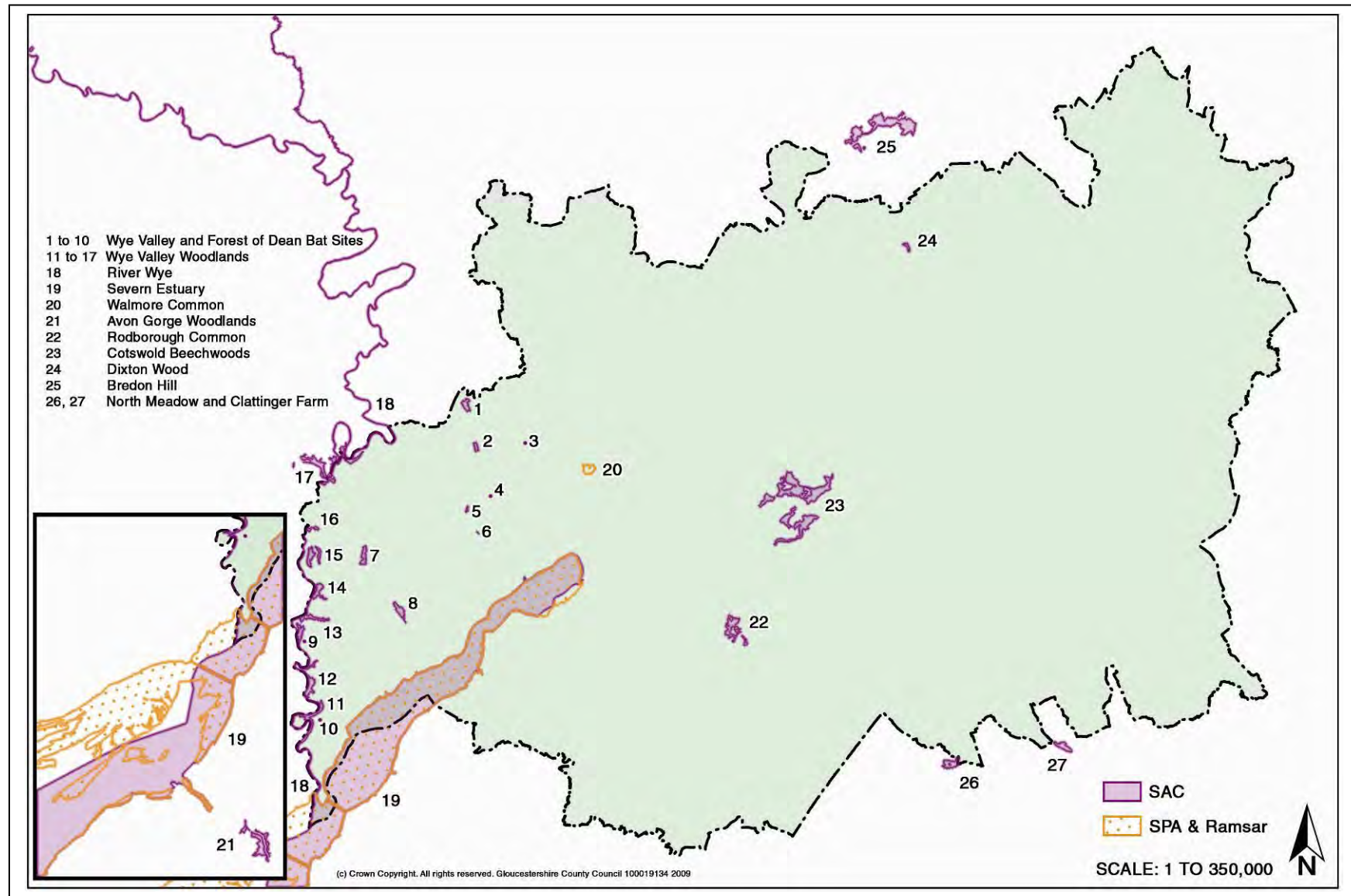
***Planning for the Protection of European Sites:
Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) / Appropriate Assessment (AA)***

Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report (Update 1)

(May 2009)

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European sites in and within 15km of Gloucestershire's boundary



Section 1: Introduction

International / European Sites - An Introduction

The EU *Natura 2000* network provides ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites which are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Union. These sites, which are also referred to as 'European sites' consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Offshore Marine Sites (OMS). Note: there are no OMS designated at present. Ramsar sites (Internationally Important Wetlands) are treated as if they were European sites in accordance with the Government's policy statement of November 2000 and the DEFRA Circular 01/2005 (paragraph 5). The European sites in Gloucestershire or within a radius of 15km of its administrative boundary are:

- **Rodborough Common** SAC – (Stroud)
- **Dixton Wood** SAC – (Tewkesbury)
- **Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites** SAC – (Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire)
- **River Wye** SAC – (Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Powys)
- **Wye Valley Woodlands** SAC – (Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire)
- **North Meadow and Clattinger Farm** SAC – (Wiltshire)
- **Cotswold Beechwoods** SAC – (Stroud, Cotswold, Tewkesbury)
- **Bredon Hill** SAC – (Worcestershire)
- **Walmore Common** SPA, Ramsar – (Forest of Dean)
- **Severn Estuary** SPA, SAC, Ramsar – (Stroud, Forest of Dean, South Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Bristol City, North Somerset, Newport, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan)
- **Avon Gorge Woodlands** SAC – (City of Bristol)

The purpose of Appropriate Assessment (AA) of land use plans is to ensure that the protection of the integrity of European sites is a part of the planning process at a regional and local level. (Note: AA is a later stage within a process called Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) or sometimes referred to as Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA).

The requirements for AA of plans or projects is outlined in Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("Habitats Directive"). The Directive applies a precautionary principle, and plans can only be permitted once it has been shown that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites in question. It is possible that plans may still be permitted if there is a lack of viable alternatives and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest as to why they should go ahead. Previous rulings show that these cases are rare and in this scenario compensatory measures will need to be implemented to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

An Updated Report

This report is an Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report. It updates the previous Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report which was consulted on for 5 weeks from the 6th November 2006 to the 4th January 2007. This original report as well as other HRA documents related to the Gloucestershire Minerals & Waste Development Framework (MWDF) can be viewed on-line at:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/hra

This updated report will inform a HRA Screening Report which will assess policies and sites in the Gloucestershire Waste Core Strategy (WCS) Site Options document which is due to be consulted on in August / September 2009.

Why is there a need for an updated HRA Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report? Below are a number of reasons:

- ◆ The original HRA Baseline Report was consulted on when both the WCS and the Minerals Core Strategy (MCS) did not contain sites. Following the consultation on Gloucestershire's WCS Preferred Options (31st January to 13th March 2008) Government Office for the South West (GOSW) recommended that strategic sites for the management of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) should be included in the WCS. Up to this point

the Waste Planning Authority (WPA) had been following guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12 - 2004) that Core Strategies should not include sites, and as advised by GOSW. However a revision to PPS12 was published in June 2008, and this states (at Para 4.6) that Core Strategies may now contain sites for strategic development proposals. Gloucestershire County Council has accepted that the WCS will now need to include strategic sites in order to proceed to adoption.

- ◆ As the WCS is now considering strategic sites, the HRA will have to consider the potential range of waste technologies that could be employed on these sites. In considering potential sites and technologies consultees will have the opportunity to address the issue of potential in-combination effects. Note: these issues are merely being 'flagged up' to consultees in this report, the HRA Screening report on the WCS Site Options documents will contain the detail with regard to site locations, waste technology ranges and associated buffer zones (in consultation with Natural England) from European sites.
- ◆ Technical / definitional points need updating e.g. candidate SACs are now confirmed SACs and the Severn Estuary is now a confirmed SAC as well as an SPA and Ramsar site.
- ◆ The original 2007 HRA Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report provided information on sites in and *close to* Gloucestershire. For the purposes of this report 'close to' has been defined as within a 15km radius of Gloucestershire's administrative boundary. This means that an additional site has been added namely: Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC which (according to digital GIS buffering measurements) is just within 15km of the extreme south west of Gloucestershire, i.e. the estuary at Beachley Point.
- ◆ Local authority changes, e.g. Wiltshire and Swindon are now both unitary authorities.
- ◆ Housing figures for Gloucestershire and other baseline data needs to be updated.
- ◆ An updated report gives consultees a fresh opportunity to make comments on any changes to relevant plans, projects and programmes that have occurred since early 2007 e.g. housing requirements for Gloucestershire need updating. These changes can then be reflected in HRA Screening Reports and AA Reports (if required).

Background to Evidence Gathering for Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The Gloucestershire MWDF Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework (comprising the SA Context Report and the SA Scoping Report)* contains a large volume of environmental data and specifically details the sites and species protected under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). Thus the evidence gathering process for HRA started with, and is linked to the SA Framework process.

*All original and updated SA Reports are available at the following website address:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/sa

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Draft Guidance on HRA/AA (August 2006) states (on page 8) that it would be best practice to collect information for HRA/AA, especially in relation to:

1. European sites within and outside the plan area potentially affected;
2. The characteristics of these European sites;
3. Their conservation objectives; and
4. Other relevant plans or projects.

In accordance with this guidance the following (above) information (1 – 4) was presented for scrutiny by **Natural England** as the statutory consultee in November of 2006. It was also presented to the following:

- Authorities in which the site is located;
- Authorities whose plans and projects may potentially have an impact on European sites; and
- Organisations that have particular environmental interests in the listed European sites.

Consultees were sent the report via email or they received a printed copy where the email address was not available. The report was also made available to all stakeholders and member of the public on Gloucestershire County Council's website.

The original consultation list for the 2007 HRA Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report is contained in Appendix 1, along with the consultation responses.

Updated List of Consultees

The following is the slightly amended list of consultees. It takes into account some recent changes to Local Authorities and the need to include all sites which are within 15km of Gloucestershire's boundary.

Authorities in Gloucestershire	
District / Borough / City	European Site
Cheltenham Borough Council	/
Cotswold District Council	Cotswold Beechwoods SAC
Forest of Dean District Council	Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC River Wye SAC Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar Wye Valley Woodlands SAC Walmore Common SPA/Ramsar
Gloucester City Council	/
Stroud District Council	Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Rodborough Common SAC Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cotswold Beechwoods SAC Dixton Wood SAC

Authorities bordering Gloucestershire		
Unitary or County	District / Borough	European Site
Warwickshire County Council	Stratford-on-Avon	/
Oxfordshire County Council	Cherwell	
	West Oxfordshire	
	Vale of White Horse	
Wiltshire Council (Unitary)		North Meadow & Clattinger Farm SAC
Swindon Borough Council (Unitary)		
South Gloucestershire Council (Unitary)		Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar
Monmouthshire County Council (Unitary)		River Wye SAC Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC Wye Valley Woodlands SAC Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar
Herefordshire County Council (Unitary)		River Wye SAC Wye Valley Woodlands SAC
Worcestershire County Council	Wychavon District Council	Bredon Hill SAC

Authorities not bordering Gloucestershire but that share a European site or sites, or who have a European site which is within 15km of Gloucestershire's boundary		
Unitary or County	District / Borough	European Site
Bristol City Council (Unitary)		Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC
Powys County Council (Unitary)		River Wye SAC
North Somerset (Unitary)		Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar
Somerset County Council	Sedgemoor District Council	Severn Estuary SAC,

		SPA/Ramsar
Newport City Council (Unitary)		Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar
Cardiff Council (Unitary)		Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar
The Vale of Glamorgan Council (Unitary)		Severn Estuary SAC, SPA/Ramsar

Land Owners & Interested Groups	
Natural England	
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust – Slimbridge Nature Reserve	
Cotswold Water Park Society	
Woodland Trust	
Wye Valley AONB Partnership	
Cotswolds Conservation Board	
Forestry Commission – Forest of Dean Offices	
The National Trust	
The Crown Estate	
Environment Agency	
GOSW	
Countryside Council for Wales	
Severn Estuary Partnership	

Other Plans & Projects

The Draft Habitats Regulations 2006 state at 85B: “Where a land use plan – (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site. The plan making authority for that plan shall, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.”

Paragraph 5.9 of DCLG Draft Guidance on AA (August 2006) *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment – Guidance For Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents August 2006* states: “The assessment of significant effects of a given option needs to take account of the option’s impact in combination with other plans and projects. Only other key plans and projects which the RPB or LPA consider most relevant should be collected for the “in-combination” test. An exhaustive list could render the assessment exercise unworkable. Consult Natural England on the list identified.”

Through the original HRA Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report in 2007, Natural England were consulted, and the following is the basic list of relevant plans identified:

- * South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
- * Relevant Local Development Documents (LDDs) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) of the District Authority in which the site is located.
- * The Adopted District Local Plans.
- * Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP2).
- * Relevant Local Development Documents (LDDs) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) of other District Authorities in Gloucestershire / or neighbouring Authorities (only if deemed necessary).
- * Welsh Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) and other Development Plans (as necessary).

* Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004. (This plan is saved until Oct 2007).

* Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003. (This plan is saved until September 2007).

