

# Habitat Regulations Assessment

For the Oxford Local Plan 2040

September 2023



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Requirements of the Habitat Regulations</b> .....	3
<b>Methodology used for this Habitat Regulations Assessment</b> .....	4
<b>HRA Screening</b> .....	5
<b>European Sites</b> .....	5
<b>Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document</b> .....	6
<b>Screening Methodology</b> .....	7
<b>How the draft policies were screened out of the assessment</b> .....	9
<b>Air Quality</b> .....	9
<b>Balanced Hydrological Regime</b> .....	10
<b>Water Quality</b> .....	14
<b>Recreational Impacts</b> .....	14
<b>Screening Assessment</b> .....	15
<b>Other Plans and Programmes (in-combination impacts)</b> .....	45
<b>Screening Conclusions</b> .....	48

## Introduction

1.1 This report discusses Stage 1 (screening) of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Oxford Local Plan 2040.

1.2 The Oxford Local Plan proposed submission document:

- Sets a capacity-based/ constraint-based housing target aimed at meeting as much housing need as possible with appropriate consideration of other policy aims. As a result of this policy option the level of housing development proposed by the Local Plan 2040 will deliver more than 9,500 homes throughout the plan period.
- Proposes to meet as much employment need as possible on existing employment sites and in accessible locations i.e., city and district centres (but prioritises other uses, in particular housing, even if employment needs cannot be met in full in the city).
- Proposes to modernise, intensify and regenerate existing employment sites in the city as well as proposing the diversification of employment sites including allowing an element of housing delivery on certain employment sites;
- Recognises the need to continue to work neighbouring authorities to help deliver opportunities for housing or employment needs that cannot be met within Oxford's administrative boundary
- Allows employment sites that are not considered to be important to Oxford's economy to be redeveloped (e.g., for housing).
- Proposes to develop a detailed site allocation policy for the Northern Gateway strategic site as the Northern Gateway AAP expires in 2026.

## Requirements of the Habitat Regulations

1.3 Appropriate Assessment of plans that could affect Special Conservation Areas (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites (jointly called 'European sites) is required by paragraph 63 of the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended)<sup>1</sup>, which states:

*63. (1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission of other authorisation for a plan or project which*  
*(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or European offshore marine site (in combination with other plans or projects), and*  
*(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site*  
*must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) SI No. 1012  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents/made>

1.4 Paragraph 64 discusses alternative solutions, the test of 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI) and compensatory measures:

*64. (1) if the competent authority is satisfied, there being no alternative solutions, the plan or project must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (which subject to paragraph 2) may be of a social or economic nature, it may agree to the plan or project notwithstanding a negative assessment of the implications for the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).*

1.5 The precautionary principle is applied to European sites which are subject to appropriate assessment. Plans and projects can only be permitted if it can be shown that they will have no significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, or if there are no alternatives to them and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

## Methodology used for this Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.6 A Habitat Regulations Assessment can involve up to a four-stage process:

**1. Screening.** Determining whether or not a plan 'alone or in-combination' is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

**2. Appropriate Assessment.** Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan 'alone or in-combination' would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site.

**3. Assessment of alternative solutions.** Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of alternatives.

**4. Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain.**

1.7 This section of the HRA covers stage 1 (screening). Oxford City Council has undertaken this HRA 'in-house' with third party transport modelling commissioned using the Atkins Oxfordshire Strategic Model (OSM).

## HRA Screening

### European Sites

2.1 This section begins by describing the European sites that could possibly be affected by the Oxford Local Plan 2040. For this Habitat Regulations Assessment a 20km area of search outside of the Oxford City Council administrative area was used. The following European sites are within 20km of the Oxford City Council administrative boundary.

Table 2.1 - European sites within 20km of Oxford City administrative boundary (Oxford Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document).

Name of site	Distance from boundary	Reason for designation <sup>2</sup>
Oxford Meadows SAC	Part of site within the city boundary. Site extends into administrative area for Cherwell District Council and into the administrative boundary of West Oxfordshire District Council	<p><b>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for the selection of this site</b></p> <p><b>6510 Lowland hay meadows</b> (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)</p> <p>Together with North Meadow and Clattinger Farm, also in southern England, Oxford meadows represents <b>lowland hay meadows</b> in the Thames Valley centre of distribution. The site includes vegetation communities that are perhaps unique in the world reflecting the influence of long-term grazing and hay-cutting on <b>lowland hay meadows</b>. The site has benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries, and so exhibits good conservation of structure and function.</p> <p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</b></p> <p><b>1614 Creeping marshwort</b> (<i>Apium repens</i>)</p> <p>Oxford Meadows is selected because Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for <b>creeping marshwort (<i>Apium repens</i>)</b></p>
Cothill Fen SAC	Located 7km from the city boundary	<p><b>Annex I habitats that area primary reason for selection of this site</b></p> <p><b>7230 Alkaline Fens</b></p> <p>This lowland valley mire contains one of the largest surviving examples of alkaline fen vegetation in central England, a region where fen vegetation is rare. The M13 <i>Schoenus nigricans</i> – <i>Juncus subnodulosus</i> vegetation found here occurs under a wide range of hydrological conditions, with frequent bottle sedge <i>Carex rostrata</i>, grass-of-Parnassus <i>Parnassia palustris</i>, common butterwort</p>

<sup>2</sup> [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk)

		<p><i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i> and marsh helleborine <i>Epipactis palustris</i>. The alkaline fen vegetation forms transitions to other vegetation types that are similar to M24 <i>Molinia caerulea</i> – <i>Cirsium dissectum</i> fen-meadow and S25 <i>Phragmites australis</i> – <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> tall-herb fen and wet alder <i>Alnus</i> spp. wood.</p> <p><b>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not as a primary reason for selection of this site</b></p> <p>91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicon albae).</p>
Little Wittenham SAC	Located 19km from the city boundary	<p><b>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</b></p> <p><b><u>1166 Great Crested Newt</u></b> <i>Triturus cristatus</i></p> <p>One of the best-studied great crested newt sites in the UK, Little Wittenham comprises two main ponds set in a predominantly woodland context (broad-leaved and conifer woodland is present). There are also areas of grassland, with sheep grazing and arable bordering the woodland to the south and west. The River Thames is just to the north of the site, and a hill fort to the south. Large numbers of <b>great crested newts</b> <i>Triturus cristatus</i> have been recorded in the two main ponds, and research has revealed that they range several hundred metres into the woodland blocks.</p>

## Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document

2.2 Oxford City Council has produced a Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document which sets out the proposed strategy for development in the city to 2040 along with site allocations and development management policies.

2.3 The Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document:

- Sets a capacity-based/ constraint-based housing target aimed at meeting as much housing need as possible with appropriate consideration of other policy aims. As a result of this policy option the level of housing development proposed by the Local Plan 2040 will deliver more than 9,500 homes throughout the plan period.
- Proposes to meet as much employment need as possible on existing employment sites and in accessible locations i.e., city and district centres (but prioritises other uses, in particular housing, even if employment needs cannot be met in full in the city).
- Proposes to modernise, intensify and regenerate existing employment sites in the city as well as proposing the diversification of employment sites including allowing an element of housing delivery on certain employment sites;

- Recognises the need to continue to work neighbouring authorities to help deliver opportunities for housing or employment needs that cannot be met within Oxford's administrative boundary
- Allows employment sites that are not considered to be important to Oxford's economy to be redeveloped (e.g., for housing).
- Proposes to develop an detailed site allocation policy for the Northern Gateway strategic site as the Northern Gateway AAP expires in 2036.

## Screening Methodology

2.4 Previous HRAs undertaken for Oxford City looked at how policies in the plan could potentially have an impact on European sites within 20km of the city. Of the three sites identified within 20km of the city, two sites were screened out at this stage and one was looked at in more detail. The sites screened out were Cothill Fen SAC and Little Wittenham SAC. The paragraphs below provide a short summary as to why these site were screened out previously.

2.5 Cothill Fen SAC is over 7km from the Oxford city boundary and lies within a different river catchment. The site itself is in a relatively remote location and can be accessed by private car or by local residents on foot. The site has four conservation objectives – high water table; calcareous, base-rich water supply; minimal air pollution; and recreational impacts. Given that the city is in a different river catchment, there is unlikely to be a significant impact on the water-related conservation objectives as a result of policies in the Oxford city Local Plan 2040. Air pollution impacts are highly localised. Given the distance from the site, it unlikely that there will be significant air quality impacts. Finally recreational impacts are unlikely to be significant (as result of proposed development in the Oxford Local Plan 2040. This is due to a number of factors including the remote location of Cothill Fen, its limited accessibility by modes other than private car and the fact that Oxford city has a number of alternative recreation opportunities for residents to enjoy within the city itself (e.g., University Parks, Christchurch Meadow, South Park, Bury Knowle Park, Cutteslowe Park, etc.).

