

HABITATS REGULATIONS SCREENING MATRIX LOCAL PLAN

Title: MWDF Partial Review
Location: Northamptonshire
International Nature Conservation Site: Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA
Date: June 2012

Description:

Northamptonshire County Council is undertaking a partial review of their adopted Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF) in order to ensure that it is up-to-date and in-line with current national policy and guidance. As part of the partial review the MWDF Development Plan Documents (DPDs) will be combined into one document, called the 'Local Plan'. The Northamptonshire Local Plan will provide the strategic spatial planning framework for Northamptonshire's minerals and waste development. The spatial strategies and allocated sites for minerals and waste-related development are not under review.

This is a record of the Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment, required by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, undertaken by Northamptonshire County Council, in respect of the above partial review in accordance with the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92 / 43 / EEC).

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is the assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on a Natura 2000 site. Its purpose is to consider the impacts of a land-use plan against conservation objectives of the site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of the site. Where significant negative effects are identified, alternative options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

This HRA screening matrix applies only to the elements of the MWDF which are being reviewed. The MWDF underwent thorough HRA screening and assessment prior to its adoption. It is not considered necessary to screen all components again due to the short time period since the assessment; in addition no changes are proposed changes to either the spatial strategies or the site allocations for minerals and waste development.

The partial review will concentrate on:

- Provision figures for waste capacity and aggregates apportionment and taking these through to 2031.
- Any new or amended policies that will be necessary to reflect changed national guidance, in particular the NPPF.
- Development of policy for matters not fully covered in the current MWDF.

The following matters **are not** proposed to be covered:

- Amendments to the spatial strategy for waste and minerals.
- Minerals and waste allocations and designations as set out in the Locations for Waste and Minerals Development DPD.

Table 1 shows which documents are undergoing partial review and which are not. The table also shows the required outcomes of the partial review i.e. the Local Plan document.

Table 1: The partial review outcomes

| MWDF Adopted planning documents | Partial Review What is being reviewed | Sustainability Appraisal What is being assessed | Partial review The outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Partial Review Process | | | |
| Core Strategy | ✓ | ✓ | Local Plan |
| Locations for Minerals Development DPD | ✗ | ✗ | |
| Locations for Waste Development DPD | ✗ | ✗ | |
| Control and Management for Development DPD | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Proposals Map | N/A | N/A | |
| Development and Implementation Principles Supplementary Planning Document | ✓ | ✓ | Development and Implementation Principles Supplementary Planning Document |
| Statement of Community Involvement | N/A | N/A | Statement of Community Involvement |
| Minerals and Waste Development Scheme | N/A | N/A | Minerals and Waste Development Scheme |
| Annual Monitoring Report | N/A | N/A | Annual Monitoring Report |

Screening was undertaken to investigate whether the proposals would be likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), having considered that the plan was not directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of the sites.

Of particular importance to Northamptonshire, the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and are to be considered as a potential European Special Protection Area (SPA). HRA is applicable to both plans and projects. Subsequently HRA is required for relevant components of the plan.

The assessment has concluded that the partial review is not likely to have a significant effect on the internationally important interest features of the site, alone or in combination with other plans and projects; as such no further assessment is required.

Consultation with Natural England will be undertaken alongside the 'Consultation on the way forward' document (June 2012); advice and recommendations will be incorporated into the conclusions of the screening assessment as appropriate.