* Other Minerals and Waste Local Plans / Local Development Frameworks (as necessary).

Note: The above is a general list of plans – further plans as well as specific projects are contained in the information given for each European site in Section 2. The potential ‘in-combination’ effects of plans and projects will be considered through the assessment of options in relevant HRA Reports.

HRA Reports: Methodology

This updated Baseline Report presents data and evidence related to European sites. Subsequent reports will be produced which will focus on screening plan options e.g. the site options within the Waste Core Strategy. These HRA Reports will assess the same plan options as the SA process and at the same consultation stages. However it is important to be aware of the fact that SA and HRA are two separate processes. “In terms of assessing options, HRA/AA is a standard which must be passed, and SA is a means of comparing options.” The HRA/AA process is designed to ensure that development options that are likely to have significant detrimental effects on European sites will be dropped (or modified) early in the process of plan formation.

Future HRA reports will assess options in terms of the stages suggested (below) which are derived from DCLG Guidance and emerging best practice:

HRA – Key Stages	
Stage 1	
Screening likely significant effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify European sites in and around the plan area (Primarily achieved through this Baseline Report, but also considered through Screening Report) ◆ Examine conservation objectives (Primarily achieved through this Baseline Report, but also considered through Screening Report) ◆ Identify potential effects on Natura 2000 sites (Initial work to be undertaken by the County Ecologist) ◆ Take account of the potential ‘in-combination’ effects of other plans and projects (as highlighted in this Baseline Report)
	ACTION ↓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ If no effects likely – no significant effect should be reported ◆ If effects are judged likely or some uncertainty exists – the precautionary principle applies thus proceed to Stage 2
Stage 2	
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Collate information on sites and evaluate impacts in light of conservation objectives ◆ Consider how the plan ‘in-combination’ with other plans and projects will interact when implemented (Note: this is the Appropriate Assessment process) ◆ Consider how effects on site integrity could be avoided by changes to the plan and any alternatives ◆ Develop mitigation measures including details about timescales and mechanisms
	ACTION ↓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report outcomes of AA and develop monitoring strategies ◆ If effects remain following the consideration of alternatives and development of mitigation measures proceed to Stage 3
Stage 3	

Assessment where no alternatives and adverse impacts remain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Identify if there are „imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) ◆ If IROPI can be met, identify / develop potential compensatory measures ◆ Note: IROPI is a difficult test to pass with onerous requirements – untested to date
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Section 2: European sites in Gloucestershire & within 15km of its administrative boundary

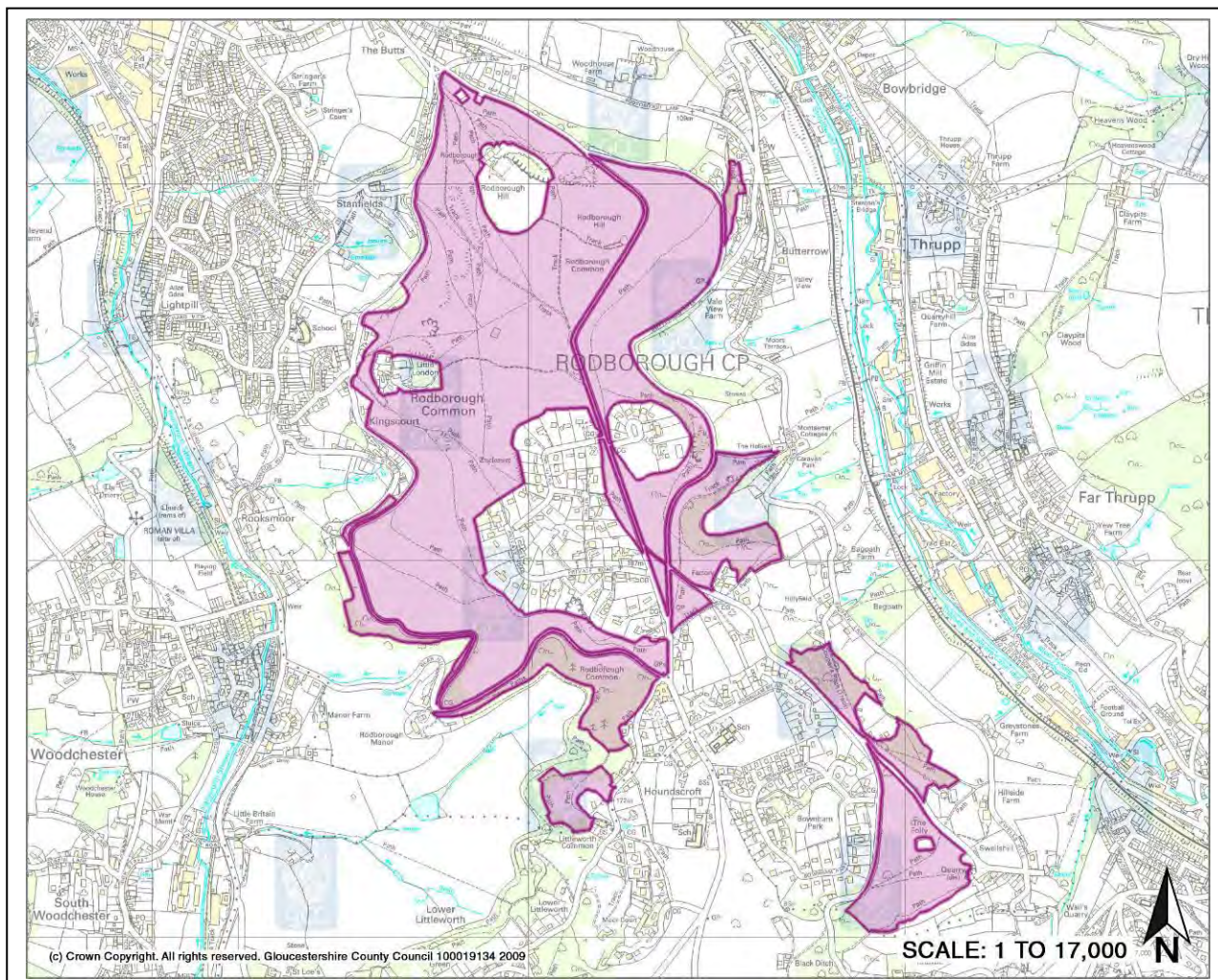
Rodborough Common

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Stroud

Grid Reference: SO849036

Area: 104.26ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue. Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes (70%) Improved grassland (10%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (10%)

Vulnerability: The grassland is dependent upon the maintenance of grazing, and this is co-ordinated through a Commoners Committee. The numbers of cattle grazing has declined with the general decline in the livestock industry, and most of the stock tends to remain on the plateau. The site owners (National Trust) have developed a project to restore management to the species-rich slopes of the site, and a number of authorities are working together to provide traffic-calming measures on busy through roads to reduce the number of livestock injuries and promote further uptake of common rights. Recreation has an impact on areas accessible by cars, and is causing localised erosion.

Scrub management is being addressed through the Environmentally Sensitive Areas scheme. Management issues are being addressed through continued liaison, joint working and a Site Management Statement between Natural England and the National Trust. It is hoped that the site will enter the Higher Level Scheme

in 2007. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – Joint Nature Conservation Committee [JNCC]) & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

■ Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *Festuco-Brometalia*

Rodborough Common is the most extensive area of semi-natural dry grasslands surviving in the Cotswolds of central southern England, and represents CG5 *Bromus erectus* – *Brachypodium pinnatum* grassland, which is more or less confined to the Cotswolds. The site contains a wide range of structural types, ranging from short turf through to scrub margins, although short-turf vegetation is mainly confined to areas of shallower soils. Source: JNCC.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within **Stroud** District Council's Local Development Framework & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Stroud Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.
- ☐ Housing at Hunts Grove (1,750 with planning consent + 250 extra proposed in the Draft RSS. A further 1500 proposed in RSS proposed modifications in an area of search at Whaddon, south of Gloucester).
- ☐ Proposal for the Aston Down site.
- ☐ Housing at Lister Petter site (c.600).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth (in Stroud District) (c.500).
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Rodborough Common SAC, including increases in traffic flows near or over the common.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The nearest development to Rodborough in the above list is the Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: dry limestone grassland. Not likely to be affected by water-borne pollution or effects on the groundwater caused by mineral extraction. Waste sites if close could have an effect through increased atmospheric deposition of nitrogen. Nearby mineral workings could have an adverse effect through dust deposition. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

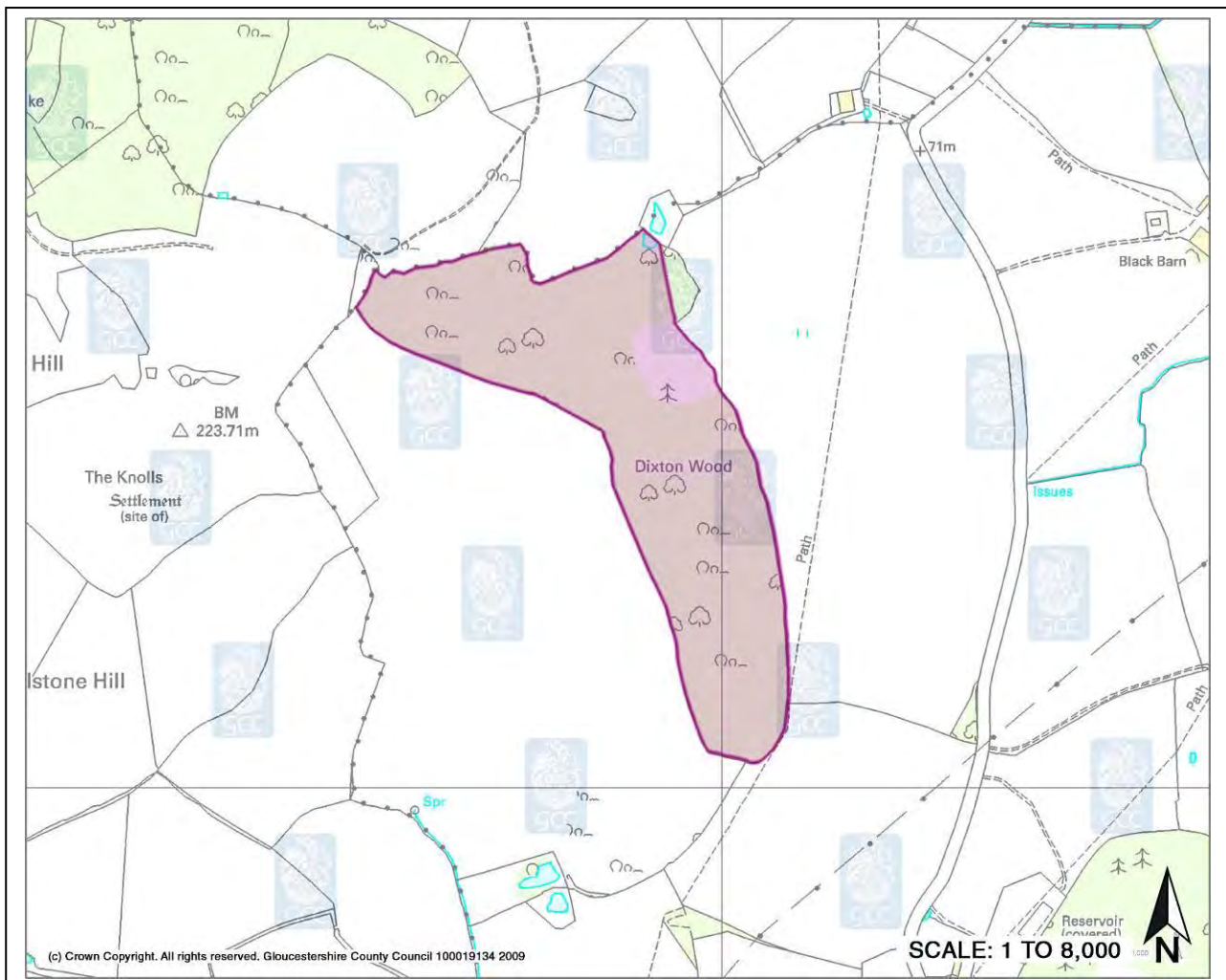
Dixton Wood

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Tewkesbury

Grid Reference: SO979313

Area: 13.14ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (100%)

Vulnerability: Dixton Wood is an area of broadleaved woodland (formerly partially grazed) with a dominance of ash including exceptionally large ancient pollards. *Limoniscus violaceus* is largely dependent on these pollards (for breeding). Principal risks to the site's integrity are lack of future replacement pollards (age-class skewed to older generation) and game management practices. These issues will be addressed through a Management Agreement with the owner of the site. This will include provision for creation of new pollards as well as management of existing resource to prevent loss through senescence and wind-blow. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC).