2.6 Little Wittenham SAC is located 19km away and only has two conservation objectives which do not relate to site management (the Oxford Local Plan 2040 does not propose policies that will alter the way the site is managed). As such the two remaining conservation objectives for this site relate to the maintenance of water quality and levels to support the ponds suitability as breeding ponds; and potential impacts of increased recreational pressure. In relation to water, levels are managed along the river Thames, and controlled through a series of locks and weirs to ensure a balanced flow, as such impacts resulting from the Oxford Local Plan 2040 are unlikely to be significant. With regard to potential recreational pressure from the increased population as a result of the Oxford Local Plan 2040 is also unlikely to be significant. This is due to the relatively remote location (access only by private car) and the fact that Oxford

city has a number of alternative opportunities for residents to enjoy within the city itself (e.g., University Parks, Christchurch Meadow, South Park, Bury Knowle Park, Cutteslowe Park, etc.).

2.7 The one site that has been 'screened in' to the assessment process in the Oxford Meadows SAC. Table 2.1 explains the reasons for which the Oxford Meadows has been designated as an SAC. Natural England's report on the condition of the SSSI's that make up the Oxford Meadows provides some information on the condition of the SSSI units. Although a lot of data is historical, there have been some recent assessments, for instance in July 2022 part of the Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common SSSI was found to be in favourable condition.

2.8 In January 2019, Natural England produced the Oxford Meadows SAC Conservation Objectives Supplementary Advice Note<sup>3</sup> which "brings together the findings of the best available scientific evidence relating to the site's qualifying features, which may be updated or supplemented in further publications from Natural England and other sources".

2.9 City Council Officers have had regard to the information provided within this document, which has been supplemented by discussions and meetings with Natural England colleagues. A HRA background paper was produced at Preferred Options setting out the proposed scope of works that was intended to inform the HRA workstream.

2.10 Broadly speaking, it was agreed that there was no change to the key requirements that have been assessed as part of previous HRA work undertaken by the Council. As such, the following key requirements form the basis of this HRA Screening document:

- Minimal Air Pollution;
- Absence of nutrient enrichment of waters/ good water quality;
- Balanced hydrological regime – alteration to adjacent rivers may alter flooding and botanical diversity;
- Ensuring recreational impacts are managed at reasonable level (this relates to the impacts on creeping marshwort only as set out in the Natural England publication: Oxford Meadows SAC Conservation Objectives Supplementary Advice Note);
- Absence of direct fertilisation;
- Maintenance of traditional hay cut and aftermath grazing.

2.11 At a meeting with Natural England on 08 June 2022, it was agreed that the following should be considered as forming the key elements of the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening for the Oxford Local Plan 2040:

- Air Pollution;
- Water Quality;
- Balanced Hydrological Regime;

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<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5815888603250688>



- Recreational Pressure.

2.12 In addition to the above requirements, this HRA considers the vulnerabilities listed in the Natura 2000 – Standard Data Form for the Oxford Meadows SAC submitted by DEFRA to the European Commission in December 2015<sup>4</sup>. This form states that the Oxford Meadows SAC is vulnerable to impacts from the following sources:

- Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish);
- Invasive non-native species; and,
- Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions.

2.13 Requirements for the maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing; and the absence of direct fertilisation are related only to the management of the SAC. They are not affected by the location of, for example, housing or employment development.

2.14 Also, the control of invasive species cannot be easily influenced by the planning regime. A Site Improvement Plan for the Oxford Meadows SAC<sup>5</sup> issued by Natural England in December 2014 highlights that the rare *Apium repens* could be affected by *Crassula* and other invasive species. However, the Plan does not indicate that the concern of *Crassula* spreading to the lower areas of Port Meadow could be dealt by control mechanisms directly linked to, or facilitated by new development. Instead, the Plan suggests that these mechanisms need to be identified at the national level. The other requirements are the subject of this report.

## How the draft policies were screened out of the assessment

2.15 This section sets out the considerations that have been given as to why certain policies have been screened out in relation to each of the conservation objectives of the site.

## Air Quality

2.16 In June 2018, Natural England published an internal operational guidance note entitled, *Natural England’s approach to advising competent authorities on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the Habitat Regulations*<sup>6</sup>. Section 4 of the note provides, “Advice on Screening for Likely Significant Effects”. Paragraph 4.10 of the note sets out that, “with regard to potential risks from road traffic emissions, Natural England and Highways England are in

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<sup>4</sup> Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/n2kforms/UK0012845.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4942743310696448>

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4720542048845824>

agreement that protected sites falling within 200m of the edge of a road affected by a plan or project need to be considered further.”

2.17 Oxford City Council has undertaken transport modelling to understand the impact of the Oxford Local Plan 2040 alone and in-combination with other relevant plans and projects, on the road network close to the Oxford Meadows SAC.

2.18 Natural England Guidance suggests that only sites within 200m of a road sensitive to air pollution need to be considered. There are two roads which could have a potential impact on air quality at the Oxford Meadows SAC. These are the A34 and the A40.

2.19 Work has been carried out by Atkins to look at the impact of planned development in Oxford City, ‘alone and in combination’ with other relevant plans and programmes. A technical note has been provided at Appendix X.

2.20 At the time of writing, preliminary findings from the air quality modelling are showing that the amount of development proposed in Oxford is not of such an order of magnitude as to trigger Natural England’s vehicular screening requirements. At this stage, we consider that impacts of development in Oxford ‘alone or in-combination’ with other plans and programmes, is unlikely to have a significant impact on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC.

## Balanced Hydrological Regime

2.21 “Three main sources of water to the meads have been identified to support the plant communities on the Oxford Meadows SAC. These are direct rainfall, surface water, and groundwater flowing in from outside the area. Any of these sources, or a combination, may contribute to the soil water, which supports the plant communities on the meads”<sup>7</sup>.

2.22 HRAs for previous Plans in Oxford ruled out the likelihood of impacts on the SAC from surface water and direct rainfall. Previous HRA work explained that the abstraction license for Farmoor Reservoir did not impact the SAC, and no increases to this abstraction licence are proposed. As such the amount of surface water is likely to remain the same throughout the Local Plan period.

2.23 The HRA Screening Report for the Draft Drought Plan (2022)<sup>8</sup> for Thames Water confirms that no likely significant effects are anticipated from any of the proposed drought schemes (in particular at Farmoor Reservoir) on the Oxford Meadows SAC, either alone, or in combination with other licenses and consents.

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<sup>7</sup> A. Dixon (2005), The Hydrology of Oxford Meadows

<sup>8</sup> Available at <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/about-us/regulation/drought-plan/strategic-environmental-assessment/habitats-regulations-assessment-screening-report.pdf>

2.24 The Environment Agency’s flood alleviation scheme for Oxford, which is likely to consist of enlargement of existing watercourse and/ or creating flood relief channels, may affect the flooding regime of the River Thames. However, Natural England has stipulated that a key requirement of the Oxford flood alleviation scheme is that it does not have an adverse impact on the Oxford Meadows hydrological regime.

2.25 Figure 2.1 shows the location of the North Oxford Gravel Terrace in relation to the Oxford Meadows SAC. It should be read in conjunction with Figure 2.2. to provide the locational context of the direction of groundwater movement on the North Oxford Gravel Terrace.

