

Charnwood Local Plan

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Charnwood Council

Project number: 60560276

May 2021

Quality Information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
George Wilkinson Graduate Ecologist	Dr James Riley Technical Director	Dr Max Wade Technical Director	Dr James Riley Technical Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
0	01/02/2021	Draft	JR	James Riley	Technical Director
1	11/04/2021	Draft – updated following amendments to the draft Local Plan	JR	James Riley	Technical Director
2	14/05/2021	Draft – updated following amendments to the draft Local Plan	JR	James Riley	Technical Director

Distribution List

# Hard Copies	PDF Required	Association / Company Name

Prepared for:

Charnwood Council

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
Midpoint, Alençon Link
Basingstoke
Hampshire RG21 7PP
United Kingdom

T: +44(0)1256 310200
aecom.com

© 2021 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") for sole use of our client (the "Client") in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
Project Background	5
Legislation	5
Scope of the Project	6
2. Methodology	7
Introduction	7
HRA Task 1: Test of Likely Significant Effects (LSE)	7
HRA Task 2: Appropriate Assessment (AA)	7
HRA Task 3: Avoidance and Mitigation	8
Confirming Other Plans and Projects That May Act 'In Combination'	8
3. Internationally Designated Sites	10
River Mease SAC	10
Introduction	10
Reasons for Designation	10
Current Threats and Pressures	10
Conservation Objectives	11
Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar Site	11
Introduction	11
Reasons for Designation	11
Current Threats and Pressures	12
Conservation Objectives	12
4. Test of Likely Significant Effects	13
Physical Scope of the HRA	13
Test of Likely Significant Effects Results	16
5. Conclusions	29
Appendix A Map of European sites	30

Figures

Figure 1. Four Stage Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment (GOV.UK, 2019)	7
---	---

Tables

Table 1. Description of potential impact pathways from increased development to European Sites	13
Table 2. Screening assessment (Test of Likely Significant Effects) of the Charnwood Local Plan	16

1. Introduction

Project Background

- 1.1 AECOM was appointed by Charnwood Council to assist in undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of its draft Local Plan (hereafter referred to as 'the Local Plan'). The objective of this assessment was to identify any aspects of the Local Plan that would cause an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects were identified.
- 1.2 The Regulation 18 Charnwood Local Plan was subject to HRA Screening in 2016¹. This identified two European sites as being relevant to HRA of the Regulation 18 Local Plan: River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Rutland Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. The assessment concluded that the Regulation 18 Local Plan was not likely to have a significant effect on any European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. However, the HRA identified the need for additional HRA Screening of the Local Plan as further details of policies and site allocations emerge. That is the purpose of this report.
- 1.3 The Local Plan sets out the development strategy for Charnwood Borough ('the Borough') from 2020 to 2037. This includes the provision of new housing (notably at the Leicester Urban Area and the settlements of Loughborough and Shepshed), employment space and improvements to service centres. These policies are described in Chapter 4 of this report.

Legislation

- 1.4 The need for HRA is set out within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and concerns the protection of European sites. European sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), proposed/candidate sites and sites designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites).
- 1.5 The HRA process applies the precautionary principle to protected areas. Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. Plans and projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation would be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.
- 1.6 In order to determine whether or not site integrity will be affected, an Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken of the plan or project in question (Box 1).

Box 1. The legislative basis for Appropriate Assessment

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Regulations state that:

"A competent authority, before deciding to ... give any consent for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site ... shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives... The authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site".

- 1.7 Over the years the term 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' has come into wide currency to describe the overall process set out in the Habitats Regulations, from screening through to identification of IROPI. This has arisen in order to distinguish the overall process from the individual stage of "Appropriate Assessment".

¹ JBA Consulting. (2016) Charnwood Local Plan: Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment. Draft Report. September 2016. [Available at: https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/hra_screening_assessment_charnwood_local_plan/Charnwood%20Local%20Plan%20-%20HRA%20Screening%20Assessment.pdf – accessed 20/01/2021].

Throughout this report the term HRA is used for the overall process, whilst use of Appropriate Assessment is restricted to the specific stage of that name.

Scope of the Project

- 1.8 There is no pre-defined guidance that dictates the physical scope of an HRA of a Plan document. Therefore, in considering the physical scope of the assessment, this HRA was guided primarily by the identified impact pathways (called the source-pathway-receptor model) rather than by arbitrary 'zones'. Current guidance suggests that the following European sites be included in the scope of assessment:
- All sites within the Borough boundary; and
 - Other sites shown to be linked to development within the Borough boundary through a known 'pathway' (discussed below).
- 1.9 Briefly defined, pathways are routes by which a change in activity provided within a Plan document can lead to an effect upon an internationally designated site. An example of this would be new residential development resulting in an increased population and thus increased recreational pressure, which could then affect European sites by, for example, disturbance of wintering birds. Guidance from the former Department of Communities and Local Government states that the HRA should be '*proportionate to the geographical scope of the [plan policy]*' and that '*an AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose*' (CLG, 2006, p.6). More recently, the Court of Appeal² ruled that providing the Council (competent authority) was duly satisfied that proposed mitigation could be '*achieved in practice*' to satisfy that the proposed development would have no adverse effect, then this would suffice. This ruling has since been applied to a planning permission (rather than a Core Strategy document)³. In this case the High Court ruled that for '*a multistage process, so long as there is sufficient information at any particular stage to enable the authority to be satisfied that the proposed mitigation can be achieved in practice it is not necessary for all matters concerning mitigation to be fully resolved before a decision maker is able to conclude that a development will satisfy the requirements of Reg 61 of the Habitats Regulations*'.
- 1.10 The European sites assessed within this HRA report are described in Chapter 3.

² No Adastral New Town Ltd (NANT) v Suffolk Coastal District Council Court of Appeal, 17th February 2015.

³ High Court case of R (Devon Wildlife Trust) v Teignbridge District Council, 28 July 2015.

2. Methodology

Introduction

- 2.1 Figure 1 below outlines the stages of HRA according to current Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance. The stages are essentially iterative, being revisited as necessary in response to more detailed information, recommendations and any relevant changes to the Plan until no significant adverse effects remain.

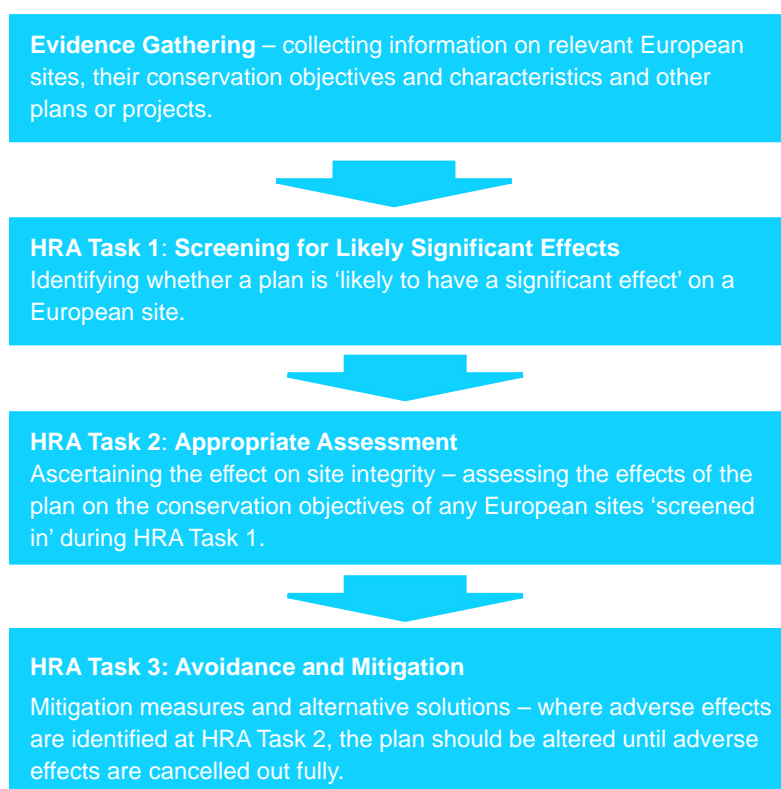


Figure 1. Four Stage Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment (GOV.UK, 2019)