2. Conservation objectives:

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

Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*

The Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* was discovered at Dixton Wood in 1998 and it has been found at the site on a single occasion subsequently. It is a small site with large number of ancient ash *Fraxinus*

exce/sior pollards, and supports a rich fauna of scarce invertebrate species associated with decaying timber on ancient trees. Rare deadwood species such as the violet click beetle are mobile species which may depend on features outside of the wood for their life-cycle. These may include veteran trees beyond the boundary of the wood and hawthorn blossom for feeding. Impact on these features on the scarp slopes between Teddington and Cleeve Common may also affect the integrity of the site. (Source: JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within **Tewkesbury** Borough Council's Local Development Framework & other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Tewkesbury Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ National Grid gas pipeline project.
- ☐ Proposed Gloucester Parkway Station.
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth (Gloucester) (c.1,400).
- ☐ Housing north of Gloucester with associated infrastructure and employment (c. 2,500) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing north west of Cheltenham and associated infrastructure and employment (c. 5,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing at Leckhampton (c.360).
- ☐ Housing at M and G Sports (c.350).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth District (c.185).
- ☐ Housing at Mill Lane, Brockworth (c.120).
- ☐ Housing proposed in Brockworth Area of Search in RSS Proposed Modifications (1,500).
- ☐ Housing at Southam (c.120).
- ☐ Various waste disposal operations at Wingmoor Farm.
- ☐ Housing and associated infrastructure and employment on Leckhampton White Land (c.1300) (as in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Dixon Wood.

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of Tewkesbury Borough, the majority of developments will be not near enough to Dixon Wood to have significant effects on the site. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: *Limoniscus violaceus* - the violet click beetle, which at this site lives in old ash trees. Ash trees like damp soil conditions, and the position of this site on the North west of the Cotswolds has ideal ground conditions. The site would be affected by mineral workings that affect soil water movements, or which cause dust deposition. Similarly the site would be affected by waste sites that led to contamination of the soil water. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

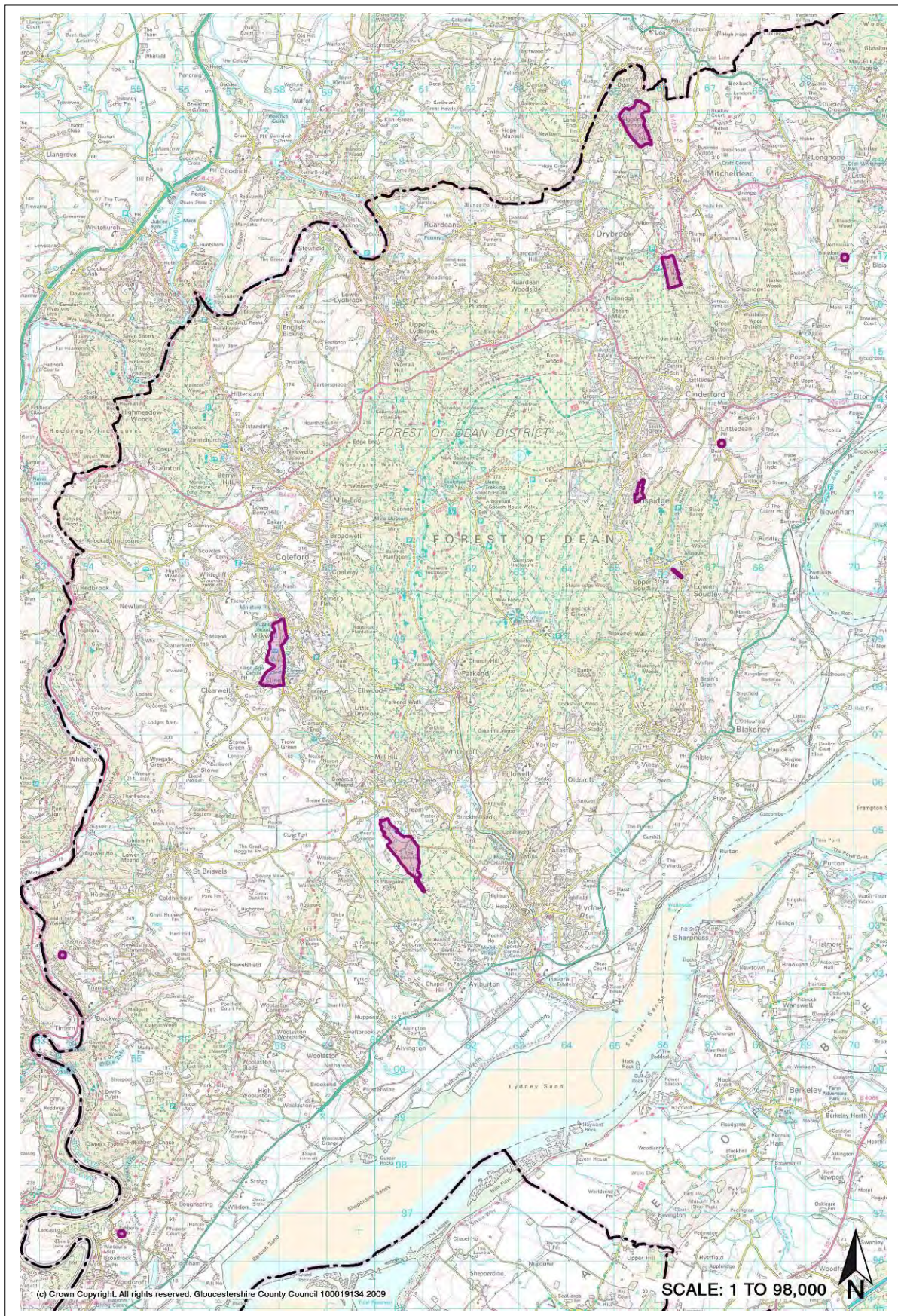
Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Forest of Dean / Fynwy (Monmouthshire)

Grid Reference: SO605044

Area: 142.7ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (26.2%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (73.8%).

Vulnerability: The site is composed of parts of a number of buildings in everyday use (mainly roof-spaces) used by the bats for breeding and a series of mines used by bats for hibernation. Within the roost the bats are vulnerable to disturbance at critical times, structural alteration and changes in the characteristic ventilation patterns. The designated sites only cover the major maternity and over-wintering roosts. The bats also depend on features outside the designated sites including intermediate roosts, foraging grounds and hedgerows/tree belts that the bats use as commuting routes. Impact on these features can also affect the integrity of the site. Any proposed changes which are likely to have an impact on the bat populations within the breeding roosts will be discussed with the relevant owners and occupiers. Where appropriate to any populations potentially damaging works will be addressed through appropriate planning regulation, management agreements and monitoring of individual roosts. Regular liaison takes place with site-owners. The human use of the mine systems (continued mineral working and recreational caving/research) is regulated by Forest Enterprise in consultation with Natural England where appropriate. Site Management Statements have been agreed with the owners of working mines to secure conservation of the populations alongside continued working. In addition, the preparation of Cave Conservation Plans will be promoted to maintain and enhance the underground environment for bats. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

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

Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales contains by far the greatest concentration of lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* in the UK, totaling about 26% of the national population. It has been selected on the grounds of the exceptional breeding population, and the majority of sites within the complex are maternity roosts. The bats are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the area.

Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*

This complex of sites on the border between England and Wales represents greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* in the northern part of its range, with about 6% of the UK population. The site contains the main maternity roost for bats in this area, which are believed to hibernate in the many disused mines in the Forest. Source: JNCC.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's Local Development Framework & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Monmouthshire County Council's (Unitary Authority) Development Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.
- ☐ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Cinderford Regeneration Project.
- ☐ Lydney Docks Regeneration Project.
- ☐ Housing at East Lydney (c.1,200).
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites (SAC).

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to bat sites to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: bat species, greater horseshoe bat; lesser horseshoe bats. These sites are especially vulnerable to mineral workings that could affect the integrity of the underground network of sites used by the bats for summer or winter roosts. Damage to these underground systems even if at distance from the notified site could harm their integrity by e.g. affecting underground air flows or temperature gradients. On the surface workings could affect important flight lines or feeding areas which, although outside of the notified area, are crucial to the survival of the bat colonies. Waste sites present a risk both in habitat loss and the potential for pollutants to enter the underground systems. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

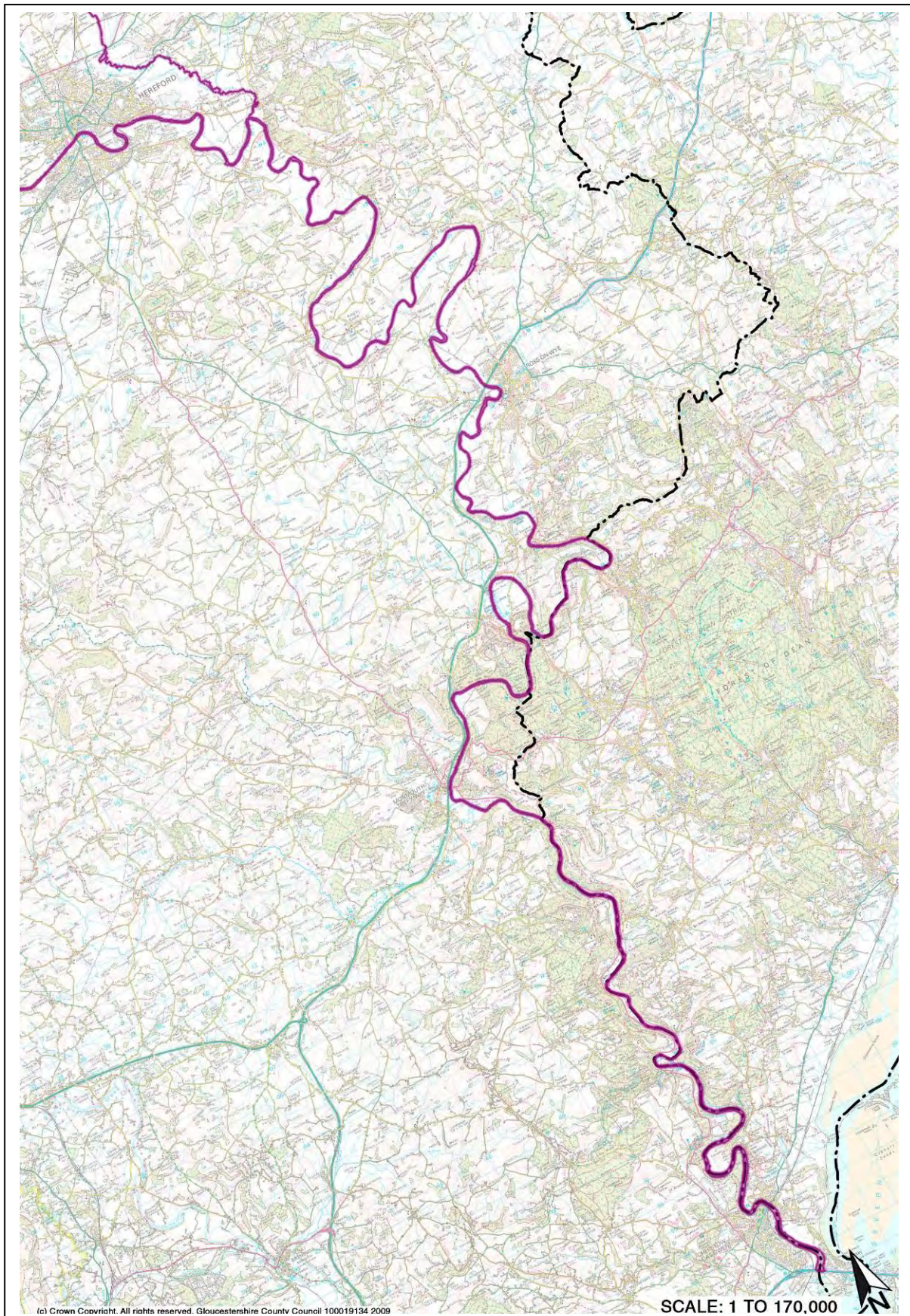
River Wye

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Forest of Dean / Fynwy - Monmouthshire / Herefordshire / Powys

Grid Reference: S0109369

Area: 2234.89ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Tidal rivers. Estuaries. Mud flats. Sand flats. Lagoons (including saltwork basins) (9.5%) Salt marshes. Salt pastures. Salt steppes (1.5%) Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (52.5%) Bogs. Marshes. Water fringed vegetation. Fens (3.1%) Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. Phygrana (1%) Dry grassland. Steppes (5.3%) Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland (2.4%) Improved grassland (10.4%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (12.3%) Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.2%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (1.8%).