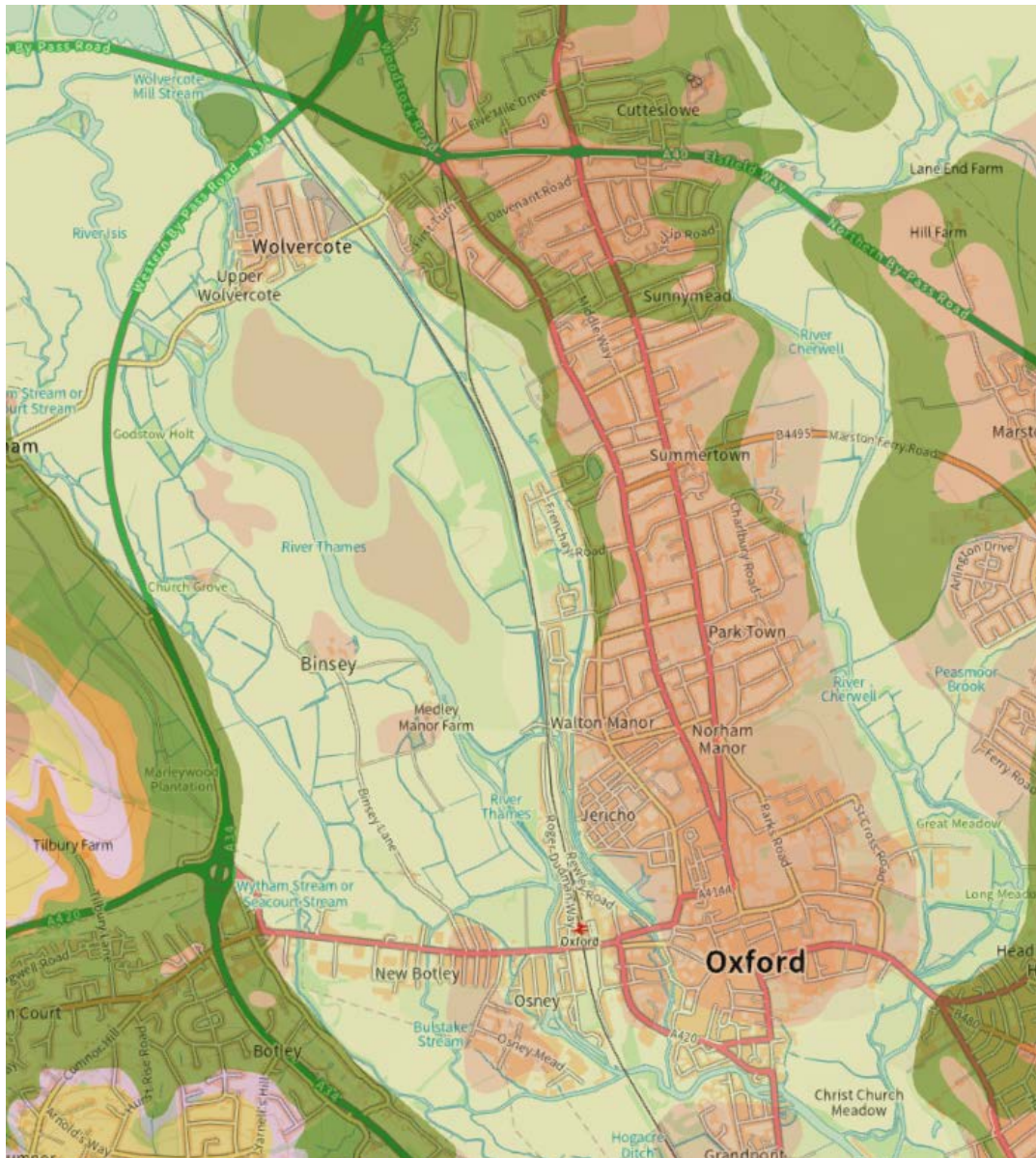


Figure 2.1: Map showing the North Oxford Gravel Terrace and Port Meadow within the context of Oxford (Reproduced with the permission of the British Geological Survey © NERC. All rights Reserved')

2.26 Figure 2.1 shows the geology of Oxford. The salmon pink colouring reaching from the city centre right up through Summertown and beyond to the north represents the North Oxford Gravel Terrace. These deposits are a source of groundwater recharge to the Oxford Meadows. It is recognised that this is not the only source of groundwater recharge, as it is likely that there is a much larger groundwater catchment area that serves the Oxford Meadows.

2.27 Previous HRA<sup>9</sup> work to support the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP) investigated the issue of connectivity between the North Oxford Gravel Terrace and the Oxford Meadows SAC and confirmed that there is a large catchment area for groundwater recharge supporting the Oxford Meadows.

2.28 This HRA was backed up with an Interim and Full Hydro-geological Assessment, both of which were submitted into the Examination Library at the time when the AAP was examined by an Independent Planning Inspector. These reports undertook a number of boreholes and found that groundwater was imperceptible within the Oxford Clay Formation and as such was not likely to make a significant contribution to the Oxford Meadows SAC. In the small portion of the Gravel Terrace that was found within the Northern Gateway site area, groundwater entry was not observed. The consultants conclude that groundwater within Alluvium found on site are likely to be in hydrological continuity with the alluvial deposits beyond the site boundary. These soils are likely to have some contribution to the groundwater regime feeding the Oxford Meadows SAC.

2.29 The conclusions of the Fully Hydrogeological Statement<sup>10</sup>, and Interim Hydrogeological Note were both submitted as evidence to the Examination Library for the Northern Gateway AAP. The findings of the Full Statement backed up those initial findings in the Interim Note .

2.30 The Full Hydrogeological Statement documented further boreholes that were dug to assess the hydrology of part of the site. This Statement found that there was an area that ran along the southernmost part of the site which was not noted on the Geological Map. The Full Hydrogeological Statement referred to this section of land as the “Alluvial Ribbon”.

2.31 The Full Hydrogeological Statement concluded (in paragraph 5.1 on p.12) that:

*Overall, it is considered that groundwater flow from the Alluvial Ribbon is likely to have some contribution to the groundwater regime feeding the environmentally sensitive sites off site. However, the recharge area of the Alluvial Ribbon on the site compared to the groundwater catchment of the river valley is miniscule and the overall contribution of the Alluvial Ribbon to the groundwater regime of the river valley as a whole is considered to be insignificant.*

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<sup>9</sup> The HRA for the Northern Gateway AAP is available online:

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/423/northern\\_gateway\\_area\\_action\\_plan](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/423/northern_gateway_area_action_plan)

<sup>10</sup> CD4.24 Full Hydrogeological Assessment, Peter Brett Associates (September 2014) and CD4.23 Interim Hydrogeological Summary Note, Peter Brett Associates (May 2014) formed part of the evidence base for the Northern Gateway AAP Examination Library.



2.32 What this shows is that there is a large catchment area within which groundwater can be recharged to the Oxford Meadows and that development at the Northern Gateway site would be unlikely to have an impact on it.

2.33 Older evidence (from D MacDonald, A Dixon, et al (2007)), shows that there may be some hydrological connectivity between the North Oxford Gravel Terrace and the Oxford Meadows. This research showed the potential connectivity using a conceptual groundwater model. It is worth noting that this model only looked groundwater flow from the North Oxford Gravel Terrace and did not take account of any wider catchment area. This model showed that water recharged to groundwaters on the North Oxford Gravel Terrace had the potential to be connected to the Oxford Meadows SAC.

2.34 Previous HRAs have taken a precautionary approach which assumes that groundwater flows follow direction of travel as set out in Figure 2.2 below.