HRA Task 1: Test of Likely Significant Effects (LSE)

- 2.2 Following evidence gathering, the first stage of any HRA is a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) test; essentially a risk assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as Appropriate Assessment is required. The essential question is:

“Is the project, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European sites?”

- 2.3 The objective is to ‘screen out’ those plans and projects that can, without any detailed appraisal, be said to be unlikely to result in significant adverse effects upon European sites, usually because there is no mechanism for an adverse interaction with European sites. This stage is undertaken in Chapter 4 of this report.

HRA Task 2: Appropriate Assessment (AA)

- 2.4 Where it is determined that a conclusion of ‘no likely significant effect’ cannot be drawn, the analysis has proceeded to the next stage of HRA known as Appropriate Assessment. Case law has clarified that ‘Appropriate Assessment’ is not a technical term. In other words, there are no particular technical analyses, or level of technical analysis, that are classified by law as belonging to Appropriate Assessment rather than determination of likely significant effects.

- 2.5 During July 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published guidance for Appropriate Assessment⁴. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 65-001-20190722 explains: *'Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded, a competent authority must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site, in view of the site's conservation objectives. The competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ruled out adverse effects on the integrity of the habitats site. Where an adverse effect on the site's integrity cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan or project can only proceed if there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured'*.
- 2.6 As this analysis follows on from the screening process, there is a clear implication that the analysis will be more detailed than undertaken at the Screening stage and one of the key considerations during Appropriate Assessment is whether there is available mitigation that would entirely address the potential effect. In practice, the Appropriate Assessment takes any policies or allocations that could not be dismissed following the high-level screening analysis and analyses the potential for an effect in more detail, with a view to concluding whether there would be an adverse effect on integrity (in other words, disruption of the coherent structure and function of the European site(s)).
- 2.7 A decision by the European Court of Justice⁵ concluded that measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a proposed project on a European site may no longer be taken into account by competent authorities at the Likely Significant Effects or 'screening' stage of HRA. The UK is no longer part of the European Union. However, as a precaution, it is assumed for the purposes of this HRA that EU case law regarding Habitat Regulations Assessment will still be considered informative jurisprudence by the UK courts. That ruling has therefore been considered in producing this HRA.
- 2.8 Also, in 2018 the Holohan ruling⁶ was handed down by the European Court of Justice. Among other provisions, paragraph 39 of the ruling states that *'As regards other habitat types or species, which are present on the site, but for which that site has not been listed, and with respect to habitat types and species located outside that site, ... typical habitats or species must be included in the appropriate assessment, if they are necessary to the conservation of the habitat types and species listed for the protected area'* [emphasis added]. This has been taken into account in the HRA process.

HRA Task 3: Avoidance and Mitigation

- 2.9 Where necessary, measures are recommended for incorporation into the Local Plan in order to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on European sites. There is considerable precedent concerning the level of detail that a Local Plan document needs to contain regarding mitigation for recreational impacts on European sites. The implication of this precedent is that it is not necessary for all measures that will be deployed to be fully developed prior to adoption of the Plan, but the Plan must provide an adequate policy framework within which these measures can be delivered.
- 2.10 In evaluating significance, AECOM has relied on existing evidence and professional judgement regarding development impacts on the European sites considered within this assessment.
- 2.11 When discussing 'mitigation' for a Local Plan document, one is concerned primarily with the policy framework to enable the delivery of such mitigation rather than the details of the mitigation measures themselves since the Local Plan document is a high-level policy document.

Confirming Other Plans and Projects That May Act 'In Combination'

- 2.12 It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and projects that may also be affecting the European site(s) in question.

⁴<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment#what-are-the-implications-of-the-people-over-wind-judgment-for-habitats-regulations-assessments> [Accessed: 07/01/2020].

⁵ People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-3.23/17).

⁶ Case C-461/17.

- 2.13 In considering the potential for combined regional housing development to impact on European sites the primary consideration is the impact of visitor numbers – i.e. recreational pressure and urbanisation.
- 2.14 When undertaking this part of the assessment it is essential to bear in mind the principal intention behind the legislation i.e. to ensure that those projects or plans (which in themselves may have minor impacts) are not simply dismissed on that basis but are evaluated for any cumulative contribution they may make to an overall significant effect. In practice, in-combination assessment is therefore of greatest relevance when the plan or policy would otherwise be screened out because its individual contribution is inconsequential.
- 2.15 Plans and projects that may act in combination with development within the Local Plan are as follows:
- Blaby Core Strategy (adopted 2013)⁷;
 - Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2006 to 2026; updated with a new Local Development Scheme (July 2020)⁸;
 - Leicester Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents (adopted 2014)⁹;
 - Melton Local Plan 2011-2038 (adopted 2018);
 - North West Leicestershire Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2017)¹⁰;
 - Rushcliffe Local Plan (adopted 2014); and
 - Severn Trent Water's Water Resource Management Plan 2019.

⁷ A new Blaby Local Plan is in progress (Call For Sites undertaken in Spring 2019) [<https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plan/new-local-plan/>].

⁸ A new Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2020 to 2039 is currently under consultation [https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/1004/planning_policy_and_the_local_plan/1315/local_plan_review_2020_to_2039].

⁹ A new draft Leicester Local Plan 2020 including potential development sites is currently under consultation [<https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sec/draft-local-plan/>].

¹⁰ Under review in 2020 [https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/local_plan_review].

3. Internationally Designated Sites

- 3.1 Two European sites have been identified as being potentially relevant to this HRA and thus requiring further consideration:
- River Mease SAC, located approximately 9.6km west of the Borough; and
 - Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site, located approximately 16.3km east of the Borough.
- 3.2 Further information on these European sites is provided below. The locations of these European sites are indicated in **Error! Reference source not found.**
- 3.3 The next nearest European site, Ensor's Pool SAC, is located approximately 24.5km south-west of the Borough. Due to the distance between this site and the Borough, and the fact that it consists of an isolated marl pit, Ensor's Pool SAC is not discussed further in this HRA report.

River Mease SAC

Introduction

- 3.4 The River Mease is a lowland clay river extending through Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Vegetation in the upper reaches of the river is relatively sparse, becoming more varied in the lower reaches where the river crosses the floodplain. The River Mease supports a nationally significant population of spined loach (*Cobitis taenia*) and a population of bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) typical of this species in Central England. Other notable fauna includes the regionally localised white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*).