Vulnerability: Water quality impacts arising from changing agricultural land-use within the catchment are having direct and indirect effects on the SAC interests through effects of diffuse pollution such as nutrient run-off and increased siltation. Natural England and the Countryside Council for Wales are seeking to address such issues through improved targeting of existing and new agri-environment schemes and through improvements in compliance with agricultural Codes of Practice. Water quality is also affected by synthetic pyrethroid sheep-dips and by point-source discharges within the catchment. The impact of sewage treatment works on the SAC is being addressed through the Asset Management Plan process and review under the Habitats Regulations. Loss of riparian habitat is occurring as a result of changes in agricultural land-use practices and other factors, including riverside development and the loss of alder tree-cover through disease. These impacts and concerns over water quality will be identified and actions recommended within the joint Natural England/Environment Agency/Countryside Council for Wales conservation strategy for the river. Fishing activities are implicated in the decline of the salmon but it is apparently Irish trawlers rather than local fishermen which have had the greatest impact. The trawler problems have now been resolved. There is increasing demand for abstraction from the river for agriculture and potable water. This is being addressed through the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy as well as the Review of Consents process. Demand for increased recreational activities is a source of potential concern for the future. Regularisation of the functions of the competent authorities, currently being sought, should reduce the risk of damage to the SAC as a result of developments for such activities. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

■ Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

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

Transition mires and quaking bogs

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

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

Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*

Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*

River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*

Twaite shad *Alosa fallax*

Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*

Bullhead *Cottus gobio*

Otter *Lutra lutra*

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

Allis shad *Alosa alosa*

Source: JNCC.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's Local Development Framework & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Monmouthshire County Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ☐ Relevant plans within Herefordshire Council's (Unitary Authority) Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Powys County Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ Ross and Hereford Flood Defence Schemes.
- ☐ The Asset Management Programme (4).
- ☐ The Catchment Flood Management Plan.
- ☐ Hereford Growth Point.
- ☐ Any other Environment Agency plans – e.g. covering river navigation issues (as advised).
- ☐ Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.
- ☐ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Lydney Docks Regeneration Project.
- ☐ National Grid gas pipeline project.
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the River Wye.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to the River Wye to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: allis shad; twaite shad; white-clawed crayfish; bullhead; river lamprey; brook lamprey; sea lamprey; otter; salmon; transition mires and quaking bogs; water-crowfoot communities. Mineral workings could affect these interests by damaging side water flows into the river and associated habitats and by pollution arising from the run-off from the workings. Waste sites would be a possible pollution source. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

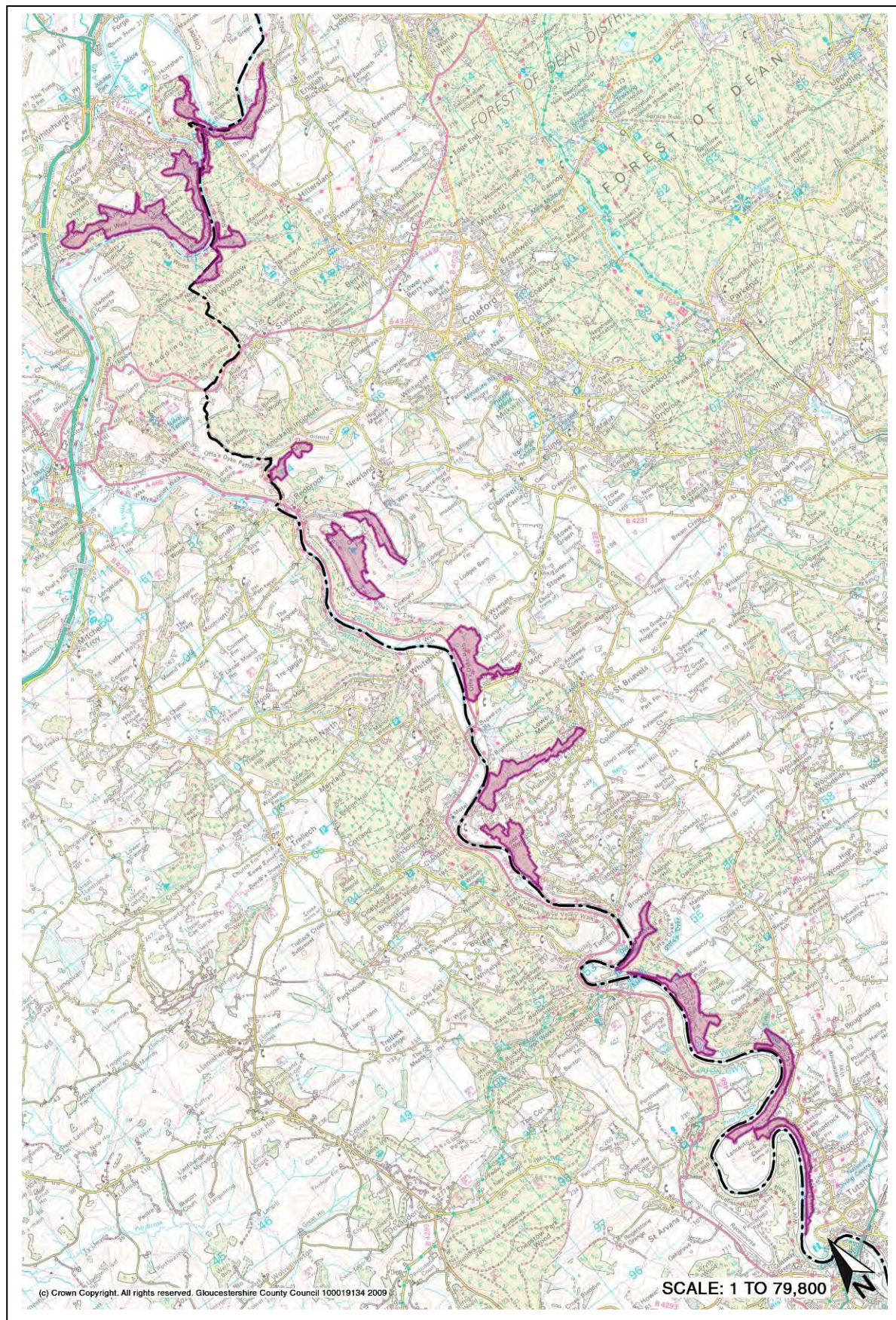
Wye Valley Woodlands

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Forest of Dean / Monmouthshire / Herefordshire

Grid Reference: SO530957

Area: 916.24



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Heath, Scrub, Maquis and Garrigue. Phygrana (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes (0.2%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (87%) Coniferous woodland (0.7%) Inland rocks. Screes. Sands. Permanent snow and ice (0.6%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (1.5%)

Vulnerability: A significant proportion of the SAC is already managed sympathetically by Forest Enterprise (now the Forestry Commission), the Woodland Trust and county Wildlife Trusts. Principal pressures are from lack of management (particularly traditional management, e.g. coppice), increasing deer numbers and inappropriate management proposals which would alter the recognised woodland stand types. Felling license approval and Forestry Commission consultation with Natural England/Countryside Council for Wales are adequate in addressing the latter issue. Positive management is being promoted through management plans (CCW), Site Management Statements (EN) and management agreements, and the Woodland Grant Scheme (including specialised targeting) is being encouraged where possible and appropriate to return some woods to active management. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

■ Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests

The Wye Valley contains abundant and near-continuous semi-natural woodland along the gorge. Beech stands occur as part of a mosaic with a wide range of other woodland types, and represent the western range of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests. Such a variety of woodland types is rare within the UK. In places lime *Tilia* sp., elm *Ulmus* sp. and oak *Quercus* sp. share dominance with the beech. Structurally the woods include old coppice, pollards and high forest types. Lady Park Wood, one of the component sites, is an outstanding example of near-natural old-growth structure in mixed broad-leaved woodland, and has been the subject of detailed long-term monitoring studies.

Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines

The woods of the lower Wye Valley on the border of south Wales and England form one of the most important areas for woodland conservation in the UK and provide the most extensive examples of *Tilio-Acerion* forest in the west of its range. A wide range of ecological variation is associated with slope, aspect and landform. The woodland occurs here as a mosaic with other types, including beech *Fagus sylvatica* and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* stands. Uncommon trees, including large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* and rare whitebeams such as *Sorbus porrigentifomis* and *S. rupicola* are found here, as well as locally uncommon herbs, including wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-leaved bitter-cress *Cardamine impatiens* and wood fescue *Festuca altissima*.

Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles

Wye Valley is representative of yew *Taxus baccata* woods in the south-west of the habitat's range. It lies on the southern Carboniferous limestone, and yew occurs both as an understorey to other woodland trees and as major yew-dominated groves, particularly on the more stony slopes and crags.

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

Rhinolophus hipposideros Lesser horseshoe bat

Source: JNCC.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ❑ Plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's Local Development Framework & potentially other District LDFs within Gloucestershire.
- ❑ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ❑ Monmouthshire County Council's Unitary Development Plan.

- ❑ Relevant plans within Herefordshire Council's (Unitary Authority) Local Development Framework.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ❑ Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.
- ❑ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ❑ National Grid gas pipeline project.
- ❑ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Wye Valley Woodlands.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to the Wye Valley Woodlands to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: yew woods; lime/maple woods; beech woods; lesser horseshoe bats. Not likely to be affected by water-borne pollution or effects on the groundwater caused by mineral extraction. Waste sites if close could have an effect through increased atmospheric deposition of nitrogen. Nearby mineral workings could have an adverse effect through dust deposition. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

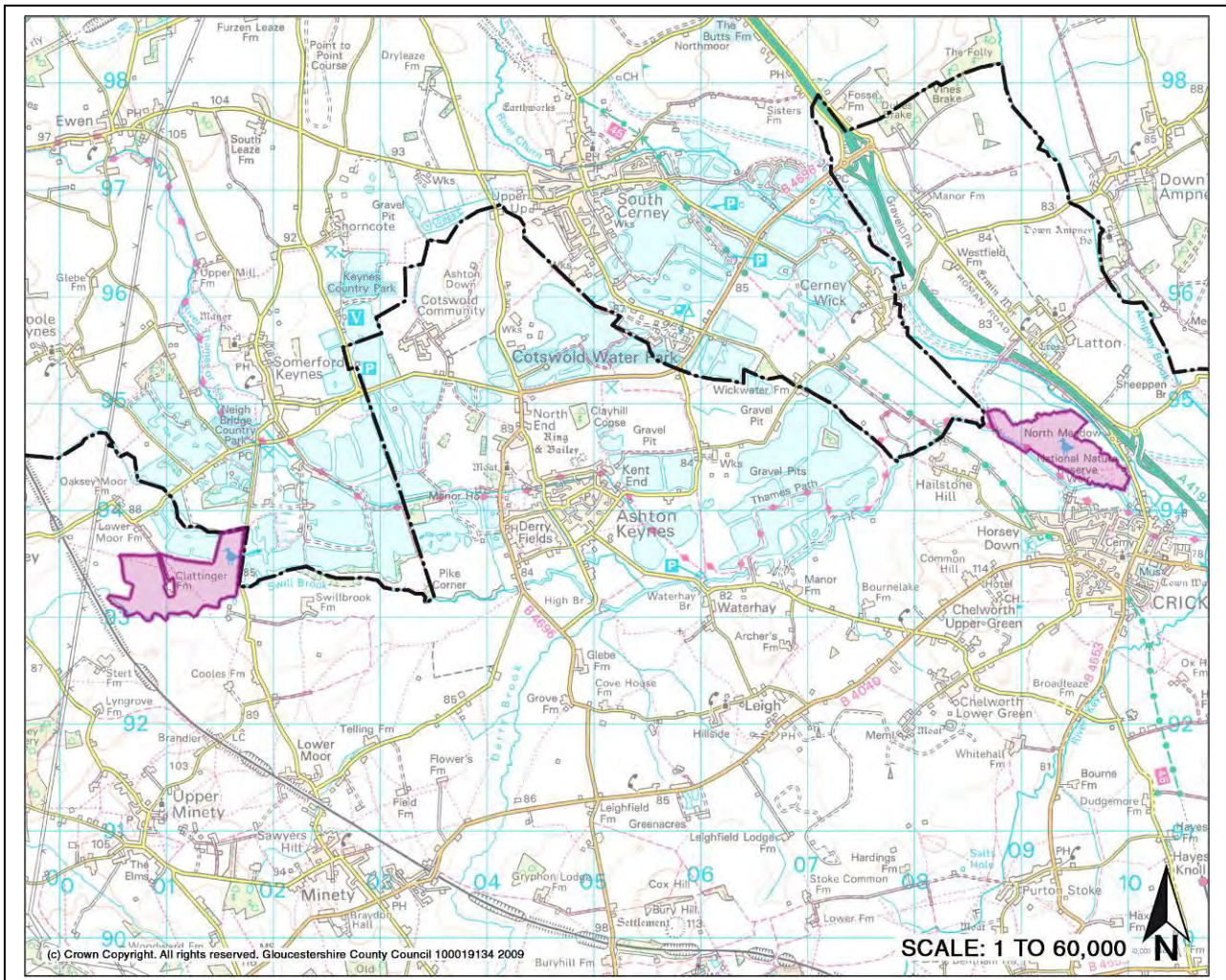
North Meadow & Clattinger Farm

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Wiltshire

Grid Reference: SU014934

Area: 104.88ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (2%) Dry grassland. Steppes (15%) Humid grassland. Mesophile grassland (71%) Improved grassland (12%)

Vulnerability: These grasslands are partly a National Nature Reserve (NNR), with the other part owned by a wildlife charity. The habitat is dependent on traditional agricultural practices of hay-cutting with aftermath cattle grazing or seasonal cattle grazing. These management requirements are addressed in the NNR management plan and in a site management statement concerning the private land which stipulates an appropriate regime. The wildlife charity is developing a management plan with Natural England to secure the long-term maintenance of the interest feature. However the traditional hay meadow management is uneconomic in the present agricultural climate. Part of the site is currently in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme; North Meadow is owned by Natural England and is a National Nature Reserve. Adjacent extraction and renovation of gravel workings are a potential threat to water levels and are subject to monitoring and mitigation measures. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007).