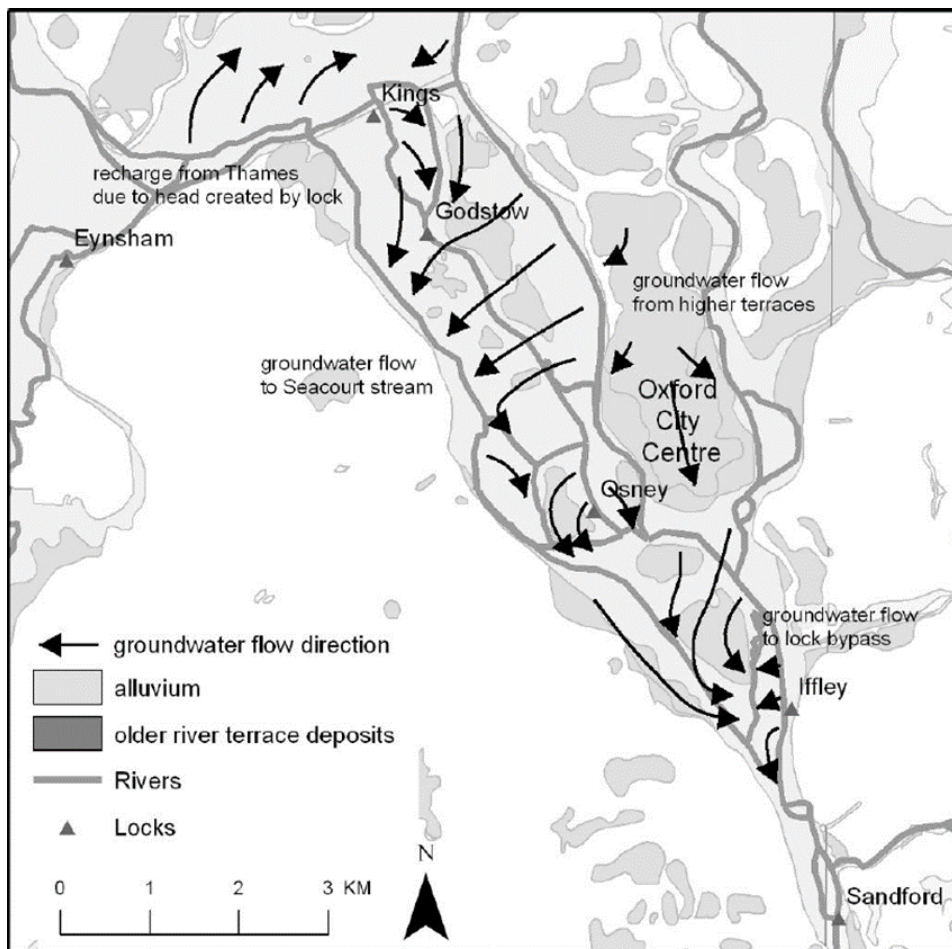


Figure 2.2 Conceptual model of groundwater flow for Oxford (2007)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> D MacDonald, A Dixon, et al, (2007) Investigating the Interdependencies between surface and

2.35 At a series of meetings with Natural England during 2023 it was agreed that, in the absence of additional data, that a precautionary approach should be taken to addressing the potential impacts of development proposed in the Local Plan 2040 on groundwater. If mitigation measures are likely to be needed, e.g., through a form of policy wording, then a Stage 2 “Appropriate Assessment” will be required. This Screening Note contains a policy screening which will assess whether further work in this area is needed.

## Water Quality

2.36 Water quality issues have been discussed in previous HRA work. This previous work resolved issues of potential pollution through effluents from wastewater treatment works and potential groundwater pollution. Previous HRA work recognised that pollution of groundwater could occur through the development of site allocations in locations (e.g., North Oxford Gravel Terrace), which showed a degree of hydrogeological connectivity with the Oxford Meadows SAC. This previous HRA work suggested mitigation (in the form of policy wording) to ensure that development in the plan would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Oxford Meadows SAC. It also concluded that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be used to ensure that the quality of groundwater would not be adversely affected.

2.37 It is proposed that a similar precautionary approach is applied to the Oxford Local Plan 2040 and that appropriate policies should require developers to ensure that surface water and groundwater quality are not likely to be affected by development proposals. Where any policy wording (mitigation) is proposed, it will be undertaken through the Stage 2 “Appropriate Assessment” stage HRA.

## Recreational Impacts

2.38 Previous studies have shown that residents of Oxford are generally willing to walk approximately 1900m to large green spaces. As such, where a site is over 1900m away, the site has been screened out for recreational impacts. Non-residential sites within the 1900m buffer have also been screened out. Where a residential use is proposed within 1900m from the Oxford Meadows SAC, the location and proximity of other green spaces have also been considered. Consideration has also been given to whether the site is proposed for student accommodation or for houses/ flats.

2.39 It was previously confirmed by Natural England that *A. repens* (creeping marshwort) is not particularly sensitive to trampling. It is however sensitive to dog fouling. Student

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groundwater in the Oxford area to help predict to timing and location of groundwater flooding and to optimise flood mitigation measures. Presented at the 42nd Flood and Coastal Management Conference, York, 2007

accommodation does not allow pets and as such this type of development has been screened out of the assessment process. Similarly, all non-residential uses which are proposed in the plan have also been screened out of the assessment process. Only residential development is likely to lead to an increase in the number of dog-walkers at the Oxford Meadows SAC.

## Screening Assessment

2.40 Table 2.2a looks at the proposed submission policies and Table 2.2b looks at the site allocations. Also see the schedule of the effects of the plan in para 2.10. Proposed Submission Policies have been screened out of the assessment where it was considered that they were not likely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC. Individual Site Allocations have been screened out where it is considered that they are unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.

2.41 For previous HRA screening assessments carried out by the City Council, Natural England recommended that the effects of the plan be categorised in the form of a schedule. This approach has been adopted for the Oxford Local Plan 2040. This allows policies with no negative effect on European sites to be eliminated (screened out) from further appraisal, so that the appraisal can concentrate on those policies with possible effects.

2.42 The schedule previously applied by the City Council is as follows:

A – Policies or proposals cannot have any negative impact;

B – Effects will be addressed in assessments “down the line”, including project assessment under Regulation 48

C – Could have an effect, but would not be likely to have a significant (negative) effect, (alone or in combination with other plans and projects);

D – Likely to have a significant effect alone and would require an Appropriate Assessment

E – Likely to have a significant effect in combination with other plans or projects and which require Appropriate Assessment of those combinations;

F – Likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, but which would not adversely affect the integrity of a European site;

G – Likely to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and for which it cannot be ascertained that they would not adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

Proposed Submission Policy Reference:	Categorisation of the effects of elements of the policy option	Description of the policy	Key environmental considerations likely to give rise to significant effects or not
S1: Spatial Strategy and Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development		Policy setting broad spatial parameters for development in the city including making reference to the NPPF and neighbourhood plans	<p>Policy encourages development towards sustainable locations across the city including ensuring vitality and vibrancy of centres and focusing employment development towards existing employment sites and accessible locations.</p> <p>This policy approach is considered to have no likely significant effects on the designated site but the allocations arising from it will need to be considered so this option has been taken forward for further assessment as part of the appropriate assessment.</p>
S2: Design Code and Guidance	A	Policy promoting the use of design codes and guidance	Policy unlikely to lead to significant effects
S3: Infrastructure Delivery in New Development	A	Policy setting out the need for development proposals to make contributions toward infrastructure delivery	Policy unlikely to lead to significant effects
S4: Plan Viability	A	Policy setting out that the policies in the plan should not result development becoming unviable and the mechanisms	Policy unlikely to lead to significant effects



		for how to addressing development viability in individual schemes.	
H1: Housing requirement		Policy setting out the housing requirement for the plan period. At the time of writing the plan required over 10,000 homes to be delivered in the city. The policy sets a capacity based housing requirement for the city aimed at meeting as much of the OAN as possible over the plan period to 2040	<p>The policy for the overall housing target for the plan period does not allocate specific sites for development but the amount of housing dictates the number of development sites that are allocated in the plan. Specific development sites will address the likely impacts on the SAC in more detail however as an overall approach this policy is taken forward in terms of recreational impacts, air quality and water (balanced hydrological regime and quality).</p> <p>This policy approach is considered to have no likely significant effects on the designated site but the allocations arising from it will need to be considered so this option has been taken forward for further assessment as part of the appropriate assessment.</p>
H2: Delivering affordable homes	A	Policy setting the requirements for the provision of affordable housing within the city.	Policy not locationally specific as requires a proportion of affordable homes to be provided as part of qualifying developments.
H3: Affordable housing contributions from new purpose-built student accommodation	A	Policy setting out when contributions from new purpose-built student accommodation will be collected	Policy not locationally specific and sets out when contributions for new purpose-built student accommodation will be collected

H4: Affordable housing contributions from self-contained older persons accommodation	A	Policy setting out when contributions from new self-contained older persons accommodation will be collected	Policy not locationally specific and sets out when contributions will be collected from self-contained older persons accommodation.
H5: Employer-linked affordable housing	A	Policy setting out which locations are suitable for employer-linked affordable housing instead of market housing	Sites all referenced in this policy have all been assessed separately as part of the site allocations section. No need to duplicate that assessment.
H6: Mix of housing sizes (no. of bedrooms)	A	Policy setting out the appropriate mix of dwelling sizes to be provided as part of development proposals (dwelling mix applies to affordable element only)	Not likely to have significant effects as policy only applies to affordable dwellings mix.
H7: Development involving loss of dwellings	A	Policy setting out approach for development proposals involving losses of dwellings.	Not likely to have significant effects as policy is only dealing with proposals involving the loss of dwellings.
H8: Houses of Multiple Occupation	A	Policy setting out the approach taken in considering planning applications for the conversion or creation of new HMOs.	Not likely to have significant effects as policy is concerned with how the location of new HMOs impact the existing residential environment.
H9: Location of new student accommodation	A	Policy restricting the location of new purpose-built student accommodation including the city and district centres.	Summertown is identified as a district centre and as such it is likely that some additional residential and non-residential development would be delivered on brownfield sites in this location. Any sites allocated for development within Summertown will be captured in the site allocations and bespoke policy wording to mitigate likely impacts will be captured through this process. As such this policy is screened out from the assessment.