Reasons for Designation

- 3.5 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site¹¹:
- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation.
- 3.6 Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:
- Spined loach: the River Mease is a good example of a riverine population of this species, with relatively high channel diversity including extensive beds of submerged plants and sandy sediments providing good habitat; and
 - Bullhead: the river's retained sinuosity and patchy cover from submerged macrophytes provides suitable habitat to support a population of this species.
- 3.7 Annex II species present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site:
- White-clawed crayfish; and
 - Otter.

Current Threats and Pressures

- 3.8 According to Natural England's Site Improvement Plan for the site, River Mease SAC currently faces the following threats/pressures of potential relevance to this HRA¹²:
- Water pollution: elevated phosphate levels from sewage treatment works could contribute to eutrophication, causing proliferation of algal growth and a decline in the abundance and/or diversity of characteristic flora and fauna. Increased ammonia levels may also affect juvenile recruitment of spined loach and bullhead;

¹¹ JNCC. (2016) River Mease SAC (UK0030258). [Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SAC-N2K/UK0030258.pdf> - accessed 14/01/2021].

¹² Natural England. (2014) Site Improvement Plan: River Mease (UK0030258) (SIP196). [Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6640857448972288> - accessed 14/01/2021].

- Drainage: drains and other discharges affect the naturalised flow pattern, causing water levels to rise and fall with increased rapidity, affecting the habitats and species present;
- Siltation: increased siltation smothers gravel beds and fine sand which form the spawning habitat of bullhead and spined loach respectively; and
- Water abstraction: alters the naturalised flow pattern, potentially affecting the qualifying species at their various life stages.

Conservation Objectives

3.9 The Conservation Objectives for River Mease SAC¹³ are to 'Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of the qualifying species; and
- The distribution of the qualifying species within the site.'

Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar Site

Introduction

3.10 Rutland Water is a large eutrophic man-made pump storage reservoir created by the damming of the Gwash Valley in 1975. The reservoir receives the majority of its water from the Rivers Nene (90%) and Welland (10%). In general, the reservoir is drawn down in the summer and filled during the autumn and winter months when river levels are high. The lagoons are one of the most important areas for wintering and breeding wildfowl. The reservoir regularly supports internationally important numbers of gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) and shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) and nationally important numbers of eight other species of wildfowl.

Reasons for Designation

3.11 Rutland Water qualifies as an SPA due to its populations of wintering birds in general and its internationally important populations of gadwall and shoveler. The waterfowl assemblage includes notable populations of teal (*Anas crecca*), wigeon (*Mareca penelope*), tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*), goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), coot (*Fulica atra*), goosander (*Mergus merganser*) and great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)¹⁴.

3.12 Rutland Water qualifies as a Ramsar site under Ramsar criterion 5 for supporting an internationally important waterfowl assemblage and under Ramsar criterion 6 for supporting internationally important spring/autumn populations of shoveler, gadwall and potentially mute swan. Other noteworthy bird populations present in spring/autumn and winter include great crested grebe, cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), tufted duck, coot, ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), spotted redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) and lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*), goldeneye, smew (*Mergellus albellus*) and water rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)¹⁵.

¹³ Natural England. (2014) European Site Conservation Objectives for River Mease SAC (UK0030258). [Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6217720043405312> - accessed 14/01/2021].

¹⁴ JNCC. (2016) Rutland Water SPA (UK9008051). [Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9008051.pdf> - accessed 14/01/2021].

¹⁵ JNCC. (1991) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands: Rutland Water. [Available at: <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11062.pdf> - accessed 14/01/2021].

Current Threats and Pressures

3.13 According to Natural England's Site Improvement Plan for the site, Rutland Water SPA currently faces the following threats/pressures of potential relevance to this HRA¹⁶:

- Water abstraction/inappropriate water levels: increased abstraction could radically alter water levels in the reservoir which may result in waterbirds using areas that are currently outside the SPA designation;
- Water pollution: inflows to Rutland Water currently receive regulated and unregulated treated sewage discharges. This, together with further nutrient inputs from diffuse sources (e.g. agriculture), contribute to eutrophication of the reservoir (leading to regular algal blooms and the decline of fauna and flora);
- Planning permission: developments (e.g. wind farms) in the wider area of the SPA may have the potential to affect waterfowl behaviour (e.g. nocturnal migration/dispersal); the potential impacts of this are poorly understood; and
- Public access/disturbance: the reservoir is subject to varied recreational activities (e.g. watersports, fishing, cycling, birdwatching, walking). Future recreational uses would need to avoid likely significant effects on bird populations.

Conservation Objectives

3.14 The conservation objectives of the SPA are to *'Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:*

- *The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;*
- *The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;*
- *The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;*
- *The populations of qualifying species; and*
- *The distribution of qualifying species within the site.'*

¹⁶ Natural England. (2014) Site Improvement Plan: Rutland Water (UK9008051) (SIP208). [Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5985520903520256> - accessed 14/01/2021].

4. Test of Likely Significant Effects

Physical Scope of the HRA

4.1 Two European sites have been identified as being relevant to this HRA of the Local Plan: River Mease SAC (located approximately 9.6km west of the Borough) and Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (located approximately 16.3km east of the Borough). Based upon Natural England's Site Improvement Plans (as summarised in Chapter 3) and professional judgement, there are three impact pathways that require analysis regarding development within the Borough resulting from the Local Plan. These impact pathways are:

- Water quality:
- Water levels: and
- Recreational impacts (Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site only).

4.2 Context on these impact pathways is provided in Table 1 below. All these impact pathways are inherently considered 'in combination' with growth in surrounding authorities as Charnwood Borough is too remote from European sites to affect them alone.

Table 1. Description of potential impact pathways from increased development to European Sites

Impact pathway	Description
Water pollution	<p>The quality of the water that feeds European sites is an important determinant of the nature of their habitats and species. Poor water quality can have a range of environmental impacts. At high levels, toxic chemicals and metals can result in immediate death of aquatic life and have detrimental effects even at lower levels, including increased vulnerability to disease and changes in wildlife behaviour.</p> <p>Eutrophication, the enrichment of plant nutrients in water, increases plant growth and consequently results in oxygen depletion. Algal blooms, which commonly occur due to eutrophication, increase turbidity and decrease light penetration. The decomposition of organic wastes that often accompanies eutrophication deoxygenates water further.</p> <p>Sewage and industrial effluent discharges contribute to increased nutrients levels in European sites; particularly to phosphate levels in watercourses. Greater pressure on water treatment services due to new development (especially housing) may increase the risk of effluent escape into aquatic environments. Diffuse pollution, including that from urban run-off, is considered to be a major factor in the unfavourable condition of European sites.</p> <p>River Mease SAC and Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site have both been identified as being susceptible to impacts from reduced water quality. River Mease SAC has been identified as requiring stricter phosphorus input limits, as specified in the River Mease Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP)¹⁷. Rutland Water is a drinking water storage reservoir with a relatively small natural upstream catchment (comprising the River Gwash and Egleton Brook), with additional inputs pumped artificially from the catchments of the River Nene and the River Welland.</p> <p>Wastewater within the Borough is currently handled by Severn Trent Water. Three local authorities (South Derbyshire, Lichfield and North West Leicestershire) have joined together with Natural England, the Environment Agency, Trent Rivers Trust and Severn Trent Water to create the River Mease Partnership. The partnerships' main aim is to reduce the levels of phosphate within the River Mease SAC through positive action to enable the Conservation Objectives for the SAC to be met. With the Developer Contribution Scheme in place through the Local Plans, they have created the River Mease SSSI/SAC Restoration Plan to put in place the mitigation and enhancements for which the developer contribution scheme pays.</p> <p>However, it is understood there is no hydrological connectivity between housing and employment in Charnwood Borough and River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site, and that there are</p>

¹⁷ River Mease SAC Water Quality (Phosphate) Management Plan. (2011). Version 1.0. Environment Agency.

no Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) serving settlements within the Borough that discharge into the River Mease or its tributaries, or Rutland Water.