Table 2: Screening matrix

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| Brief description |
| <p>The partial review will ensure that Northamptonshire minerals and waste planning policy is up-to-date and in-line with current national policy and guidance. As part of the partial review the MWDF Development Plan Documents (DPDs) will be combined into one document, called the 'Local Plan'. The Northamptonshire Local Plan will provide the strategic spatial planning framework for Northamptonshire's minerals and waste development. The partial review will concentrate on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision figures for waste capacity and aggregates apportionment and taking these through to 2031. • Any new or amended policies that will be necessary to reflect changed national guidance, in particular the NPPF. • Development of policy for matters not fully covered in the current MWDF. |
| Brief description of the Natura 2000 site |
| <p>Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA: This chain of both active and exhausted sand and gravel pits extends for approximately 35 kilometres along the alluvial deposits of the River Nene floodplain from Clifford Hill on the southern outskirts of Northampton, downstream to Thorpe Waterville and north to Thrapston and occupies an area of 1,369.88ha within Northamptonshire (Figure 1). They form an extensive series of shallow and deep open waters which occur in association with a wide range of marginal features, such as sparsely-vegetated islands, gravel bars and shorelines, and habitats including reedswamp, marsh, wet ditches, rush pasture, rough grassland and scattered scrub. This range of habitat and the varied topography of the lagoons provide valuable nesting, resting and feeding conditions to sustain nationally important numbers and assemblages of breeding and wintering birds especially ducks and waders. Species such as gold plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> and lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> also spend time feeding and roosting on surrounding agricultural land outside of the SPA.</p> |
| Assessment criteria |
| Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to significant effects on the Natura 2000 site. |
| <p>Previous assessment of the MWDF indicated that the plan was likely to give rise to significant effects on the Natura 2000 site, this was specifically related to the spatial strategy for waste and minerals and minerals and waste allocations and designations (set out in the Locations for Waste and Minerals Development DPD). Neither of these elements are included in the partial review, as such the partial review is not likely to give rise to significant effects (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects) on the Natura 2000 site.</p> |
| Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary effects of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of size and scale, landtake, distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site, resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction, etc), emissions (disposal to land/water/air), excavation requirements, transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc and other. |
| <p>Plan area: The partial review applies specifically to minerals and waste related development within Northamptonshire.</p> <p>Plan implementation period: 2012-2031.</p> <p>Size, scale, land-take: Not applicable as the partial review does not allocate land.</p> <p>Distance from Natura 2000 site: Not applicable as the partial review does not allocate land.</p> <p>Physical changes resulting from the plan: The partial review will not result in any physical changes that will impact on the SPA.</p> <p>Resource requirements: The partial review will not result in resource requirements that will impact on the SPA, rather it encourages site specific environmental management, sustainable development techniques and restoration, hence encourages the prudent use of resources.</p> <p>Emissions and waste: The partial review policies support site specific environmental management and sustainable development techniques which will assist in reducing emissions and reducing potential environmental harm associated with wastes.</p> <p>Excavation requirements: The partial review does not require excavation work.</p> <p>Transportation requirements: The partial review policies support the minimisation and control of transportation movements.</p> <p>Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning: Not applicable as the partial review does not allocate land for development.</p> |

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| <p>Impacts resulting from the plans objectives: The partial review and policies will not result in any impacts upon the Natura 2000 site.</p> |
| <p>Assessment criteria</p> |
| <p>Describe any likely significant effects on the site arising as a result of reduction of habitat area, disturbance to key species, habitat or species fragmentation, reduction in species density, changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality, etc) and climate change.</p> |
| <p>Reduction of habitat area: There will be no physical reduction of habitat area of the SPA resulting from the partial review. Disturbance to key species: There will be no disturbance to key species resulting from the partial review. Habitat or species fragmentation: The partial review will not result in habitat or species fragmentation. The policies included in the partial review support restoration and habitat connectivity. Reduction in species density: The partial review will not result in a reduction in species density. Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality, etc): No changes are expected in key indicators of conservation value as a result of implementation of the partial review. Climate change: No impacts are expected in relation to climate change as a result of the partial review. The partial review supports sustainable development techniques and the transition to a low carbon future.</p> |
| <p>Describe any likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the site.</p> |
| <p>No significant impacts on the SPA site (as a whole in terms of interference with the key relationships that define the function or structure of the site) have been identified resulting from the partial review.</p> |
| <p>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance and change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality, etc).</p> |
| <p>Not applicable.</p> |
| <p>Describe from the above those elements of the plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts are not known.</p> |
| <p>Not applicable as the partial review will not impact on the SPA.</p> |