H10: Linking new academic facilities with the adequate provision of student accommodation	A	Policy linking the delivery of new academic floorspace at the universities to whether or not a certain number of students (for each university) is housed in purpose-built student accommodation.	Not likely to have significant effects as the policy does not allocate development but rather seeks to ensure that no additional academic floorspace comes forward at either university unless the specified accommodation requirements are met.
H11: Homes for travelling communities	A	Policy setting out criteria to be met when considering new residential pitches for travelling communities	Policy unlikely to have significant effects on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it does not outline development proposals that could have a potential impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.
H12: Homes for Boat Dwellers	D	Policy setting out criteria to be met when considering proposals for new residential moorings.	Limited scope and capacity for additional moorings in close proximity to the Oxford Meadows SAC. As such policy unlikely to have significant effects.
H13: Older persons and other specialist accommodation	A	Policy setting out criteria to be met when considering development proposals for new older persons and specialist accommodation.	Policy unlikely to have significant effects on the Oxford Meadows as it does not specifically outline locations where there is a higher potential for adverse impacts
H14: Self-build and custom housebuilding	A	Policy setting out requirements for delivery of self-build and custom-build housing as part of qualifying developments (sites over 100 homes)	Policy unlikely to have a significant effect as it promotes a requirement on larger residential development proposals, which will themselves be assessed separately as part of this process (see Table 2.2b)
H15: Hostels	A	Policy restricting the location of new hostels including to the city and district centres	Summertown is identified as a District Centre and as such it is likely that some additional residential and non-residential development would be delivered on brownfield sites in this location. Any sites allocated for development within Summertown will be captured in the site

			allocations and bespoke policy wording to mitigate likely impacts will be captured through this process. As such this policy is screened out from the assessment.
H16: Boarding school accommodation	A	Policy restricting the location of new boarding school accommodation to sites on or adjacent to a teaching campus of the school the children will attend	Summertown is identified as a District Centre and as such it is likely that some additional residential and non-residential development would be delivered on brownfield sites in this location. Any sites allocated for development within Summertown will be captured in the site allocations and bespoke policy wording to mitigate likely impacts will be captured through this process. As such this policy is screened out from the assessment.
E1: Employment Strategy	D	Policy restricting new employment development to city and district centres and existing employment sites. Policy also allows for an element of housing to be delivered on all categories of employment sites.	Summertown is identified as a district centre and as such it is likely that some additional residential and non-residential development would be delivered on brownfield sites in this location. Any sites allocated for development within Summertown will be captured in the site allocations and bespoke policy wording to mitigate likely impacts will be captured through this process. As such this aspect of the policy is screened out from the assessment. However policy includes ability to enable an element of housing to be delivered on employment sites. This aspect of the policy should be further considered as part of the recreational impact assessment in Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment

E2: Warehousing and storage uses	A	Policy restricting warehousing and storage uses (B8) to supporting Category 1 employment sites only	Policy unlikely to have significant impact on SAC as relates to allowing specific type of employment development on sites where employment is already allowed.
E3 Affordable Workspaces	A	Policy enabling certain key employment to help deliver affordable workspaces	Policy unlikely to have significant impact on SAC as it relates to delivering employment floorspace on allocated sites at a reduced rental rate.
E3: Employment and Skills Plans	A	Policy requiring opportunities for local people in the construction and operational stage of developments and training opportunities etc.	Policy unlikely to have a significant impact on SAC as relates to improving training and learning opportunities for local people
E4: Tourism and Short-stay accommodation	A	Policy sets out locations where new short-stay accommodation should be located in the city. Locations include city and district centre and main arterial routes into the city.	Summertown is identified as a District Centre and as such it is likely that some additional residential and non-residential development would be delivered on brownfield sites in this location. Any sites allocated for development within Summertown will be captured in the site allocations and bespoke policy wording to mitigate likely impacts will be captured through this process. As such this policy is screened out from the assessment.
G1: Protection of the Green Infrastructure	A	Policy sets out approach for protecting and enhancing the GI network, defines residential garden land and provides policy protection for trees and ancient woodland and other GI features (e.g., hedgerows)	Policy unlikely to have impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC as provides protection for GI network and features and provides a definition of residential garden land.
G2: Enhancement and provision of	A	Policy about delivering new green and blue infrastructure features as part of new development proposals including	Policy unlikely to have impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC as related to delivering

new green and blue features		public open space and management arrangements.	opportunities for green and blue features and associated management arrangements
G3: Provision of new GI features – Urban Greening Factor	A	Policy regarding delivering new GI features in new developments using urban greening factor metric	Policy unlikely to have impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC as related to delivering a range of on-site improvements for new developments.
G4: Delivering mandatory net gains in biodiversity	A	Policy setting out the percentage of net gain to be delivered as part of developments in Oxford	Policy unlikely to have impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it sets the amount of net gain required to be delivered as part of new developments in the city
G5: Enhancing on-site biodiversity in Oxford	A	Policy seeking ecological enhancements as part of new development proposals	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it requires developments to deliver a minimum amount of ecological enhancements.
G6: Protecting Oxford's biodiversity including the ecological network	A	Policy providing protection of Oxford's ecological network of designated sites and other features of interest	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as seeks to provide for the safeguarding conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Oxford
G7: Flood Risk and Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs)	A	Policy setting out how flood risk will be considered as part of development proposals, including when the LPA will require a flood risk assessment.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as sets out the types of development that require a flood risk assessment.
G8: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	A	Policy setting out circumstances when Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be required as part of development proposals and how SuDS should be incorporated into schemes.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it sets out when development proposals will require SuDS and how they should be delivered.

G9: Resilient Design and Construction	A	Policy setting out how design and construction measures that help mitigate climate change have been incorporated into development proposals	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it relates ensuring the design of development proposals helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
R1: Net zero buildings in operation	A	Policy setting out how development proposals are to achieve energy reductions to deliver net zero.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows as concerned with how the developments will reduce energy use in their operational stages.
R2: Embodied Carbon	A	Policy setting out how embodied carbon will be limited during the construction process	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with limiting the carbon used in the construction process.
R3: Retro-fitting existing buildings including heritage assets	A	Policy setting out support for retrofit measures to help mitigate and adapt existing buildings to minimise climate change impacts.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with delivering climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to existing buildings.
R4: Air Quality Assessments and standards	A	Policy setting out the circumstances when development proposals require an assessment of air quality to ensure that the impact of new development on air quality is minimised	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it sets the requirements when an air quality assessment is required as part of new development proposals.
R5: Land Contamination	A	Policy setting out the information required to be able to assess applications where there is the potential for impacts from contamination.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it sets out a requirement for additional information to be submitted where there is a risk of contamination as part of development proposals.
R6: Soil Quality	A	Policy setting out how the LPA expects development proposals to demonstrate	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it sets out the requirements for

		how any impact on soil quality has been mitigated.	how to address potential impacts on soil quality as part of development proposals.
R7: Amenity and environmental health impacts of development	A	Policy setting out how amenity and environmental health impacts will be considered as part of development proposals.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it seeks to mitigate a range of factors which could have an impact on amenity.
HD1: Conservation Areas	A	Policy setting out how development proposals should be considered in conservation areas in Oxford	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with development proposals and their effects on the city's conservation areas.
HD2: Listed Buildings	A	Policy setting out how development proposals on Listed Buildings should be considered in the planning process	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it is concerned with how development proposals are assessed on Listed Buildings.
DH3: Registered Parks and Gardens	A	Policy setting out how development proposals that have an impact on Registered Parks and Gardens are to be considered.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it is concerned with the impact of development proposals on Registered Parks and Gardens.
HD4: Scheduled Monuments	A	Policy setting out how development proposals that have an impact on Scheduled Monuments should be assessed.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it is concerned with the impact of development proposals on Scheduled Monuments.
HD5: Archaeology	A	Policy setting out how archaeological deposits will be considered as part of the application process.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it addresses how archaeological deposits will be considered in development proposals.