Water levels Housing growth has the potential to increase regional water abstraction rates, which can have serious negative impacts on European sites.

Over-abstraction from rivers can reduce water levels, causing flow velocity to fall. This can have wide ranging effects on river parameters, including increased temperatures and nutrient concentrations and reduced oxygen concentrations. Such impacts can be significantly detrimental to rivers' floristic characteristics and to notable species. Alteration of water levels has been identified as a threat to River Mease SAC and Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site.

Water supply within the Borough is handled by Severn Trent Water within their Strategic Grid Water Resource Zone (WRZ). However, HRA of Severn Trent Water's Final Water Resource Management Plan undertaken in 2019 screened out any LSE on any European sites from in-combination effects (including those from housing proposed in the Charnwood Local Plan adopted 2015). Since the WRMP is based on population growth projections across its supply area to 2045 (well beyond the Local Plan period) it can be concluded that no LSE will exist connecting the Charnwood Local Plan to any European sites regarding this impact pathway.

Recreational pressure (relevant to Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site) Increased development within the Borough could lead to higher numbers of visitors to nearby European sites, potentially resulting in increased recreational pressure. Different European sites are subject to different types of recreational pressures and have different vulnerabilities. Studies across a range of species have shown that the effects from recreation can be complex. HRAs of Plans tend to focus on recreational sources of disturbance as a result of new residents.

Rutland Water is recognised as a locally important destination for undertaking recreational activities including a range of watersports, fishing, cycling, birdwatching and walking, and hosts larger recreational events annually.

The principal means through which recreational use can impact on waterfowl populations (for which Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site is designated) is through disturbance, which causes birds to expend energy unnecessarily and reduce time spent feeding¹⁸. Disturbance therefore risks increasing energetic output while reducing energetic input, which can adversely affect the condition and ultimately the survival of birds. In addition, displacement of birds from one feeding site to others can increase the pressure on the resources available within the remaining sites as they have to sustain a greater number of birds¹⁹. Although the potential for disturbance may be lower in winter (when SPA/Ramsar designated bird populations use the European site) than in summer due to the reduction in recreational users, winter activity can still have disturbance impacts, especially as birds are particularly vulnerable at this time of year due to food shortages, such that disturbance which results in abandonment of suitable feeding areas can have severe consequences^{20,21,22}. Disturbing activities are on a continuum; the most disturbing activities are likely to be those that involve irregular, infrequent, unpredictable loud noise events, movement or vibration of long duration, whilst birds are less susceptible to disturbance from activities that involve regular, frequent, predictable, quiet patterns of sound or movement or minimal vibration. The further any activity is from the birds, the less likely it is to result in disturbance.

Increased recreational pressure as a result of new residential development is widely considered to be of concern where development is proposed within c.5-10km of inland European sites (supported by surveys of various European sites). Surveys indicate that approximately 75% of regular visitors to inland European sites live within 5-10km of those sites. In contrast, Charnwood Borough is located over 16km from the SPA/Ramsar site at its closest, with the core centres of population in the district being a minimum of 24km from the SPA/Ramsar site; well outside any realistic regular recreational catchment.

¹⁸ Riddington, R., Hassall, M., Lane, S. J., Turner, P. A., & Walters, R. (1996) The impact of disturbance on the behaviour and energy budgets of Brent geese. *Bird Study* 43:269-279.

¹⁹ Gill, J.A., Sutherland, W.J. & Norris, K. (1998) The consequences of human disturbance for estuarine birds. *RSPB Conservation Review* 12: 67-72.

²⁰ Underhill, M. C., Kirby, J. S., Bell, M. C. & Robinthwaite, J. (1993) Use of Waterbodies in South West London by Waterfowl. An Investigation of the Factors Affecting Distribution, Abundance and Community Structure. Report to Thames Water Utilities Ltd. and English Nature. Wetlands Advisory Service, Slimbridge.

²¹ Evans, D.M. & Warrington, S. (1997) The effects of recreational disturbance on wintering waterbirds on a mature gravel pit lake near London. *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 53: 167-182.

²² Tuite, C.H., Hanson, P.R. & Owen, M. (1984) Some ecological factors affecting winter wildfowl distribution on inland waters in England and Wales and the influence of water-based recreation. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 21: 41-62.

- 4.3 Since no realistic impact pathway exists to European sites from growth in Charnwood Borough there is no potential for 'in combination' effects. Screening of policies within the Local Plan is detailed in Table 2 below. For full wording of each policy refer to the Local Plan. Green shading in the final column indicates that the policy has been determined not to lead to a likely significant effect on any European sites due to the absence of any mechanism for an adverse effect.

Test of Likely Significant Effects Results

Table 2. Screening assessment (Test of Likely Significant Effects) of the Charnwood Local Plan

Policy	Summary of Policy	Screening outcome
DS1: Development Strategy	<p>Sets out the development strategy for Charnwood Borough for the Local Plan Period (2020-2037), stating the intention of the Council to support sustainable development within the Limits to Development and allocations defined in the Local Plan. Under the Development Strategy development will be supported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributes towards meeting the identified needs for housing, employment and town centre uses; - Minimises the need to travel by private vehicle, instead prioritising public transport, walking and cycling; - Protects the intrinsic character of the countryside; - Maintains the functions of Green Wedges and Areas of Local Separation; - Safeguards and delivers a net gain in biodiversity; - Is in accordance with Local Plan Policies (notably Policy EV6: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity, which includes provision for the avoidance of impacts on any internationally designated sites). <p>Specifies a housing requirement for the Borough of 17,776 homes over the Local Plan Period. Makes provision for the delivery of at least 19,461 new homes in this period.</p> <p>Provides for up to 81.8ha of employment land during the Local Plan Period in order to meet the economic needs of the Borough.</p> <p>States that development will be directed to locations of least environmental or amenity value, conserving and enhancing the built and natural environment in accordance with Local Plan Policies, protecting biodiversity and mitigating for/adapting to climate change</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>Housing and employment allocations are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (the only relevant European site identified as being susceptible to increased recreational pressure). This exceeds the distance within which development is considered to lead to an increase in recreational pressure on a European site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). The Development Strategy states that development will be supported where it accords with Local Plan Policies, which include policies to encourage sustainable transport (reducing the potential for air quality impacts) and avoid impacts on biodiversity; notably the avoidance of impacts on any internationally designated sites (see Policy EV6: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity). There is therefore no potential for LSE.</p>
DS2: Leicester and Leicestershire Unmet Needs	<p>States that within 7 months of the agreement by all partners of the Statement of Common Ground for Unmet Housing and Employment Need, the Council will publish a review of this local plan. Should a full or partial update be triggered by the review, the Council will commence the update (defined as being publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) within 12 months of the publication of the review. Once the update has commenced the Council will submit the Plan Update to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination within a further 36 months of the date of commencement of the update.</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>This policy does not specify any allocations or activities with the potential for effects on European sites. However, this policy does identify the potential requirement for an update to the Local Plan. Any updates to the Local Plan with the potential for LSE on European sites (e.g. additional housing/employment land) should be subject to further HRA to ascertain whether LSE can be screened out or whether Appropriate Assessment and/or mitigation is required.</p>
DS3: Local Plan Allocations	<p>The following housing sites are allocated within the Local Plan. Many of these allocation policies include provision for the avoidance of ecological impacts (see policy wording for full details).</p>	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>Housing allocations are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (the only relevant European site identified as being susceptible to increased recreational</p>