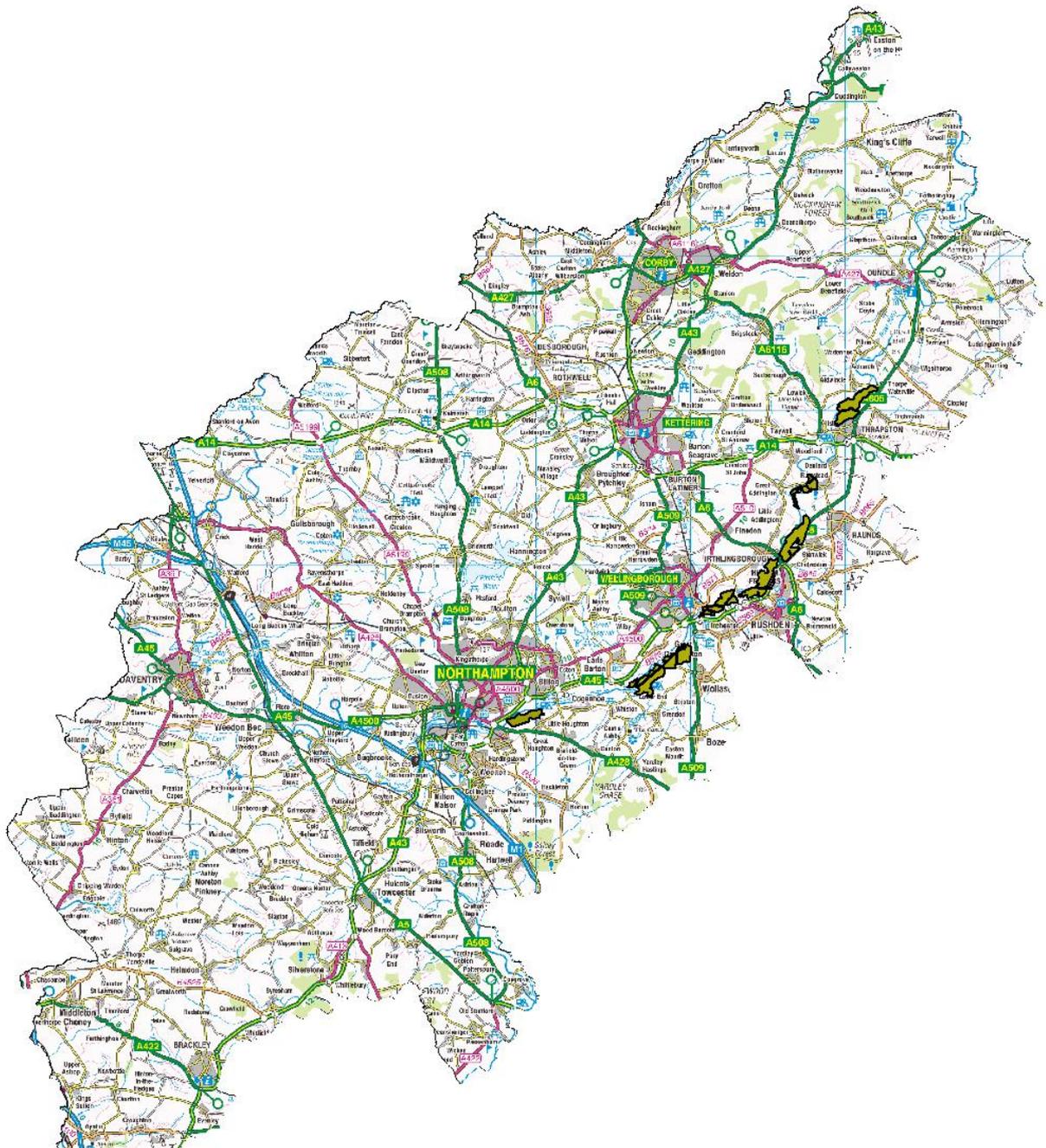


Figure 1: Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA within Northamptonshire