HD6: Non-designated heritage assets	A	Policy defines a non-designated heritage asset and sets out the process by which these assets are to be considered when determining planning applications	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with how non-designated heritage assets are considered during the planning process.
HD7: Principles of High-Quality Design	A	Policy seeks to ensure high-quality design in development proposals.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with ensuring development proposals are of the highest design quality
HD8: Using context to determine appropriate density	A	Policy setting out how development proposals are expected to make best and most efficient use of land in order to deliver development of an appropriate density	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it seeks to ensure that design principles are used when considering the appropriate density of a scheme.
HD9: Views and Building Heights	A	Policy seeking to protect Oxford's historic skyline.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with the heights and visual impact of development proposals.
HD10: Health Impact Assessment	A	Policy setting out when a Health Impact Assessment should be submitted as part of development proposals and what it should contain.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with when a Health Impact Assessment should be submitted to inform development proposals and what it should contain.
HD11: Privacy, Daylight and Sunlight	A	Policy setting out how the impacts of development proposals will be assessed in terms of privacy, sunlight and daylight.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it relates to how the impact of development proposals will be assessed.
HD12: Internal Space Standards	A	Policy setting out that internal space standards for residential developments will follow nationally described space standards	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with quantity of internal space standards as part of new development proposals.

HD13: Outdoor Amenity Space	A	Policy setting out requirements for outdoor amenity space to be delivered as part of development proposals	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as concerned with amount of on-site amenity space required as part of development proposals.
HD14: Accessible and Adaptable Homes	A	Policy setting out the amount of affordable and market homes to be delivered that comply with accessible standards	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it sets out the proportion of accessible and adaptable homes to be delivered as part of development proposals.
HD15: Bin and Bike Stores and External Servicing Features	A	Policy setting out how external servicing features (including bin and bike stores) will be considered as part of development proposals	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as is concerned with small scale on-site measures.
C1: Town Centre uses	A	Policy setting out the types of uses suitable for Oxford's city, district and local centres. Policy also includes requirements for sequential test for town centre uses.	Summertown is identified as a District Centre and as such it is likely that some additional residential and non-residential development would be delivered on brownfield sites in this location. Any sites allocated for development within Summertown will be captured in the site allocations and bespoke policy wording to mitigate likely impacts will be captured through this process. As such this policy is screened out from the assessment.
C2: Maintaining Vibrant Centres	A	Policy sets out how development proposals within the city and district centres can maintain active frontages to help maintain the vibrancy of centres. Includes locally specific requirements for each of the city and district centres.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as related to ensuring development proposals in the city and district centres activate street frontages and provide other localised improvements.

C3: Protection, alteration and provision of local community facilities	A	Policy setting out how local community facilities will be protected when they form part of development proposals. Also sets out support for new community facilities in appropriate locations .	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as related to protection of existing facilities and provision of new ones in suitably accessible locations.
C4: Protection, alteration and provision of learning and non-residential institutions.	A	Policy setting out how learning and non-residential institutions will be protected when they form part of development proposals. Also sets out support for new learning and non-residential institutions in appropriate locations.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as related to protection of existing facilities and provision of new ones in suitably accessible locations.
C5: Protection, alteration and provision of cultural venues and visitor attractions.	A	Policy setting out how cultural venues and visitor attractions will be protected when they form part of development proposals. Also sets out support for new cultural venues and visitor attractions in appropriate locations.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as related to protection of existing facilities and provision of new ones in suitably accessible locations.
C6: Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Service and Delivery Plans	A	Policy setting out requirements for when Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Service and Delivery Plans should accompany a planning application.	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows as it relates to the conditions when certain applications should be accompanied by additional transport-related evidence.
C7: Bicycle Parking Design Standards	A	Policy setting out how bicycle parking should be provided as part of development proposals	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it relates to the amount of cycle parking to be provided as part of development.
C8: Motor Vehicle Parking Standards	A	Policy setting out how parking levels should be assessed as part of development proposals including	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as provides car parking standards

		providing requirements for low-car schemes.	for development proposals including providing requirements for low-car schemes .
C9: Electric Vehicle Charging	A	Policy providing guidance for electric vehicle charging points in new developments	Policy unlikely to have an impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC as it relates to delivery of electric vehicle charging points in new developments.

Table 2.2 Key environmental considerations that are likely to give rise to significant effects as a result of development of the sites proposed for further consideration in Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document.

Policy Ref:	NAME	If the policy has no effect, then reasons why	Possible impacts on SAC
Policy NEOAOF	Northern Edge of Oxford Area of Focus	Area based policy setting out broad infrastructure requirements and other non-site specific policy aspects.	
Policy SPN1	Northern Gateway	<p>Site is less than 500m away from the SAC. The site is proposed for mixed-use employment led development with residential and other complementary uses.</p> <p>Previous HRA work for this site included the screening and appropriate assessment stage. The appropriate assessment concluded that there would be no likely significant effects as a result of the mitigation measures proposed. These mitigation measures were embedded within the previous policy framework (AAP).</p>	<p>Previous HRA work suggested mitigation measures to reduce risk of recreational impacts. Increased amount of public open space provided at the site. HRA for AAP also investigated impacts on balanced hydrological regime and concluded no significant effects.</p> <p>Air quality impacts of whole plan on SAC is currently being assessed using transport modelling. Results to be presented as part of HRA Screening.</p>
Policy SPN2	Oxford UP Sports Ground	Site located more than 200m away from SAC. This site is proposed for residential development and student accommodation.	Possible impacts on SAC – balanced hydrological regime and water quality.

		Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.	This site could be in an area where basement development could have an impact on groundwater flow.
Policy SPN3	Diamond Place and Ewert House	Site located more than 200m away from SAC. This site is proposed for a retail-led mixed-use scheme which could also include residential, employment and student accommodation.  Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.	Possible impacts on SAC – recreational impacts, balanced hydrological regime and water quality. This site could be in an area where basement development could have an impact on groundwater flow.
Policy CBLLAOF	South Infrastructure Area: Cowley Branch Line and Littlemore Area of Focus	The whole of Southern Infrastructure Area lies outside the buffer zones for residential impacts and outside of the potential groundwater recharge zone for the SAC. Transport modelling that informs air quality assessment takes account of all sites in the plan.	Site allocations and development likely to come forward within this area of focus unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.
SPS1: SPS2: SPS3:	ARC Business Park Kassam Stadium and Ozone Leisure Complex	All sites listed here are outside the buffer zones for recreational impacts (1,900m) and do not lie in an area of hydrological connectivity	Sites listed here unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC due to their location.

SPS4: SPS5: SPS6: SPS7:	Overflow Car Park at Kassam Stadium site MINI Plant Oxford Oxford Science Park Sandy Lane Recreation Ground Unipart Group	to the site. Transport modelling that informs the air quality screening assessment takes account of all sites in the plan.	Sites listed are screened out from further assessment.
SPS8: SPS9: SPS10: SPS11: SPS12: SPS13: SPS14: SPS15: SPS16: SPS17: SPS18: SPS19:	Bertie Place Recreation Ground Blackbird Leys Central Area Knights Road Cowley Marsh Depot Templars Square Land at Meadow Lane Former Iffley Mead Playing Field Grandpont Car Park Redbridge Paddock Crescent Hall Edge of Playing Fields, Oxford Academy 474 Cowley Road (Former Powell's Timber Yard)	All sites listed here are outside the buffer zones for recreational impacts (1,900m) and do not lie in an area of hydrological connectivity to the site. Transport modelling that informs the air quality screening assessment takes account of all sites in the plan.	Sites listed here unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC due to their location. Sites listed are screened out from further assessment.
Policy MRORAO F	Marston Road and Old Road Area of Focus	All sites listed here are outside the buffer zones for recreational impacts (1,900m) and do not lie in an area of hydrological connectivity to the site. Transport modelling that informs the air quality screening assessment takes account of all sites in the plan.	Sites listed here unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC due to their location. Sites listed are screened out from further assessment.
SPE1 SPE2	Government Buildings and Harcourt House Land Surrounding St Clements Church	All sites listed here are outside the buffer zones for recreational impacts (1,900m) and do not lie in	Sites listed here unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC due to their location.