Site SHLAA Ref.	Site name	Location	Number of dwellings
-	Thorpebury Sustainable Urban Extension	Thurmaston	4,500
-	Broadnook Sustainable Urban Extension	Birstall	1,950
-	Garendon Park Sustainable Urban Extension	Loughborough	3,200
PSH069	Land South East of Syston	Leicester Urban Area	960
PSH070	Barkby Road, Syston	Leicester Urban Area	270
PSH441	Land north of Barkby Road Syston	Leicester Urban Area	195
PSH144	Land at Gynsill Lane & Anstey Lane, Glenfield	Leicester Urban Area	260
PSH460	Park View Nursery Site off Gynsill Lane, Glenfield	Leicester Urban Area	30
PSH463	Land off Cliffe Road/Henson Close, Birstall	Leicester Urban Area	35
PSH189	Land off Barkby Thorpe Lane, Thurmaston	Leicester Urban Area	105
PSH287	Queniborough Lodge	Leicester Urban Area	132
PSH124	Land at Melton Road, Syston	Leicester Urban Area	31
PSH476	Woodgate Nurseries, Barkby Lane	Leicester Urban Area	39
SH163	Rear of Manor Medical Centre, Melton Road, Thurmaston	Leicester Urban Area	20
PSH191	Works opposite 46 Brook Street, Thurmaston	Leicester Urban Area	7
PSH192	Works adjacent 46 Brook Street, Thurmaston	Leicester Urban Area	5

pressure). This exceeds the distance within which development is considered to lead to an increase in recreational pressure on a European site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). Allocations will be delivered in accordance with the Development Strategy (see above), which includes reference to positive biodiversity policies including (under Policy EV6: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity) the avoidance of impacts on any internationally designated sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.

PSH411	Land off Birstall Meadow Road/Long Meadow Way	Leicester Urban Area	15
SH141	Brook Street, Syston	Leicester Urban Area	15
PSH021	Extend Park Grange Farm, Loughborough	Loughborough	422
PSH106	Nanpantan Grange, Land south west of Loughborough	Loughborough	205
PSH255	Land south of Loughborough	Loughborough	723
PSH133	Land to r/o Snells Nook Lane, Loughborough	Loughborough	120
PSH245	Carillon Court Shopping Centre Derby Square	Loughborough	43
SH084	Part of Baxter Gate Opportunity Site, Loughborough	Loughborough	210
PSH267	Land off Beacon Road	Loughborough	30
PSH313	Park Grange Farm, Newstead Way	Loughborough	15
SH034	138-144 Knightthorpe Road, Loughborough	Loughborough	13
SH056	Former Petrol Station, Pinfold Gate, Loughborough	Loughborough	26
SH060	Former Main Post Office, Sparrow Hill, Loughborough	Loughborough	16
SH102	Southfields Road Car Park, Loughborough	Loughborough	33
PSH488	Market Street	Loughborough	72
PSH489	Southfields Council Offices, Southfield Road	Loughborough	163
SH048	Former Limehurst Depot	Loughborough	138
PSH487	Devonshire Square	Loughborough	39
PSH412	Land off Melton Road, East Goscote	Other Settlements	223
PSH260	Land to rear of Derry's Garden Centre, Cossington	Other Settlements	124

PSH042	Land at Threeways Farm, Queniborough	Other Settlements	100
PSH305	Land to the rear of 89 Loughborough Road, Hathern	Other Settlements	29
PSH413	Land off Zouch Road, Hathern	Other Settlements	50
PSH446	Land off Melton Road, Queniborough	Other Settlements	55
PSH100	Land off Gaddesby Lane, Rearsby	Other Settlements	47
PSH147	44 Hoby Road, Thrussington	Other Settlements	30
PSH376	Land off Old Gate Road, Thrussington	Other Settlements	60
PSH047	The former Rectory & Land at Thurcaston	Other Settlements	31
SH033	The Leys, Hathern	Other Settlements	6
PSH482	Fairhaven Farm, Anstey	Service Centres	47
PSH388	High Leys Farm / Manor Farm, Anstey II	Service Centres	124
PSH387	High Leys Farm / Manor Farm, Anstey I	Service Centres	110
PSH389	Land off Groby Road, Anstey	Service Centres	364
PSH391	Land to south of Melton Road, Barrow	Service Centres	130
PSH392	Land off Melton Road, Barrow	Service Centres	120
PSH461	Land off Willow Road, Barrow	Service Centres	215
PSH484	Land off Cotes Road, Barrow	Service Centres	220
PSH439	Land off Barnards Drive, Sileby	Service Centres	228
PSH053	Land south of Rothley	Service Centres	40
PSH477	Rothley Meadow development	Service Centres	39
PSH242	Land adjoining 84 Melton Road, Barrow	Service Centres	18
PSH353	Rear of the The Maltings site High Street, Sileby	Service Centres	13
SH129	36 Charles Street, Sileby	Service Centres	11
SH132	7 King Street, Sileby	Service Centres	14
PSH492	971 Loughborough Road, Rothley	Service Centres	9
PSH064	Land off Kendal Road, Sileby (South of Butler Way and Gray Lane)	Service Centres	24

PSH261	Land of Holmeffield Road, Sileby	Service Centres	55
PSH343	East of Loughborough Road, Quorn	Service Centres	75
PSH291	Land at Tickow Lane (Phase 2), Shepshed LE12 9LY	Shepshed	394
PSH293	Land North of Hallamford Road and West of Shepshed	Shepshed	250
PSH404	Land west of Tickow Lane	Shepshed	300
PSH405	Land to the west of the B591/Ingleberry Rd & north of Iveshead Lane	Shepshed	174
PSH062	Land at Tickow Lane, Shepshed	Shepshed	190
PSH174	Land at Oakley Road, Shepshed	Shepshed	133
PSH024	Land off Fairway Road	Shepshed	100 & 5ha Employment
PSH138	Land fronting Ashby Road & Ingleberry Road, Shepshed	Shepshed	151
PSH483	Land south of Ashby Road Central	Shepshed	49
PSH149	20 Moscow Lane, Shepshed	Shepshed	49
PSH322	Land rear of 62 Iveshead Road	Shepshed	68
PSH352	21 Garendon Road, LE12 9NU	Shepshed	7
SH121	32 Charnwood Road, Shepshed	Shepshed	15
Total			9019

DS4: Employment Sites The following employment sites are allocated within the Local Plan. These will be required to adhere to other Local Plan policies for the avoidance of ecological impacts (see policy wording for full details).