2. Conservation objectives:

■ Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

Lowland hay meadows *Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*

North Meadow and Clattinger Farm in the Thames Valley in southern England is one of two sites representing lowland hay meadows near the centre of its UK range. As in the case of the Oxford Meadows, this site represents an exceptional survival of the traditional pattern of management and so exhibits a high degree of conservation of structure and function. This site also contains a very high proportion (>90%) of the surviving UK population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, a species highly characteristic of damp lowland meadows in Europe and now rare throughout its range.

Source: JNCC

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ❑ Local Plans produced by the former district councils in **Wiltshire** which are still relevant after 1 April, 2009. The policies contained within these documents currently form part of the development plan for Wiltshire and will remain in place until replaced by policies in new Development Plan Documents (DPD), particularly the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- ❑ Wiltshire Council Local Development Framework.
- ❑ Wiltshire Council Minerals & Waste Development Plan Documents.
- ❑ Wiltshire & Swindon Waste Local Plan.
- ❑ Wiltshire & Swindon Minerals Local Plan.
- ❑ Plans within Cotswold District Council's Local Development Framework
- ❑ Adopted Cotswold District Local Plan.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ❑ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ❑ Oxfordshire Waste Local Plan (Adopted).
- ❑ Oxfordshire Minerals Local Plan (Adopted).
- ❑ Plans within Oxfordshire's Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
- ❑ Plans within Swindon Borough Council's Local Development Framework.
- ❑ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ❑ Housing at Kingshill North and South (c.490).
- ❑ Mineral working / restoration / landfill operations at Sandpool Farm, Somerford Keynes.
- ❑ Mineral extraction in the Cotswold Water Park at Cerney Wick Farm Quarry and Latton Farm Quarry.
- ❑ Restoration sites in the Cotswold Water Park e.g. Carney Wick Farm & Cleveland Lakes.
- ❑ Proposals for sand and gravel extraction at and in the vicinity of Down Ampney Airfield.
- ❑ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on North Meadow & Clattinger Farm.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to North Meadow & Clattinger Farm to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: lowland hay meadow on river valley alluvial soil. Mineral extraction in or near the site could affect groundwater levels or surface or subsurface water movements. Extraction above the site could also lead to pollution from runoff. Waste sites could pose a pollution threat, especially from nutrient enrichment. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

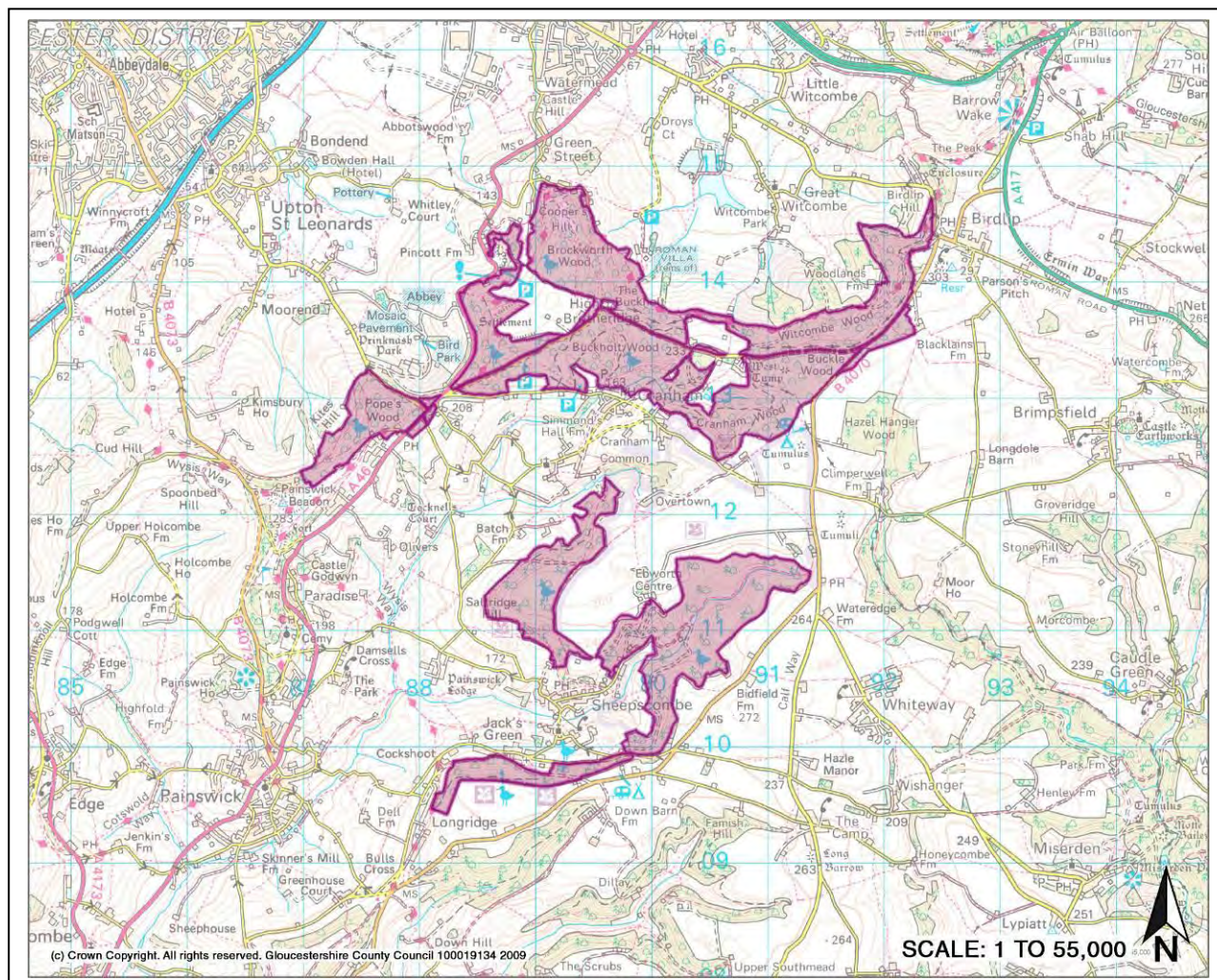
Cotswold Beechwoods

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Stroud / Cotswold / Tewkesbury

Grid Reference: SO898134

Area: 585.85ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (1%) Dry grassland. Steppes (1.5%) Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (82%) Coniferous woodland (5%) Mixed woodland (10%) Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (0.5%).

Vulnerability: The woodland is being maintained by a variety of silvicultural practices including selective forestry, group fellings and small areas of coppicing. Age-class and structural diversity is being enhanced through a sympathetic Woodland Grant Scheme. Early removal of planted conifers is being encouraged in areas where planting occurred in the 1970s. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC).

2. Conservation objectives:

■ Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests

The Cotswold Beechwoods represent the most westerly extensive blocks of *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests in the UK. The woods are floristically richer than the Chilterns, and rare plants include red helleborine *Cephalanthera rubra*, stinking hellebore *Helleborus foetidus*, narrow-lipped helleborine *Epipactis leptochila*

and wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*. There is a rich mollusc fauna. The woods are structurally varied, including blocks of high forest and some areas of remnant beech coppice.

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

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *Festuco-Brometalia*

Source: JNCC

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Stroud** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Stroud Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Tewkesbury** Borough Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Tewkesbury Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Cotswold** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Cotswold Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.
- ☐ Housing at Hunts Grove 1,750 with planning consent + 250 extra proposed in the Draft RSS. A further 1500 proposed in RSS proposed modifications in an area of search at Whaddon, south of Gloucester).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth (in Stroud District) (c.500).
- ☐ Proposal for the Aston Down site.
- ☐ Housing at Lister Petter site (c.650).
-
- ☐ Proposed Gloucester Parkway Station.
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth (c.1,400).
- ☐ Housing north of Gloucester with associated infrastructure and employment (c. 2,500) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing north west of Cheltenham and associated infrastructure and employment (c. 5,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing at Leckhampton (c.1300 – Area of Search).
- ☐ Housing at M and G Sports (c.350).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth District (c.185).
- ☐ Housing at Mill Lane, Brockworth (c.120).
- ☐ Housing proposed in Brockworth Area of Search in RSS Proposed Modifications (1,500)
- ☐ Housing at Southam (c.120).
- ☐ Various waste disposal and management operations at Wingmoor Farm.
-
- ☐ Kingshill North and South (c.490).
- ☐ Bourton on the Water (124).
-
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Cotswold Beechwoods (SAC).

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the districts of Stroud, Tewkesbury and Cotswolds, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to North Meadow & Clattinger Farm to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: beech woodlands; dry limestone grasslands. Not likely to be affected by water-borne pollution or effects on the groundwater caused by mineral extraction. Waste sites if close could have an effect through increased atmospheric deposition of nitrogen. Nearby mineral workings could have an adverse effect through dust deposition. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

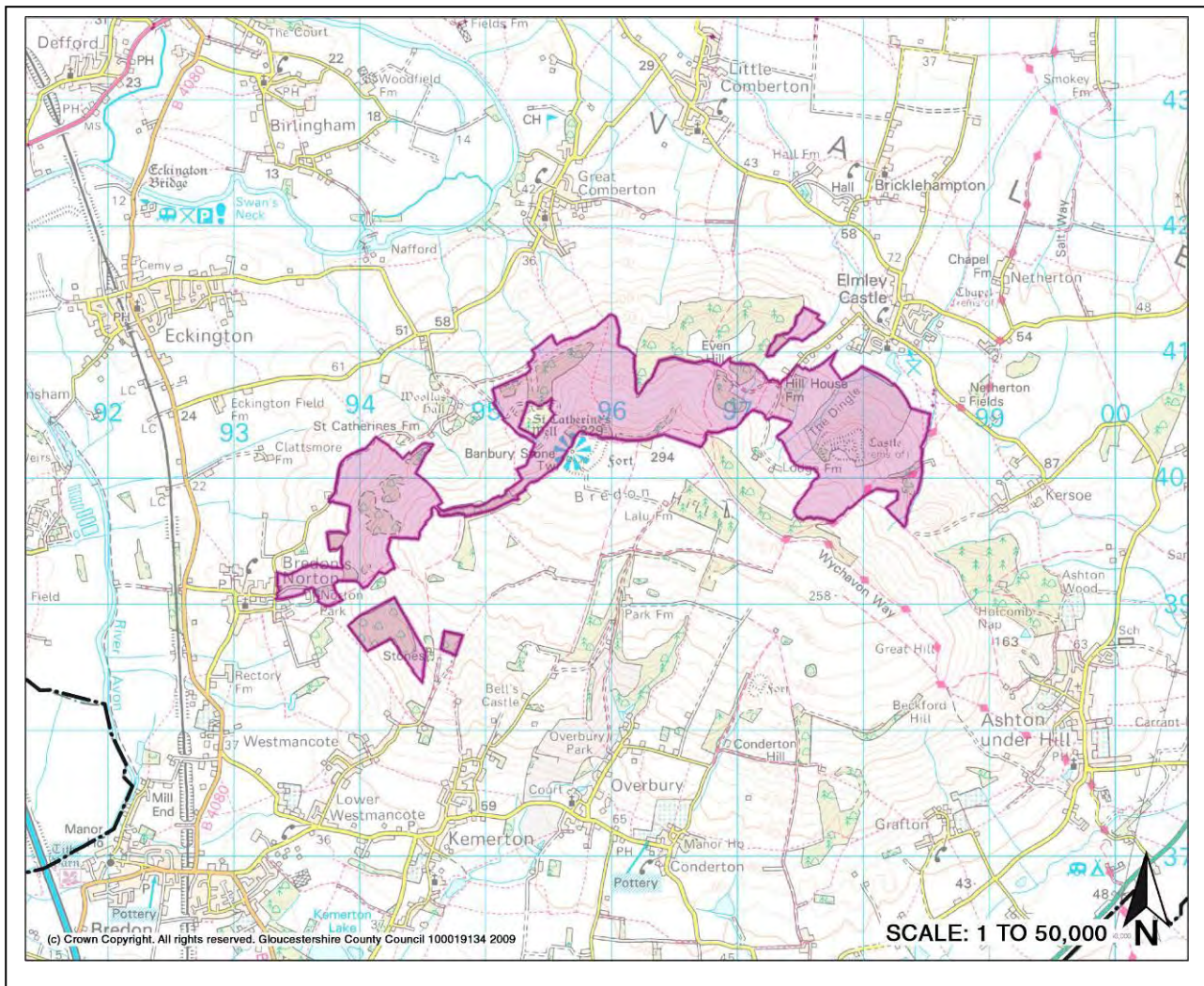
Bredon Hill

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Wychavon, Worcestershire

Grid Reference: SO965406

Area: 359.86ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Heath. Scrub. Maquis and garrigue. *Phygrana* (10%) Dry grassland. Steppes (10%) Non-Forest areas cultivated with woody plants (including orchards, groves, vineyards, (80%))

Vulnerability: Bredon Hill is an area of pasture woodland and ancient parkland providing habitat for *Limoniscus violaceus*. The main threats are the lack of a replacement generation of trees for the current ancient trees over much of the hill, as many of the younger trees have been removed to increase stock grazing areas; the overall number of ancient trees suitable for *Limoniscus violaceus* is relatively small. Management agreements are being used to preserve existing tree stocks and to provide replacement planting. (Source: Natura 2000 Standard Data Form – JNCC).