SPE3	Headington Hill Hall and Clive Booth Student Village	an area of hydrological connectivity to the site. Transport modelling that informs the air quality screening assessment takes account of all sites in the plan.	Sites listed are screened out from further assessment.		
SPE4	Oxford Brookes University Marston Road Campus				
SPE5	1 Pullens Lane				
SPE6	Churchill Hospital				
SPE7	Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC)				
SPE8	Warneford Hospital				
	Bayards Hill Primary Sch Pt Playing Flds Land West of Mill Lane Marston Paddock Manzil Way Resource Centre Slade House Thornhill Park Union Street Car Park Jesus and Lincoln College Sports Grnds Ruskin College Campus Ruskin Field John Radcliffe Hospital Rectory Centre			All sites listed here are outside the buffer zones for recreational impacts (1,900m) and do not lie in an area of hydrological connectivity to the site. Transport modelling that informs the air quality screening assessment takes account of all sites in the plan.	Sites listed here unlikely to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC due to their location. Sites listed are screened out from further assessment.
NCCAOF	North of the City Centre Area of Focus				
SPCW1	West Wellington Square	The site is less than 1.9km away from the SAC. It is allocated for academic institutional, student accommodation and residential development. It has been screened out for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime</b>	Potential for recreational impacts on SAC if residential development is delivered at this location.  Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.		



SPCW2	Canalside Land, Jericho	This site is proposed for a mixed-use development including residential and a replacement boatyard. It has been screened out for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime</b>	Potential for recreational impacts on SAC if residential development is delivered at this location.  Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.
SPCW3	Manor Place	Site is more than 1.9km from the SAC. This site is proposed for student accommodation or residential. It has been screened out for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime Recreational Impacts</b>	Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.
SPCW4	Land at Winchester Road, Banbury Road and Bevington Road	Site is more than 200m from the SAC. This site is proposed for academic institutional uses, student accommodation and/ or residential development. It has been screened out for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime</b>	Potential for recreational impacts on SAC if residential development is delivered at this location.  Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.
WEAOF	West End and Botley Road Area of Focus	This is an area based policy which includes a number of criteria including how to assess heritage	Previous HRA work considered that the West End of Oxford is served by a number of recreational

		impacts and infrastructure requirements for the area. The policy itself is not expected to have a significant impact on the Oxford Meadows SAC.	opportunities that are more or equally accessible than the SAC. These sites include Botley Park, Oatlands Road Recreation Ground, Oxpens Field, Grandpont Recreation Ground and Grandpont Nature Park, Hogacre Common Eco Park Christchurch Meadow and University Parks. As such, recreational impacts are screened out from the West End sites.
SPCW5	Oxpens	Site is more than 200m from the SAC. This site is proposed for a mix of uses including employment, residential and student accommodation. Site is downstream from the SAC so unlikely to be hydrologically connected. It has been screened to for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime Recreational Impacts</b>	Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.
SPCW6	Nuffield Sites	Site is more than 200m from the SAC. This site is proposed for a mix of uses including employment, residential and student accommodation. Site is downstream from the SAC so unlikely to be hydrologically	Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.

		connected. It has been screened to for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime Recreational Impacts</b>	
SPCW7	Osney Mead	This site is in existing employment use and is identified for mixed-use development that may include residential. It has been screened out of the assessment for: <b>Water quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime Recreational Impacts</b>	Possible Impacts on SAC – recreational  Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.
SPCW8	Botley Road Retail Park	This site is in existing retail use. The site is proposed for employment-related uses. The site is not allocated for residential development given the potential flood-risk issue at the site. The site is downstream from the SAC so is unlikely to be hydrologically connected. It has been screened out for: <b>Water Quality/ Balanced Hydrological Regime Recreational Impacts</b>	Air Quality impacts of whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results will be presented as part of the HRA Screening.
<b>Employment sites</b>			
Cat.1	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter		
Cat.1	Oxford University Press, Walton Street		

Cat.2	69-71 Banbury Road	These sites are all located on the North Oxford Gravel Terrace and as such there is potential for basement development to have an impact on groundwater movement and groundwater recharge.	Air quality impacts of the whole plan are being assessed using transport modelling. The results of this modelling will be presented as part of the HRA screening.
Cat.2	228-240 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	Barclay House, 242 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	Mayfield House, 256 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	264 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	265 Banbury Road (BBC Radio Oxford)		
Cat.2	267-269 Banbury Road (Prima House)		
Cat.2	Oxfam House, 274 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	285 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	Cranbrook House, 297 Banbury Road		
Cat.2	Lambourne House, 311-321 Banbury Road	All employment sites more than 1,900m from the Oxford Meadows were screened out from the assessment.	Further investigation is needed for those employment sites less than 1,900m from the Oxford Meadows SAC as the plan's employment strategy now promotes an element of housing on all employment sites. As such the Stage 2 assessment will look at these sites in more detail.
Cat.2	Summertown Pavillion, Middle Way		

Table 2.3 Possible Impacts of the Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document on the Oxford Meadows SAC

Nature	Policies or site allocations likely to have an impact on the SAC	Magnitude	Duration	Location	Conclusions
Air Pollution Impacts	<p><u>Policy Options</u></p> <p>S1: Spatial Strategy H1: Housing Requirement</p> <p><u>Sites</u></p> <p>Transport modelling to look at how development proposed as part of the plan is likely to impact air quality at the Oxford Meadows SAC.</p>	<p>Natural England Guidance on Air Quality suggests that increases in trips under 1,000 AADT or under 200 AADT (HGV) can be screened out from further assessment.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that all sites will be developed within the Local Plan period. Any impacts would therefore occur within this period (up to 2040).</p>	<p>Sites allocated all across the city but have potential to increase traffic on A34 and A40 which are adjacent to the Oxford Meadows SAC.</p>	<p>Traffic Modelling has been commissioned to look at the potential air quality impacts of development proposed in Oxford city on the Oxford Meadows SAC.</p> <p>The results are discussed at section XXX of the HRA screening Report.</p>
Balanced Hydrological Regime (Groundwater)	<p><u>Policy Options</u></p> <p>S1: Spatial Strategy H1: Housing Requirement</p>				<p>The following sites are taken forward to the “Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment”.</p>

555

	<p><u>Sites</u> SPN1: Northern Gateway</p> <p>SPN2 - Oxford University Press Sports Ground</p> <p>SPN3 - Diamond Place and Ewert House</p> <p>SPCW4 - Land at Winchester Road, Banbury Road and Bevington Road</p> <p><u>Employment sites</u></p> <p><u>Category 1:</u></p> <p>Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ)</p> <p>Oxford University Press (OUP)</p> <p><u>Category 2:</u></p>	<p>Where sites are located on the Gravel Terrace, it is important that the same amount of surface water is able to recharge the groundwater after development is completed.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that all sites will be developed within the Local Plan period. Any impacts would therefore occur within this period (up to 2040).</p>	<p>Sites are all on or near the North Oxford Gravel Terrace.</p>	<p>These sites are all on, or near the North Oxford Gravel Terrace. Policy provision exists in the Local Plan 2036 to ensure groundwater quality, flow and recharge is not impeded by development in this location.</p> <p>A policy approach has been developed to address this issue in the Oxford Local Plan 2040.</p> <p>The Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will make recommendations as to the precise wording of these policies to ensure</p>
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	69-71 Banbury Road 228-240 Banbury Road 242 Banbury Road 256 Banbury Road 264 Banbury Road 265 Banbury Road 267-269 Banbury Road 274 Banbury Road 285 Banbury Road 297 Banbury Road 311-321 Banbury Road Summertown Pavillion, Middle Way				that there are no significant impacts on the conservation objectives for the Oxford Meadows SAC.
Water Quality	<u>Sites</u> SPN1: Northern Gateway	Where sites are located on the	It is anticipated that all sites will be	Sites are all on or near the North	See comments above for balanced

	<p>SPN2 - Oxford University Press Sports Ground</p> <p>SPN3 - Diamond Place and Ewert House</p> <p>SPCW4 - Land at Winchester Road, Banbury Road and Bevington Road</p> <p>Employment Sites</p> <p><u>Category 1:</u></p> <p>Radcliffe Observatory Quarter (ROQ)</p> <p>Oxford University Press (OUP)</p> <p><u>Category 2:</u></p> <p>69-71 Banbury Road</p>	<p>Gravel Terrace, it is important that the quality of surface water that is recharged to groundwater is maintained after development is completed.</p>	<p>developed within the Local Plan period. Any impacts would therefore occur within this period (up to 2036).</p>	<p>Oxford Gravel Terrace.</p>	<p>hydrological regime.</p>
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	<p>228-240 Banbury Road</p> <p>242 Banbury Road</p> <p>256 Banbury Road</p> <p>264 Banbury Road</p> <p>265 Banbury Road</p> <p>267-269 Banbury Road</p> <p>274 Banbury Road</p> <p>285 Banbury Road</p> <p>297 Banbury Road</p> <p>311-321 Banbury Road</p> <p>Summertown Pavillion, Middle Way</p>				
Recreational Impact	<p><u>Policy Options</u></p> <p>E1: Employment Strategy (Cat. 3 sites)</p> <p>H1: Housing Requirement</p>				