Site Ref.	Site description	Location	Area (ha)
LUSEP	Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park	Loughborough	73
ES1	Employment land off Sileby Road - Neighbourhood Plan allocation	Barrow upon Soar	2.3
ES2	Employment land at the North of Birstall Sustainable Urban Extension	Birstall	15

No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.

Employment allocations are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. Allocations will be delivered in accordance with the Development Strategy (see above), which includes reference to positive biodiversity policies including (under Policy EV6: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity) the avoidance of impacts on any internationally designated sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE

ES3	Employment land at The Warren, for industrial uses and small warehouses	East Goscote	3.95
ES4	Employment land at the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension	Loughborough	16
ES5	Employment land at Dishley Grange	Loughborough	9
ES6	Employment land at Rothley Lodge, for industrial uses and small warehouses	Rothley	3.35
ES7	Employment land at Loughborough Road, for industrial uses and small warehouses	Rothley	2.2
ES8	Employment land off Fairway Road	Shepshed (allocation)	5
ES9	Employment land at Watermead Business Park	System	12
ES10	Employment land at the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension	Thurmaston	13

DS5: High Quality Design Requires developments to make a positive contribution to the Borough through a high quality design, with independent design reviews to be undertaken for certain developments. Refers to the need to respect and enhance local landscape character and reduce climate change impacts.

No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.
This is a design management policy which acknowledges the need to respect and enhance landscape character and reduce climate change impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.

LUA1: Leicester Urban Area Supports development in the Leicester Urban Area that meets other Local Plan policies, See Policy LUA2 below for details of development to the North-east of Leicester.

No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.
The Leicester Urban Area is approximately 18km from the nearest European site (River Mease SAC). This policy refers to the need to adhere to other Local Plan policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the provision of greenspace and the reduction of air quality impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.

LUA2: Thorpebury Sustainable Urban Extension Allocates land north-east of Leicester as a sustainable urban extension to deliver approximately 3,205 homes by 2037. This housing will seek to deliver 30% affordable homes, extra care housing and pitches/plots for gypsies/travellers. This urban extension will also provide up to 13ha of employment land, three primary schools and one secondary school, an accessible main Local Centre and opportunities for smaller centres, and travel improvements (including new and improved walking and cycling routes related to the green infrastructure network). This policy includes provision for the protection and enhancement of existing wildlife corridors, regulation of carbon emissions, sustainable drainage, the protection and enhancement of water quality, and the creation/enhancement of green spaces. This will be delivered through a development framework, with a green infrastructure strategy to inform the development of detailed proposals/management and a sustainability assessment to identify responses to carbon emissions reduction and climate change resilience.

No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.
This development is to be located approximately 24km from the nearest European site (Rutland Water SPA/Ramsar). There is therefore no potential for recreational impacts on Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). This development also refers to policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the provision of greenspace and the reduction of air quality impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.

LUA3: Broadnook Sustainable Urban Extension	Allocates land north of Birstall as a sustainable urban extension to deliver a garden suburb of approximately 1,950 homes by 2036. This housing will seek to deliver 30% affordable homes, extra housing and pitches/plots for gypsies/travellers. This urban extension will also provide up to 15ha of employment land, a primary school, an accessible Local Centre, and travel improvements (including new and improved walking and cycling routes related to the green infrastructure network). This policy includes provision for the protection and enhancement of existing wildlife corridors, regulation of carbon emissions, sustainable drainage, the protection and enhancement of water quality, and the creation/enhancement of green spaces. This will be delivered through a development framework, with a green infrastructure strategy to inform the development of detailed proposals/management and a sustainability assessment to identify responses to carbon emissions reduction and climate change resilience.	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>Birstall is located approximately 22km from the nearest European site (River Mease SAC). There is therefore no potential for recreational impacts on Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). This development policy refers to policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the provision of greenspace and the reduction of air quality impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.</p>
LUC1: Loughborough Urban Centre	Supports development in Loughborough Urban Centre in line with other development policies, improving connectivity/accessibility and protecting and enhancement the Charnwood Forest, River Soar and strategically important wildlife corridors. Includes provision for retail space at Baxter Gate/Pinfold Gate, taking into account air quality impacts and encouraging sustainable modes of transport.	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>Loughborough is located approximately 15.3km from the nearest European site (River Mease SAC). There is therefore no potential for recreational impacts on Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). This policy refers to policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity (particularly through the safeguarding of strategically important wildlife corridors), the provision of greenspace and the reduction of air quality impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.</p>
LUC2: Garendon Park Sustainable Urban Extension	Allocates land west of Loughborough as a sustainable urban extension to deliver approximately 3,200 homes by 2037. This housing will seek to deliver 30% affordable homes, extra care housing and pitches/plots for gypsies/travellers. This urban extension will also provide up to 16ha of employment land, two primary schools, an accessible main Local Centre and travel improvements (including new and improved walking and cycling routes related to the green infrastructure network). This policy includes provision for the protection and enhancement of existing wildlife corridors, regulation of carbon emissions, sustainable drainage, the protection and enhancement of water quality, and the creation/enhancement of green spaces. This will be delivered through a development framework, with a green infrastructure strategy to inform the development of detailed proposals/management and a sustainability assessment to identify responses to carbon emissions reduction and climate change resilience.	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>Loughborough is located approximately 15.3km from the nearest European site (River Mease SAC). There is therefore no potential for recreational impacts on Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts. This development also refers to policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the provision of greenspace and the reduction of air quality impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.</p>
LUC3: Loughborough University Science & Enterprise Park	Allocates 73ha to the west of Loughborough University for an extension to the Science and Enterprise Park. This development will integrate with the sensitive landscape and its existing biodiversity.	<p>No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.</p> <p>Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park is approximately 15.1km east of the nearest European site (River Mease SAC). This development includes reference to landscape design and existing</p>

		biodiversity. Considering the nature of the development and the distance to any European sites there is no potential for LSE.
SUA1: Policy	Shepshed Encouraging the regeneration of Shepshed, supporting development that accords with the pattern of development outlined in the Local Plan, ensures the delivery of infrastructure to support sustainable communities, improves connectivity to employment centres and transport links, integrates with the wider landscape and mitigates for adverse effects on important wildlife corridors (notably the Black Brook). Supports proposals for housing development at five allocated sites west of Shepshed (in close proximity to the Black Brook, its tributaries and White Horse Wood), which will be accompanied by a jointly produced biodiversity strategy to mitigate for potential effects on biodiversity interests. States that developments will be accompanied by an air quality impact assessment.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. Development at Shepshed is to be located approximately 11.5km east of River Mease SAC. There is therefore no potential for recreational impacts on Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). This development also refers to policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, the provision of greenspace and the reduction of air quality impacts. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
SC1: Centres	Service Supports service centres in meeting their residents' needs, seeking to improve sustainability whilst maintaining their separate characters/identities, in line with other development management policies (including the protection and enhancement of Charnwood Forest, River Soar and wildlife corridors).	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. Service Centres are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. Includes reference to policies to encourage sustainable transport (reducing the potential for air quality impacts) and avoid impacts on biodiversity. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
OS1: Settlements, Villages and Hamlets	Other Supports other settlements, smaller villages and hamlets in meeting their local social and economic needs by supporting development in line with other development management policies.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. These settlements are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. There is therefore no potential for recreational impacts on Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site (see Table 1). Given the lack of hydrological connectivity to River Mease SAC or Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site there is no potential for water quality or water level impacts (see Table 1). Includes reference to policies to encourage sustainable transport (reducing the potential for air quality impacts) and avoid impacts on biodiversity. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
C1: Countryside	Commits to managing development in countryside areas to protect its intrinsic character and beauty by supporting rural economic developments that have a strong relationship with the operational requirements of established rural industries, adaptation of rural buildings (where there would not be significant adverse environmental effects) and supporting community services and facilities that meet local needs.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy includes provision to avoid environmental effects. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H1: Housing Mix	Requires the delivery of a mix of house types, tenures and sizes that reflect the overall needs of the Borough; notably provision for older and disabled people.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.