2. Conservation objectives:

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

Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*

Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus* were recorded at Bredon Hill in 1989, although there is a 1939 record from „Tewkesbury‘, which may refer to Bredon Hill. It has been found in each of several years since. It should be noted that the Violet click beetle is a mobile species. The scarp slope that begins at Cleeve Common and extends north into Worcestershire contains many veteran trees in woods and hedgerows and is an important resource for deadwood invertebrates including the Violet click beetle. Impacts on the hedgerow and veteran tree resource in this area may affect the integrity of the site. Bredon Hill is a very important site for fauna associated with decaying timber on ancient trees, including many Red Data Book and Nationally Scarce invertebrate species.

Source: JNCC & consultation response from Natural England – Feb 2007.

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Worcestershire County Council's Minerals & Waste Development Framework.
- ☐ Worcestershire Waste Local Plan.
- ☐ Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within Wychavon District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Wychavon Local Plan.
- ☐ Plans within Tewkesbury Borough Council's Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ West Midlands RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Housing north of Gloucester with associated infrastructure and employment (c.2,500) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing north west of Cheltenham and associated infrastructure and employment (c.5,000) (as proposed in Draft RSS).
- ☐ Housing at Brockworth District (c.185).
- ☐ Housing at Mill Lane, Brockworth (c.120).
- ☐ Housing proposed in Brockworth Area of Search in RSS Proposed Modifications (1,500).
- ☐ Housing at Southam (c.120).
- ☐ Various waste disposal and management operations at Wingmoor Farm.
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Bredon Hill.

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of Tewkesbury District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to Bredon Hill to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have ‚in-combination‘ effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: *Limoniscus violaceus* - the violet click beetle. Similar issues as for Dixon Wood with respect to how the site may potentially be affected by minerals or waste development. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

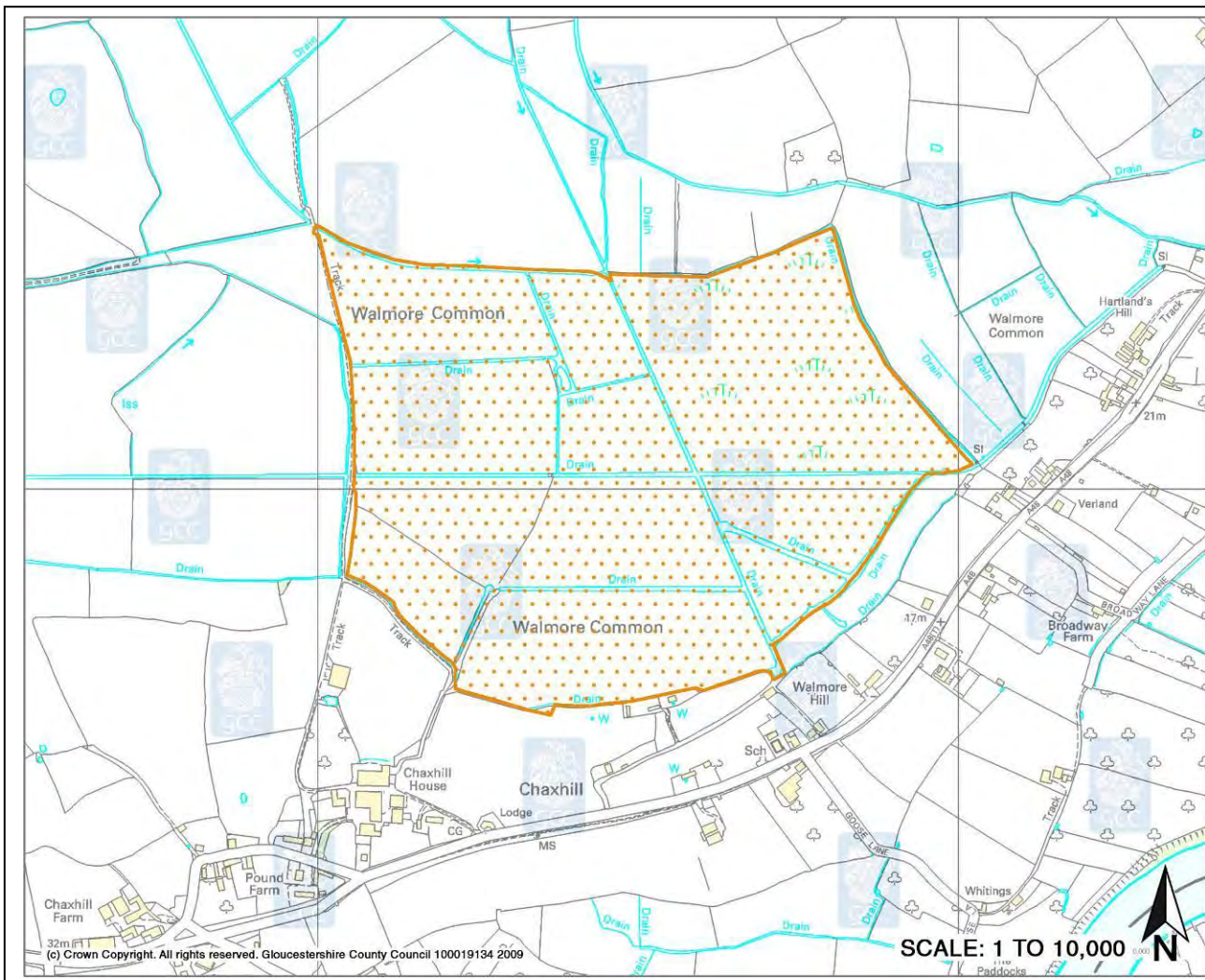
Walmore Common

Designation: Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site

Location: Forest of Dean

Grid Reference: SO745150

Area: 52.85ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: Walmore Common occupies a low lying area in the Severn Vale, which is subject to winter flooding. The site is a wetland overlying peat providing a variety of habitats including improved neutral grassland, unimproved marshy grassland and open water ditches. The common is part of a series of sites within the Severn Vale which, in winter, form an important refuge and feeding area for wildfowl.

Vulnerability: The site is a Ramsar site, an EU Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. A water level management plan, currently in preparation, will ensure appropriate conditions are retained for the wintering bird interest. The marsh grassland and ditches will be maintained and enhanced by maintaining high water levels from spring to autumn. The nearby Timber Preservation plant has contingency plans in the event of accidental spillage. (Source: Ramsar Sites Information Service at: <http://www.wetlands.org/rsis/>)

2. Conservation objectives:

■ This site qualifies under EU Habitats Directive 79/409/EES Article 4.1 by regularly supporting (in winter) internationally important numbers of Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*. During the five winter

periods 1986/87 to 1990/91 the average peak count was 207 birds (1% of the NW European population and 3% of British. (Source: SPA citation).

■ This site qualifies under Ramsar criterion 6 by supporting species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: The qualifying species/populations (peak counts in winter) is Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, 43 individuals, representing an average of 0.5% of Great Britain's population (5 year peak mean 1998/9 – 2002/3). (Source: JNCC).

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ South West RSS.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Development of wind turbines or wind farms along the Severn Estuary and the area around Walmore Common.
- ☐ Development of a telecommunications mast system in the area around the common.
- ☐ Open access on common land.
- ☐ Operation of sluice and water levels; implementation of a Water Level Management Plan and ditch management rotation.
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Walmore Common SPA.

4. Comment on plans and projects:

The above list of projects relates to the whole of the Forest of Dean District, but it is likely that the majority of developments will not be near enough to Walmore Common to have significant effects. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering Gloucestershire) that may potentially have 'in-combination' effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and are up-to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: wintering Bewick's swans. Mineral extraction in or near the catchment could affect groundwater levels or water movements. Extraction above the site could also lead to pollution from runoff. Waste sites could pose a pollution threat. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

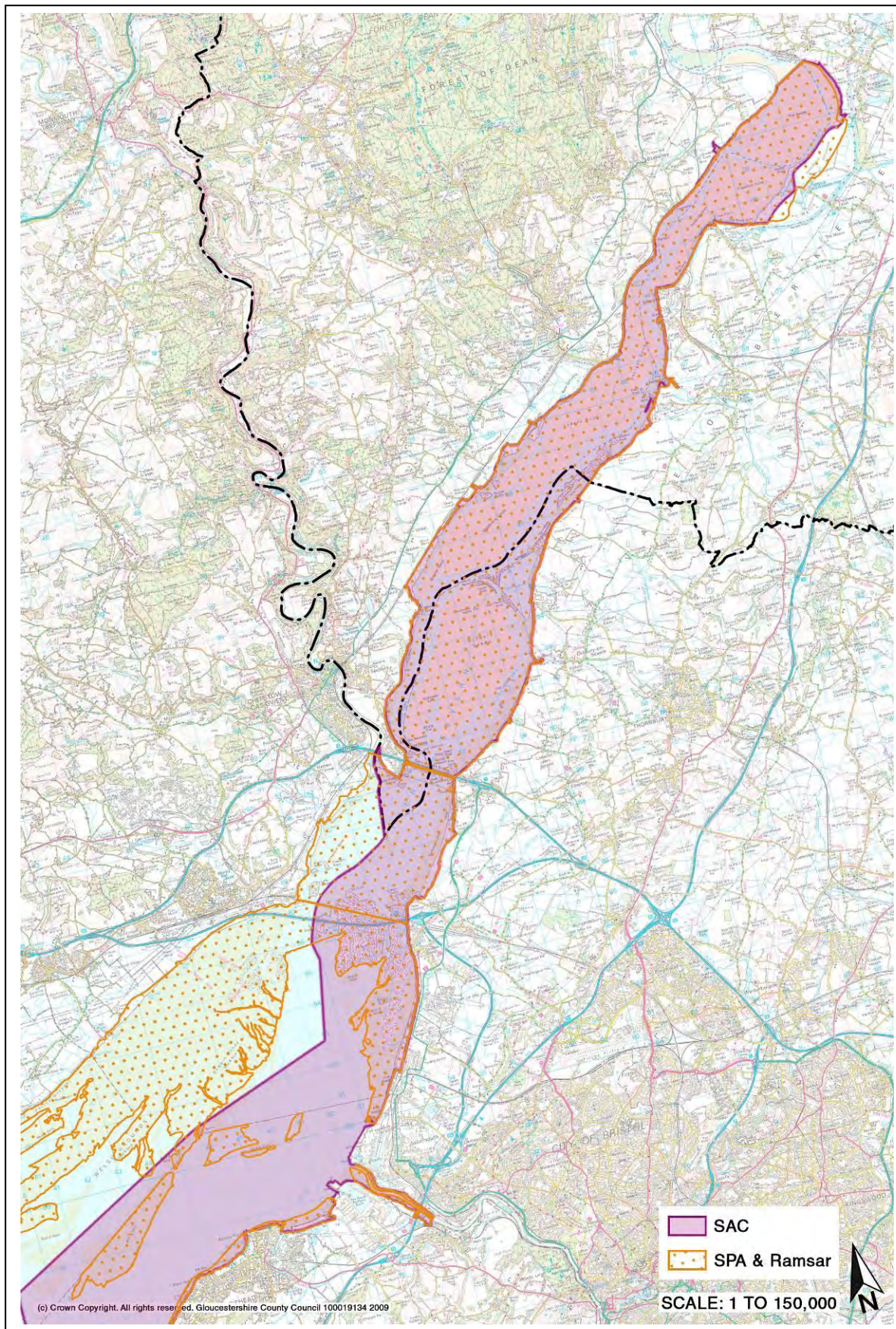
Severn Estuary

Designation: Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site / Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Stroud / Forest of Dean

Grid Reference: 51 13 29N 03 02 57W

Area: 24662.98 ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character: The estuary's classic funnel shape, unique in Britain, is a factor causing the Severn to have the second-largest tidal range in the world (after the Bay of Fundy, Canada). This tidal regime results in plant and animal communities typical of the extreme physical conditions of liquid mud and tide swept sand and rock. The species-poor invertebrate community includes high densities of ragworms, lugworms and other invertebrates forming an important food source for passage and wintering waders. A further consequence of the large tidal range is the extensive intertidal zone, one of the largest in the UK, comprising mudflats, sand banks, shingle, and rocky platforms. Glassworts and annual sea-blite colonise the open mud, with beds of all three species of eelgrass occurring on more sheltered mud and sandbanks. Large expanses of common cord-grass also occur on the outer marshes. Grazed saltmarsh fringes the estuary with a range of saltmarsh types present. The middle marsh sward is dominated by common saltmarsh-grass with typical associated species. In the upper marsh, red fescue and saltmarsh rush become more prominent. The estuary is an important habitat for migratory fish.