	<p><u>Sites</u></p> <p>SPN1: Northern Gateway</p> <p>SPN2: Oxford University Press Sports Ground</p> <p>SPN3: Diamond Place and Ewert House</p> <p>SPCW1: Wellington Square West</p> <p>SPCW2: Canalside Land, Jericho</p> <p>SPCW4: Land at Winchester Road, Banbury Road and Bevington Road</p>	<p>Allocation includes residential. Possible impact on SAC</p> <p>Allocation includes residential. Possible impact on SAC</p> <p>Allocation includes residential. Possible impact on SAC</p> <p>Allocation includes residential. Possible impact on SAC</p> <p>Allocation includes residential. Possible impact on SAC</p> <p>Allocation includes residential. Possible impact on SAC</p>	<p>It is anticipated that all sites will be developed within the Local Plan period. Any impacts would therefore occur within this period (up to 2040).</p>	<p>All sites within 1900m of the SAC</p>	<p>Sites were screened out of this part of the assessment where there were no residential uses proposed.</p> <p>There is likely to be a limited amount of recreational pressure from this development for instance, from people having their lunch on Port Meadow in the summer months.</p> <p>However, dog-fouling is considered to be more of an issue.</p> <p>This is discussed further in the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment section of the HRA.</p>
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	<u>Employment sites:</u>	All employment sites now offer the opportunity to deliver an element of housing. Therefore all Category 1 and Category 2 employment sites within 1,900m of the Oxford Meadows are taken forward for further consideration as part of the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.			<p>Sites for student accommodation were also screened out of the assessment.</p> <p>It was agreed with Natural England that dog fouling was more of a threat to the Oxford Meadows SAC than trampling.</p> <p>Consultation with the Oxford Rare Plants Group confirmed that <i>A. repens</i> (creeping marshwort) is not particularly sensitive to tramping but is more sensitive to dog fouling.</p> <p>Since there are no pets allowed in purpose-built student</p>
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					accommodation it was considered that this would not be likely to be an issue.
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## Other Plans and Programmes (in-combination impacts)

2.43 In line with the precautionary principle, Oxford City Council has considered impacts that could be caused ‘in-combination’ with other plan areas. The plans and programmes shown at Table 2.4 have been considered in relation to the HRA of the Oxford Local Plan Proposed Submission Document Policies.

Table 2.4 Other Plans and programmes with potential ‘in-combination’ impacts

Policy, Plan, Strategy/ Initiative	Proposals	Potential 'in combination' impacts?
<p>Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report August 2015.</p> <p>In 2022, a timetable for the production of a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan was agreed. A call for sites was undertaken in 2023 and an initial consultation was scheduled to take place in 2023 as well.</p>	<p>It provides a policy framework for identifying sites for new minerals and waste development and for making decisions on planning applications.</p>	<p>The HRA concluded that the Core Strategy would not have a likely significant effect on air quality, water resources, recreation, hazardous and radioactive materials.</p>
<p>Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (adopted 2022) including Core Schemes (e.g., Traffic Filters)</p>	<p>LTP4 sets out proposed transport solutions for the county up to 2031.</p>	<p>Stage 2 HRA for Traffic Filters found that the only screening threshold that was exceeded was for NO<sub>x</sub> concentrations. The largest change at any receptor point was found to be 0.8µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Reductions in the background NO<sub>x</sub> levels were found to be significantly larger than the largest changes found to be associated with the scheme itself (smallest background change was 4.4µg/m<sup>3</sup>). The Stage 2 HRA therefore concluded no likely significant effects as a result of the Traffic Filters.</p>
<p>Cherwell Local Plan 2040</p>	<p>The Plan will set out policies for the development of land for housing, employment and other uses.</p>	<p>Plan production at an early stage. Reg. 18 consultation not yet undertaken. HRA Screening Assessment not publicly available at time of writing. Impacts of</p>

		Local Plan 2031 and Partial Review Plan both considered as part of previous HRA work.
South and Vale Joint Local Plan 2041	This plan will set out policies for the development of land for housing, employment and other uses.	Plan production at an early stage. Reg. 18 consultation not yet undertaken. HRA Screening Assessment not publicly available at time of writing. Impacts of previous Local Plans for South and Vale considered as part of previous HRA work.
West Oxfordshire Draft Local Plan 2041	This plan will set out policies for the development of land for housing, employment and other uses.	Plan production at an early stage. Reg. 18 consultation not yet undertaken. HRA Screening Assessment not publicly available at time of writing. Impacts of previous Local Plan considered as part of previous HRA work.
East West Rail	Rail project	<p>East West Rail is a nationally significant railway project which aims to deliver much-needed transport connections for communities between Oxford and Cambridge by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Upgrading an existing section of railway between Oxford and Bicester;</li> <li>- Bringing back a section of railway between Bicester and Bletchley;</li> <li>- Refurbishing existing railway between Bletchley and Bedford; and</li> <li>- Building brand new railway infrastructure between Bedford and Cambridge.</li> </ul> <p>Air emissions may affect habitats including those with the Oxford Meadows. An approach involving the monitoring of vegetation has been agreed with Natural England, to identify any habitat changes, and to ensure that</p>

		timely measures can be taken, if necessary to prevent adverse effects on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC <sup>12</sup>
Thames Water Utilities Ltd Drought Plan (2022)	Water Management Plan	The HRA Screening concluded that the Drought Plan 2022 will not in any way result in any significant effect on the Oxford Meadows SAC and therefore there is no potential for in-combination effects.
Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS)	Flood Defence Scheme to reduce impact of flooding in certain areas of Oxford at the highest risk from flooding.	Natural England responded to the planning application consultation for the proposed scheme. In their public response dated 09 May 2022, Natural England stated that: <i>“As set out in our letter of 22nd January 2019, based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation and has no objection to the proposed development. We do not consider the amendments subject to this current consultation to alter this.”</i>
Oxford Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership	The Pan-Regional Partnership area covers the Oxford-Cambridge Region. Government backing for the partnership unlocks access to up to £2.5m of government funding to support its priorities in delivering sustainable growth and environmental enhancements for the region.	The Pan-Regional Partnership area includes Oxford City and a number of local authorities across the UK including Cambridge City Council. While there is significant growth anticipated in this region, it is also being backed by rail infrastructure connections such as East West Rail. Last mile interventions in Oxford City include Cowley Branch Line, which is anticipated will come forward in the plan period and is likely to help with a modal shift away from private car use. It is not anticipated that the growth across the region will significantly

<sup>12</sup> Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford Improvements) Order Environmental Statement NTS January 2010

		impact the conservation objectives for the Oxford Meadows SAC.
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## Screening Conclusions

2.44 Table 2.3 suggests that two of the policies in the plan have possible impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC.

- H1: Housing Requirement: Sets the number of homes to be delivered in the plan period; and
- E1: Employment Strategy, which allows an element of housing on employment sites subject to certain criteria.

2.45 Table 2.3 also suggests that a number of sites should be included for further consideration in the Local Plan 2040 Proposed Submission Document because it has not been possible to rule out the possibility of significant effects at the Oxford Meadows SAC as a result of their development at this stage. Both the sites and the policies have the potential to have an impact on the following:

- Water Quality;
- Balanced Hydrological Regime; and
- Increased Recreational pressure

2.46 These will be discussed further at Section 3 (Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment).

2.47 It has been possible to screen out some of the impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC:

- Maintenance of traditional hay cut and light aftermath grazing; and
- Absence of direct fertilisation.

2.48 These have been screened out as they are not related to activities directly at the site, which the Oxford Local Plan 2040 will not affect.

2.49 Air Quality modelling has been commissioned and although it has not reported back yet fully, early indications are that development proposed as part of the Oxford Local Plan is unlikely to have any significant effects on air quality at the Oxford Meadows SAC.