H2: Housing for Older and Disabled People	Aims to meet the needs of the ageing and disabled populations by providing homes suitable for wheelchair users (e.g. single-level properties) and special accommodation as required.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H3: Internal Space Standards	Expects all new residential dwellings to adhere to national space standards, with any deviation from these standards addressed and explaining in the Design and Access Statement.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H4: Affordable Housing	Seeks 30% affordable housing from all major housing developments (with the exception of brownfield sites, where 10% affordable housing will be sought). The Local Plan states the delivery of sufficient affordable housing will not require housing in addition to that within the identified Local Housing Need figure.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H5: Rural Exception Sites	Supports the provision of small-scale developments in rural areas where the housing meets an identified local need for affordable housing, and where development is adjacent/related to a rural settlement and respects the character and landscape setting of this settlement.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. These sites are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. Includes reference to policies to encourage sustainability and respect the landscape setting. There is no potential for LSE.
H6: Self-build and Custom Housebuilding	Supports proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding in locations considered suitable for housing (in accordance with LP policy).	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H7: Houses in Multiple Occupation	Supports the well-being, character and amenity of communities by managing the proportion of houses in multiple occupation, preventing new/expanded houses in multiple occupation where appropriate.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H8: Campus and Purpose Built Student Accommodation	Supports the provision of additional student housing within the campuses of Loughborough University and Loughborough College, and the provision of additional off-campus purpose built accommodation if it is well related to the existing campuses of Loughborough Town Centre, has good transport links (minimising additional vehicle traffic) and avoids damage to the social and physical character of the locality.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
H9: Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Supports sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople that meet an identified need where they are designed to create a healthy and safe environment, appropriate in scale, well related to local infrastructure and services, avoid unacceptable impacts on the locality's character/appearance/amenity, and ensure safe vehicle movement.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. These sites are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. Includes reference to policies to encourage sustainable transport. There is no potential for LSE.
E1: Meeting Employment Needs	Aims to meet the economic needs of Leicester and communities within the Borough by supporting appropriate employment opportunities, to be delivered in line with other Local Plan policies.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. Employment sites are at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. Policy includes reference to Local Plan policies to encourage sustainable transport (reducing the potential for air quality impacts) and avoid impacts on biodiversity; notably the avoidance of impacts on any internationally designated sites. There is no potential for LSE.

E2: Existing Employment Sites	Protecting Protects existing good quality employment sites for employment uses where possible.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy does not raise any specific pathways in relation to any European sites. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
E3: Rural Development	Economic Aims to maximise the potential of the Borough's rural economy by 2037 by supporting sustainable development opportunities including tourism and leisure facilities. States this development should not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a strategic policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. Policy states this development should be of a sustainable nature. No impact pathways exist to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
T1: Town and Retail Centres	Defines the town/retail centre hierarchy for the Borough and sets out the intention of the Council to support development for retail, leisure, office, professional services and other uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of town/retail centres.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a strategic policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. Therefore, no impact pathways exist to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
T2: Community Facilities	Protection of States the intention to protect and (where possible) enhance community facilities.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a strategic policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. Therefore, no impact pathways exist to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
T3: Car Parking Standards	Seeks to ensure there is adequate provision of residential and non-residential parking in the Borough.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a strategic policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. The Local Plan includes policies to reduce personal vehicle use, which would be positive regarding air quality. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
CC1: Flood Management	Risk States the intention to manage flood risk by directing development to areas of lowest flooding risk and informing developments in higher risk areas by undertaking a flood risk assessment. Refers to encouraging developments which support the creation of new habitats including woodland and wetland.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a strategic policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. This policy encourages habitat creation which would benefit biodiversity within the Borough. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
CC2: Drainage (SuDS)	Sustainable Aims to ensure development includes appropriate measures to manage flood risk in an integrated way that achieves wider benefits for communities and the environment. Refers to the need for Sustainable Drainage Systems to provide multifunctional benefits including wildlife benefits.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a strategic policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. This policy encourages the creation of features which would benefit biodiversity within the Borough. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
CC3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Installations	States that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy installations will be supported where any adverse impacts (including biodiversity impacts) have been fully addressed.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy would contribute to an overall improvement in air quality. The policy states that renewable and low carbon energy developments would be required to fully address biodiversity impacts. Any such developments within the Borough would be at least 9.6km from River Mease SAC and

		at least 16.3km from Rutland Water SPA and Ramsar site. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
CC4: Sustainable Construction	Requires all new developments and refurbishments to take account of sustainable development principles, with the overall objective of achieving a carbon neutral borough in order to mitigate against the effects of climate change.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive policy in relation to air quality, which would reduce development impacts on European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
CC5: Sustainable Transport	Supports sustainable patterns of development which will minimise the need to travel and support a shift towards more sustainable methods of transport (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport).	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive policy in relation to air quality, which would reduce development impacts on European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
CC6: Electric Vehicle Charging Points	Seeks to significantly increase the number of electric vehicle charging points in the Borough, supporting development that provides electric vehicle charge points,	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive policy in relation to air quality, which would reduce development impacts on European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV1: Landscape	Commits to careful management of development to protect the Borough's distinctive landscape.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a landscape management policy, with no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV2: Green Wedges	Seeks to protect the function of Green Wedges which are to guide development form and ensure that urban growth is accompanied by open areas for people and wildlife.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy promotes the protection of green wedges to ensure urban growth is accompanied by open areas for people and wildlife. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV3: Areas of Local Separation	Aims to protect the predominantly open and undeveloped character of Areas of Local Separation.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy promotes the protection of open and undeveloped areas. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV4: Charnwood Forest and the National Forest	Seeks to protect and enhance the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and support the aims of the National Forest Strategy, supporting development that protects and enhances the biodiversity of Charnwood Forest, provides tree planting and improved the network of public rights of way.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive policy for protecting and enhancing biodiversity within Charnwood Forest Regional Park There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV5: River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor	Aims to protect and enhance the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor, supporting development that protects and enhances their biodiversity value and function as a wildlife corridor and seeking opportunities to for wildlife/biodiversity enhancements.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive biodiversity policy, promoting the protection and enhancement of wildlife features of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Corridor. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV6: Conserving and Enhancing	Commits to conserve and enhance the Borough's natural environment, ensuring that biodiversity, ecological networks and geodiversity interests are protected and enhanced; includes the protection and enhancement of national and local priority habitats and species, the maintenance of biodiversity during construction, the protection	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive biodiversity policy in relation to the protection and enhancement of habitats, species and ecological connectivity, citing the