Vulnerability: The conservation of the site features is dependent on the tidal regime. The range is the second highest in the world and the scouring of the seabed and strong tidal streams result in natural erosion of the habitats. The estuary is therefore vulnerable to large scale interference, including human actions. These include land-claim, aggregate extraction/dredging, physical developments such as barrage construction flood defences, pollution (industrial, oil spillage), eutrophication and tourism based activities and disturbance. These issues are being addressed through existing control measures and as part of the Severn Estuary Strategy. Since June 1995 the Severn Estuary Strategy has been working towards the sustainable management of the site, through the involvement of local authorities, interested parties and local people. This integrated approach is being further developed in conjunction with the SAC management scheme for the nature conservation interest of the estuary. A large area of the SPA / Ramsar is now also designated as an SAC.

2. Conservation objectives:

Qualifies as a **SPA** as follows:

Article 4.1 Qualification 79/409/EEC

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Cygnus columbianus bewickii (Western Siberia/North-eastern & North-western Europe)
3.9% of the GB population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Article 4.2 Qualification 79/409/EEC

Over winter the area regularly supports:

Anas strepera (North-western Europe)
0.9% of the population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Anser albifrons albifrons (North-western Siberia/North-eastern & Northwestern Europe)
0.4% of the population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Calidris alpina alpina (Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa)
3.3% of the population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Tadorna tadorna (North-western Europe)
1.1% of the population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

Tringa tetanus (Eastern Atlantic - wintering)
1.3% of the population
5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96

<p>Article 4.2 Qualification 79/409/EEC: An Internationally Important Assemblage of Birds</p> <p>Over winter the area regularly supports: 84317 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 01/04/1998) Including: <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, <i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i>, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, <i>Anas strepera</i>, <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>, <i>Tringa totanus</i>.</p>
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Source: JNCC.

Note: Contemporary data and information on water bird trends at this site and their regional (sub-national) and national contexts can be found in the Wetland Bird Survey report, which is updated annually. See www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm.

Qualifies as a **SAC** as follows:

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site

1130 Estuaries

Habitat occurrence description not yet available.

1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

Habitat occurrence description not yet available.

1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

Habitat occurrence description not yet available.

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

1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time

1170 Reefs

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

1095 Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*

Species occurrence description not yet available.

1099 River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*

Species occurrence description not yet available.

1103 Twaite shad *Alosa fallax*

Species occurrence description not yet available.

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

Not applicable.

Source: JNCC.

Qualifies as a **Ramsar** site as follows:

Natural England Previously Commented: "The Severn Estuary Ramsar criteria shown on the JNCC website (Version 3.0 & dated 08/05/2006) result from a review that has not yet been implemented. At the moment therefore these are not the correct criteria to use (although this situation may change in the near future). Since the requirement for an appropriate assessment stems from the Habitats Regulations it is the features of the European sites that need to be considered."

However the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) for the Severn Estuary (Version 3.0) is now dated 13/06/2008 and is one page longer on the JNCC website so it is reproduced below for information purposes and comment.

Ramsar criterion 1

Due to immense tidal range (second-largest in world), this affects both the physical environment and biological communities.

Habitats Directive Annex I features present on the pSAC include:

H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time

H1130 Estuaries

H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

Ramsar criterion 3

Due to unusual estuarine communities, reduced diversity and high productivity.

Ramsar criterion 4

This site is important for the run of migratory fish between sea and river via estuary. Species include Salmon *Salmo salar*, sea trout *S. trutta*, sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*, river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, allis shad *Alosa alosa*, twaite shad *A. fallax*, and eel *Anguilla anguilla*. It is also of particular importance for migratory birds during spring and autumn.

Ramsar criterion 8

The fish of the whole estuarine and river system is one of the most diverse in Britain, with over 110 species recorded. Salmon *Salmo salar*, sea trout *S. trutta*, sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*, river lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*, allis shad *Alosa alosa*, twaite shad *A. fallax*, and eel *Anguilla anguilla* use the Severn Estuary as a key migration route to their spawning grounds in the many tributaries that flow into the estuary. The site is important as a feeding and nursery ground for many fish species particularly allis shad *Alosa alosa* and twaite shad *A. fallax* which feed on mysid shrimps in the salt wedge.

Ramsar criterion 5

Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter:
70919 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003).

Ramsar criterion 6

Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in winter:

Tundra swan, *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, NW Europe

229 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Greater white-fronted goose, *Anser albifrons albifrons*, NW Europe

2076 individuals, representing an average of 35.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean for 1996/7-2000/01)

Common shelduck, *Tadorna tadorna*, NW Europe

3223 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Gadwall, *Anas strepera strepera*, NW Europe

241 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Dunlin, *Calidris alpina alpina*, W Siberia / W Europe

25082 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Common redshank, *Tringa totanus totanus*

2616 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species/populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration

under criterion 6. Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

Lesser black-backed gull, *Larus fuscus graellsii*, W Europe/Mediterranean/W Africa

4167 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.8% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

Ringed plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*, Europe/Northwest Africa

740 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

Eurasian teal, *Anas crecca*, NW Europe

4456 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Northern pintail, *Anas acuta*, NW Europe

756 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within the **Forest of Dean** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.

- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Stroud** District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Stroud District Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within South Gloucestershire Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted South Gloucestershire Local Plan.
- ☐ Adopted South Gloucestershire Minerals & Waste Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within Bristol City Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Bristol City Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within North Somerset Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted North Somerset Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans (including the Joint Waste Core Strategy) produced by the West of England Partnership.
- ☐ Monmouthshire County Council's Development Plan.
- ☐ Newport City Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ☐ Cardiff City Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ☐ The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Unitary Development Plan.
- ☐ The Shoreline Management Plan.
- ☐ Relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans & Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (EA).
- ☐ Rights of Way Improvement Plans.
- ☐ Severn Estuary Partnership plans and strategies.

PROJECTS:

Stroud

- ☐ Cotswolds Canal Restoration Project.
- ☐ Housing at Hunts Grove (c.1,500 – 1,750).
- ☐ Activity / development at Sharpness Docks.

Forest of Dean

- ☐ Lydney Docks Regeneration Project.
- ☐ Housing at East Lydney (c.1,200).

Other – outside of Gloucestershire – English / East side of Estuary

- ☐ Development associated with the decommissioning of Berkeley power station.
- ☐ Proposals at Oldbury power station.
- ☐ Avonmouth Docks.
- ☐ EA flood defence proposals for Avonmouth.
- ☐ Wind turbine proposals in South Gloucestershire and around Avonmouth.
- ☐ Proposals at Hinkley Point B power station.

Other – outside of Gloucestershire – Welsh / West side of Estuary

- ☐ Development projects / activity at Chepstow Docks.
- ☐ Development projects / activity at Newport Docks.
- ☐ Development projects / activity at Cardiff Bay (Docks).
- ☐ Development projects / activity at Newport Docks.
- ☐ Development projects / activity at Barry Docks.
- ☐ EA flood defence proposals for Caldicot.

Other –

- ☐ The Crown Estate licences for sand and gravel dredging in English & Welsh water.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

Impacts on the tidal Severn Estuary could potentially arise from a number of different sources or different kinds of development in a number of Authorities (both in England and in Wales) adjoining the Estuary. A good source of information is the Severn Estuary Partnership website:

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/>

This site has a variety of useful information on the Severn Estuary including mapped information on:

- Major developments proposed in development plans
- Major sewage discharges & planned improvements
- Major industrial discharges.

But the assessment of 'in-combination' effects cannot be totally exhaustive; the list of other plans and projects has to be workable. Any comments on projects (e.g. especially from consultees outside or bordering

Gloucestershire) that may potentially have „in-combination’ effects are welcomed. Housing figures come from Gloucestershire County Council Strategic Planning and these are up to-date as of 05/2009.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

European interest: 1) as SPA - wintering wildfowl (>10,000 regularly), plus important numbers of individual species Bewick’s swan, European whitefronted goose, wigeon, gadwall, shoveler, pochard. 2) as SAC – Allis shad; twaite shad; Atlantic salt meadows; estuaries; river lamprey; intertidal mudflats and sandflats; sea lamprey; reefs; subtidal sandbanks. This site is unlikely to be affected directly by on land mineral extraction but there could be significant indirect effects from changes to water flow patterns into the site. (Note: marine aggregate extraction could have implications for many of the sites features by disruption of the sedimentary systems and natural processes operating throughout the estuary). Waste sites pose a threat from pollution. Source: Letter from Natural England (July 2006).

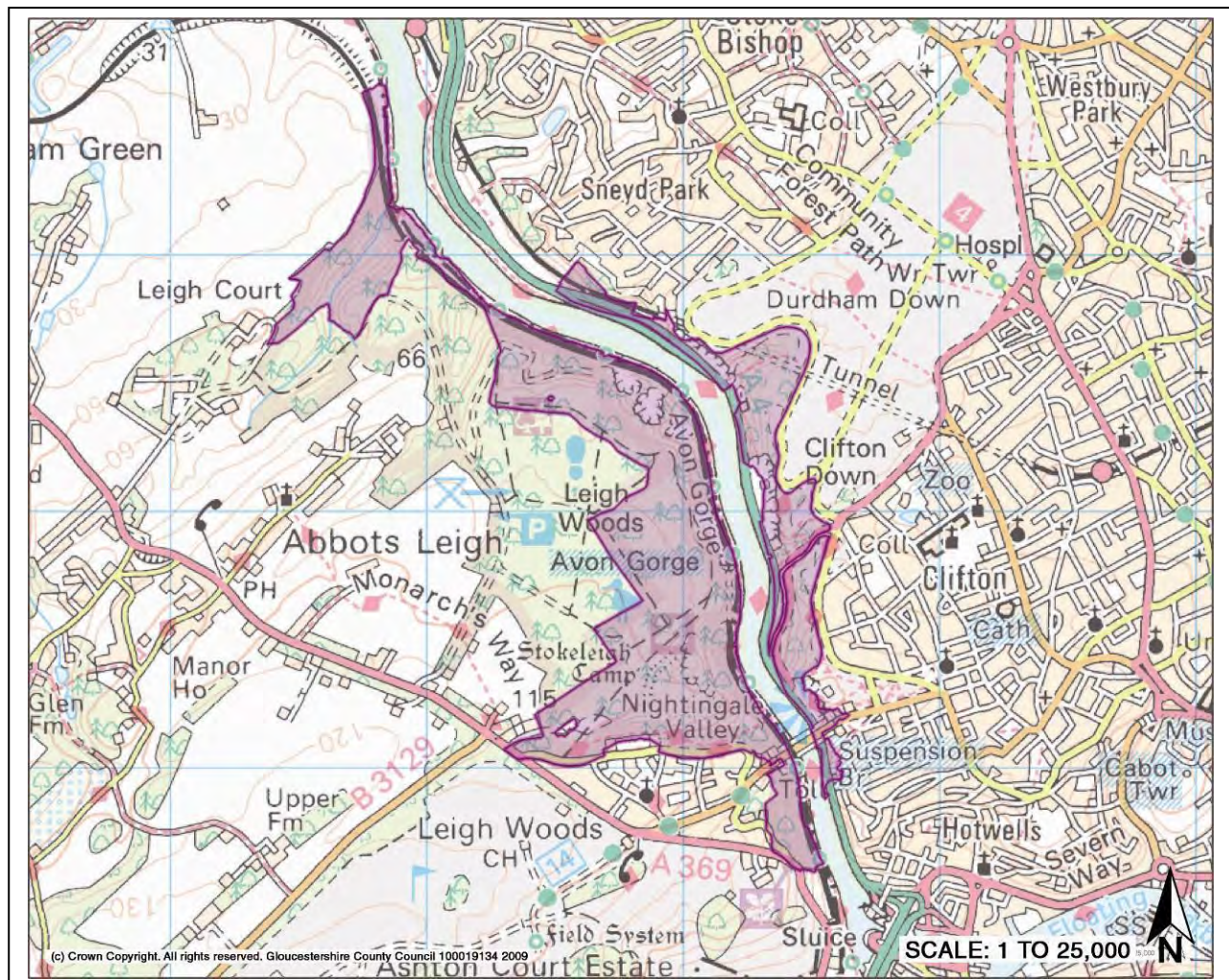
Avon Gorge Woodlands

Designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Location: Bristol City

Grid Reference: 51 27 50 N 02 38 01 W

Area: 152.35 ha



1. The characteristics of the European site:

General Site Character:

Limestone cliffs and screes of a large river gorge: Heath, scrub, maquis, garrigue and phrygana (4%). Dry grassland and steppes (4%). Humid grassland and mesophile grassland (2%). Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (70%). Coniferous woodland (5%). Mixed woodland (5%). Inland rocks, screes, sands, permanent snow and ice (10%).