Biodiversity and Geodiversity	and enhancement of biodiversity networks including strategic ecology corridors. States that development proposals which harm internationally, nationally or locally designated biodiversity sites and/or priority habitats and species will not be supported unless there are exceptional circumstances, with mitigation or (as a last resort) compensation measures required to provide a net gain in biodiversity value above the habitat lost.	importance of avoiding impacts internationally designated sites. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV7: Tree Planting	Seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment by increasing the number of trees in the Borough, supporting development that retains existing trees and provides new tree planting (including the replacement of any removed non-woodland tree with at least three new trees).	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive biodiversity policy in relation to the retention and planting of trees. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV8: Heritage	Aims to conserve and enhance the Borough's historic environment including heritage assets of cultural, environmental and economic value.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy relates to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV9: Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation	Seeks to meet the open space, sport and recreation needs of communities within the Borough to support community health, wellbeing and cohesion, providing appropriate landscape design solutions.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy relates to provision of open space and facilities for sports and recreation. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV10: Indoor Sports Facilities	Promotes developments providing financial contributions to the provision of indoor sports facilities.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This policy relates to provision of sports facilities. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV11: Air Quality	Aims to improve air quality in the Borough by supporting developments that do not lead to the deterioration of local air quality or impede the achievement of air quality objectives.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a positive policy in relation to air quality, which would reduce development impacts on European sites. There is no potential for LSE.
EV12: Burial Space	Allocates 9.1ha of land at Nanpantan for burial space. States this should minimise the impact of development on the landscape by making use of additional planting using native species.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This development is to be located approximately 14.7km from the nearest European site (River Mease SAC). Considering the type of development and the distance to European sites there are no potential impact pathways. There is therefore no potential for LSE.
INF1: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions	Outlines the intention to work with infrastructure providers, developers and partner organisations to ensure the delivery of new and improved infrastructure necessary to support the Local Plan development strategy.	No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out. This is a development management policy and does not specifically allocate sites for development. Infrastructure would need to be delivered in accordance with other Local Plan policies which include policies to avoid impacts on biodiversity; notably the avoidance of impacts on any internationally designated sites. There are no impact pathways to European sites. There is no potential for LSE.

INF2: Local and Strategic Road Network

Aims to mitigate the transport impacts of the Local Plan development strategy and improve the efficiency of the local and strategic road network. Supports sustainable transport choices (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport).

No Likely Significant Effect. Screened out.

This policy promotes sustainable transport which would reduce the potential for air quality impacts. Considering this, and the distance between Local Plan development and the nearest European sites, there are no impact pathways. There is no potential for LSE.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 All potential impact pathways could be screened out during the test of likely significant effects. As such, HRA Screening indicates there is no potential for likely significant effects on any European sites as a result of Local Plan developments or policies, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. As such, no Appropriate Assessment was required. There is no need for the Local Plan to include further policy and/or mitigation requirements to avoid impacts on the integrity of any European sites.

Appendix A Map of European sites

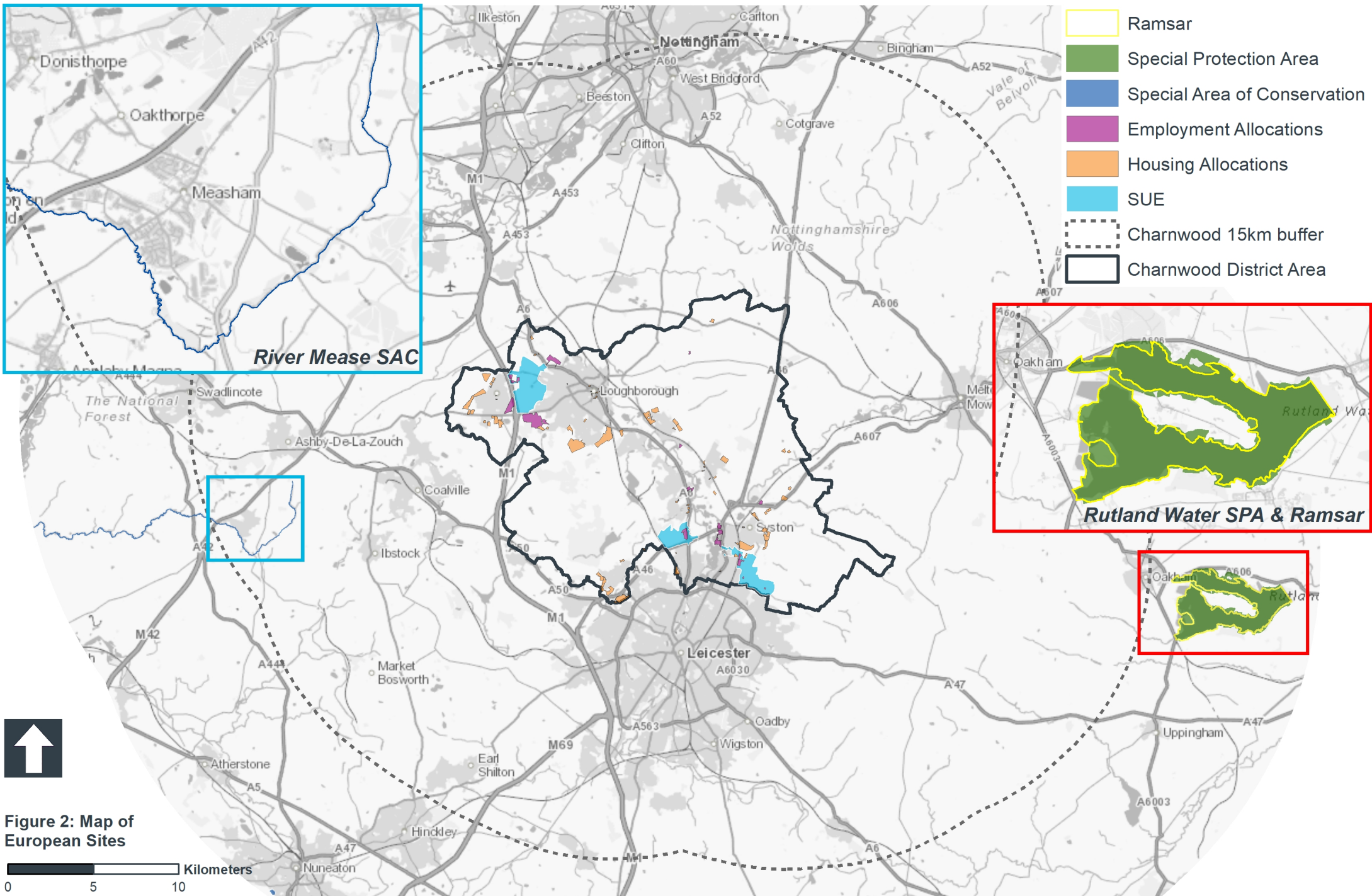


Figure 2: Map of European Sites

Service Layer Credits: Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2020 © Natural England material is reproduced with the permission of Natural England 2020. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