Vulnerability:

There are no significant threats to the Annex I habitat on this site. Part is managed as a National Nature Reserve and the management of the remainder is being addressed through a Site Management Statement. The presence of non-native trees throughout the site needs to be assessed. In addition, scrub invasion on calcareous grasslands is a problem. Both of these have begun to be tackled through the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project.

2. Conservation objectives:

■ Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines

Avon Gorge is representative of *Tilio-Acerion* forests in south-west England on the limestone cliffs and screes of a large river gorge. It is important because of the high concentration of small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, compared with other sites in the region, the presence of rare whitebeams *Sorbus* spp., including two unique to the Avon Gorge (*S. bristoliensis* and *S. wilmottiana*), and other uncommon plants, such as green hellebore *Helleborus viridis*. Other characteristic species include soft shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum* and hart's-tongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium*. Species-rich transitions to scrub and grasslands are associated with the woodland. Small groves of yew *Taxus baccata* also occur on some of the stonier situations.

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

Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates *Festuco-Brometalia*

3. Relevant plans or projects:

PLANS:

- ☐ Any relevant plans within **Bristol City** Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Bristol City Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within the Forest of Dean District Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- ☐ Adopted Forest of Dean Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within Stroud District Council's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted Stroud District Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within Cotswold District Council's emerging Local Development Framework. .
- ☐ Adopted Cotswold District Council Local Plan.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Waste Local Plan 2002 – 2012 Adopted October 2004.
- ☐ Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan 1997 – 2006 Adopted April 2003.
- ☐ Any relevant plans within South Gloucestershire's emerging Local Development Framework.
- ☐ Adopted South Gloucestershire Local Plan.
- ☐ Adopted South Gloucestershire Minerals & Waste Local Plan.
- ☐ Any relevant plans (including the Joint Waste Core Strategy) produced by the West of England Partnership.
- ☐ Bristol Avon Catchment Flood Management Plan & Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy.

PROJECTS:

- ☐ Major housing or industrial development in and around the city of Bristol.
- ☐ Strategic waste management proposals as part of the West of England Partnership Joint Core Strategy.
- ☐ Any other major development identified in Development plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on the Avon Gorge Woodlands.

4. Comment on plans or projects:

As this is an added site for this updated Baseline Report, additional comments, particularly from Natural England are welcomed. It is likely that any significant impacts on this site are more likely to arise from development in Bristol rather than in Gloucestershire, but any comments on the need to include additional plans and projects and on potential 'in-combination' effects are welcome.

5. General statements from Natural England on potential impacts from Minerals & Waste development:

Currently no statement from Natural England.

Section 3: Conclusion and Contact Details

This updated Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report will inform future HRA Screening reports and AA Reports (if needed) - assessing options within Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that make up Gloucestershire County Council's Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF). To assist in the process consultees are asked to provide information on:

- The accuracy of the baseline data relating to European sites.
- Any further information on plans and projects (including potential 'in-combination' effects) which could have an impact on any of the 11 European sites in this report.

Contacts:

Please send your comments by **Friday 12th June 2009** to:

**David Ingleby / Minerals & Waste Planning Policy / Environment Directorate /
Gloucestershire County Council / Shire Hall / Westgate Street / Gloucester / GL1 2TH**
Tel: 01452 426338
Email: david.ingleby@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Or:

**Gary Kennison / Principal Ecologist / Environment Directorate / Gloucestershire County
Council Shire Hall / Westgate Street / Gloucester / GL1 2TH**
Tel: 01452 425679
Email: gary.kennison@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Original 2007 Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report: List of Consultees and Responses

■ Original Consultation List for HRA/AA Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report (February 2007)

Gloucestershire:

- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Gloucester City Council
- Stroud District Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council

Neighbouring:

- Monmouthshire County Council – (River Wye Sites, Wye Valley Woodlands, Severn Estuary)
- Herefordshire County Council – (River Wye Sites, Wye Valley Woodlands)
- Powys County Council – (River Wye Sites)
- Wiltshire County Council – (North Meadow & Clattinger Farm)
- North Wiltshire District Council – (North Meadow & Clattinger Farm)
- Worcestershire County Council – (Bredon Hill)
- Wychavon District Council – (Bredon Hill)
- South Gloucestershire Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Bristol City Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Sedgemoor District Council – (Severn Estuary)
- North Somerset Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Newport City Council – (Severn Estuary)
- Cardiff Council – (Severn Estuary)
- The Vale of Glamorgan Council – (Severn Estuary)

Owners / interested groups:

- Natural England
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
- Cotswold Water Park Society
- Woodland Trust
- Wye Valley AONB Partnership
- Cotswolds Conservation Board
- Forestry Commission – Forest of Dean Offices
- The National Trust
- The Crown Estate
- Environment Agency
- GOSW
- Countryside Council for Wales

■ Consultation Responses to HRA/AA Evidence Gathering / Baseline Report (February 2007)

Following a 5 week consultation (6th November 2006 to 4th January 2007), there were 2 responses to the original AA Baseline Report as detailed below. Changes were made reflecting consultee comments and recommendations.

- J. Harvey - Deputy Gaveler – Forest of Dean (Received 30/12/2006)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above document. It is noted that the "Active" indicated in Appendix 3 relate to 2003, but it should be noted that there are some 12 Freeminer quarries of limited output that produce mineral returns to the FC and 2 further that are dormant.

It may be of interest to note that the FC were and are objectors to the designation of the Wye Valley & Dean Forest cSAC sites as the conflict in legislation between the Dean Forest Mines Acts & Natura 2000 was unresolved prior to the imposition of SAC status on the sites by the DETR.

- Helen Lancaster – Natural England (Received 2/2/2007)

Letter:

Natural England supports the general approach that the county council has taken but has a number of comments on matters of detail. Our response is given in the attached annex. We appreciate that much of the information was taken from the Natura 2000 data forms on the JNCC website. However the information on these forms was compiled some time ago; in the intervening time we have gained a clearer understanding of some of the off-site effects that affect the integrity of the European sites. We have suggested amendments to the 'Vulnerability' section which reflect this. The situation with the Severn Estuary is particularly complex with regard to the Ramsar criteria; our advice is that the Appropriate Assessment should focus on the features of the Special Protection Area and the possible Special Area of Conservation. Under the requirements of the Habitats Regulations it is the features of the European site that must be considered.

Further comments:

1. General Comments:

cSAC should be replaced with SAC as all the candidate Special Areas of Conservation in Gloucestershire have now been confirmed as Special Areas of Conservation. References to English Nature should be replaced with Natural England.

2. Rodborough Common:

Vulnerability: We recommend that the following comments be added.

The sentence beginning 'The numbers of cattle grazing' should include 'and most of the stock tend to remain on the plateau'. It would also be useful to include a sentence saying that it is hoped that the site will enter the Higher Level Scheme in 2007.

Relevant plans or projects: We recommend that the sentence beginning 'Any other major development' should be replaced with the sentence 'Any other major development identified in Development Plans (or elsewhere) with the potential to have a significant effect on Rodborough Common SAC, including increases in traffic flows over the Common'

3. Dixon Wood

Vulnerability: We recommend that you add the following sentence: 'Rare deadwood species such as violet click beetle are mobile species which may depend on features outside of the wood for their life-cycle. These may include veteran trees beyond the boundary of the wood and hawthorn blossom for feeding. Impact on these features on the scarp slopes between Teddington and Cleeve Common may also affect the integrity of the site.'

4. Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites

Vulnerability: We recommend that you add the following sentences: 'The designated sites only cover the major maternity and over-wintering roosts. The bats also depend on features outside the designated sites including intermediate roosts, foraging grounds and hedgerows/tree belts that the bats use as commuting routes. Impact on these features can also affect the integrity of the site.'

5. River Wye

Vulnerability: Fishing activities are implicated in the decline of the salmon but it is apparently Irish trawlers rather than local fishermen which have had the greatest impact. The trawler problems have now been resolved. There is an increase in demand for abstraction – this is being addressed through the Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy as well as the Review of Consents process.

Relevant plans or projects: Plans that should also be included on the list are the Ross and Hereford Flood Defence Schemes, the Asset Management Programme 4, the Catchment Flood Management Plan (all Environment Agency plans or projects) and the Hereford Growth Point. We would advise that you also consult the Environment Agency to ensure that there are no other plans that should be considered (such as river navigation issues).

6. Wye Valley Woodlands

Vulnerability: We recommend that the sentence beginning ‘Principal pressures are from...’ should also include the phrase ‘increasing deer numbers’. Our understanding is that Forest Enterprise should now be referred to as the Forestry Commission.

Relevant plans or projects: Cinderford Regeneration Project and Lydney Docks Regeneration Project are highly unlikely to have any impact on the Wye Valley Woodlands so could be deleted from this list. The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan should be added to the list of Relevant Plans.

7. North Meadow and Clattinger Farm

Vulnerability: We recommend that the sentence beginning ‘However the traditional hay meadow management’ is deleted and replaced with ‘However the traditional hay meadow management is uneconomic in the present agricultural climate. Part of the site is currently in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme; North Meadow is owned by Natural England and is a National Nature Reserve.’

Relevant plans or projects: We would recommend that this list should also include

- Oxfordshire Waste Local Plan (adopted)
- Oxfordshire Minerals Local Plan (adopted)
- Oxfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Development Framework
- Swindon Borough Council Local Plan (adopted)
- Swindon Borough Council Local Development Framework
- Mineral extraction in Cotswold Water Park e.g. Cerney Wick Farm Quarry, Latton Farm Quarry
- Landfill sites in the Cotswold Water Park e.g. Sandpool Farm
- Restoration sites in the Cotswold Water e.g. Cerney Wick Farm, Cleveland Lakes

The housing proposed at Bourton on the Water is unlikely to have any impact on North Meadow and Clattinger Farm so could be deleted from the list.

8. Cotswolds Beechwoods:

Relevant plans or projects: Replace ‘Adopted Stroud Local Plan’ with ‘Adopted Tewkesbury Local Plan’.

9. Bredon Hill

Vulnerability: As referred to under the section dealing with Dixon Wood, violet click beetle is a mobile species. The scarp slope that begins at Cleeve Common and extends north into Worcestershire contains many veteran trees in woods and hedgerows and is an important resource for deadwood invertebrates including the violet click beetle. Impacts on the hedgerow and veteran tree resource in this area may affect the integrity of the site.

10. Walmore Common

Relevant plans or projects: We recommend that these projects are added to the list:

- Development of wind turbines or wind farms along the Severn Estuary and the area around Walmore Common.
- Development of telecom mast system in the area around Walmore Common.
- Open access on common land.
- Operation of sluice and water levels; implementation of a Water Level Management Plan and ditch management rotation.

11. Severn Estuary

General Site Character: Replace ‘Heavily grazed saltmarsh fringes’ with ‘Grazed saltmarsh fringes’. Include reference to the importance of the estuary for migratory fish.

Vulnerability: This section appears to deal more with the various designations covering the estuary rather than potential impacts on site condition. It should be noted that it actually incorporates several Sites of Special Scientific Interest rather than just one. Only part of the estuary has been designated as a National Nature Reserve (Bridgewater Bay). It should be noted that the Severn Estuary Strategy is concerned with management of the whole estuary and adjoining land. Its relevance to the designated sites is limited. We would recommend that the last sentence beginning ‘This integrated approach...’ should be deleted and replaced with ‘The site is also being considered for designation as a Special Area of Conservation (pSAC)’.

Conservation Objectives: The Severn Estuary Ramsar criteria shown on the JNCC website result from a review that has not yet been implemented. At the moment therefore these are not the correct criteria to use (although this situation may change in the near future). Since the requirement for an appropriate assessment stems from the Habitats Regulations it is the features of the European sites that need to be considered. We would advise that the Conservation Objectives need to be drawn from the Special Protection Area citation and the Reasons for Recommendation as a Possible Special Area of Conservation. Both documents are enclosed.

Relevant plans or projects: The list of plans should also include the Shoreline Management Plan, the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans and Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (consult the Environment Agency to establish which plans are key to the Estuary). Rights of Way Improvement Plans along the estuary should also be considered; the impact of access on both habitats and birds can be considerable.

The list of projects should also include the Environment Agency flood defence proposals for Avonmouth and Caldicott, the Crown Estate licences for sand and gravel dredging in English and Welsh water and the assorted wind turbine proposals in South Gloucestershire and around Avonmouth. Lydney Docks are actually in Gloucestershire.

Indicative Locations of Waste Management Facilities in Gloucestershire. (Source: GCC Minerals & Waste Planning Policy).



Appendix 3

The Spatial Distribution of Active* Mineral Sites in Gloucestershire. (Source GCC Minerals & Waste Planning Policy). * 'Active' means those sites that have provided a mineral return for the year 2003. It does represent those sites that may have a valid permission, but have not been in operation during 2003. Additionally, it should be noted that there are some 12 Freeminer quarries of limited output that produce mineral returns to the Forestry Commission (FC) and 2 further that are dormant.





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