



Local Plan Review

Habitat Regulations Assessment

June 2018

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

1.1.1 This document satisfies the requirement for Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of Local Plans in accordance with Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992 (interpreted into British law by the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010).

1.1.2 The purpose of HRA (in this context) is to identify any aspects of an emerging Local Plan that would have the potential to cause a 'likely significant effect' on Natura 2000 or 'European sites'. The assessment must consider likely effects in isolation and in combination with other plans and projects, and identify appropriate avoidance and mitigation strategies where likely significant effects are identified.

1.1.3 This report comprises the Screening Assessment and has been prepared in consultation with Natural England; it covers the requirements of Stage 1 of the HRA process, following procedures set out in current European and national guidance¹.

1.2 The Local Plan Review

1.2.1 Newham's Local Plan currently comprises the 2012 Core Strategy, 2016 Detailed Sites and Policies DPD, and 2012 Joint Waste Plan. The review that is the subject of this HRA seeks to combine the Core Strategy and DSPDPD, making updates to policies and associated site allocations or designations where necessary (note the Joint Waste Plan is subject to a separate timeline of review). In this context, 'necessary' may variously mean: to update the plan in light of regional or national policy changes, in light of sites having been developed, in light of new opportunities and pressures, or in relation to the overall aims and strategy of Local Authority. For further explanation of the review and its purpose please refer to main documents.

1.2.2 The Local Plan is a 15 year spatial plan containing policies to guide the location, type, scale and design of new development; the plan period for the revised document will be ~2018 to 2033 (the existing Core Strategy covers 2012 to 2027). Much of the plan (it's structure, breakdown of policies, focus on issues, and nature of sites allocations or designations) remains the same as the Core Strategy and DSPDPD with minor edits to overall vision, spatial policies, and associated thematic / development management policies.

Headline changes, as per published reports to Council, include:

- The allocation of 10 new mixed-use strategic sites to promote sustainable growth and the delivery of 'convergence';
- amendments to housing policies to, inter alia, update the overall housing

¹ European Commission, 2001; DEFRA, 2012; Tyldseley & Chapman, 2013

target for the borough (to 43,000 homes between 2018 and 2033), and to ensure a continued supply of good quality housing of various types, sizes and tenures to meet identified needs, attempting to maximise the benefits of development for residents by acknowledging the change in market conditions, and recognising emerging housing products (particularly in the purpose-built Private Rented Sector market);

- continued promotion of economic growth through the identification of a limited amount of employment land for release, whilst maintaining an adequate reservoir of sites and land to support jobs and business growth;
- consideration of new growth sectors (including cultural and night-time economy) and clearer definition of the scale of ambition in terms of access to employment that developers are expected to support;
- recognition of significant healthcare and education needs via the allocation of a number of community facilities sites; and
- review of any existing allocations (both large scale and non-strategic) to recognise changes in context.

1.2.3 This HRA screening assessment is based on the Proposed Submission Draft plan published November 2017. This report has been prepared in light of Natural England advice received during 'Regulation 19' consultation in January 2018, as such it replaces any handling of the HRA within the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) at Scoping Assessment stage, 'Issues and Options' (Reg 18) and 'Proposed Submission' (Reg. 19). Natural England advice changed in the latter stages of plan production given new internal guidance produced by them in December 2017 in recognition of the Wealden judgement and its implications for the handling of 'in combination' effects on Natura2000 sites.

1.2.4 The London Borough of Newham covers an area of 39km², and has an estimated population of 347'183 in 2018². Summary growth figures within the proposed plan include 49 thousand additional residents³, 43 thousand new homes⁴, and 60 thousand new jobs⁵. The Local Plan acknowledges that this growth has implications for infrastructure and the environment, with thematic policies addressing needs and mitigation where relevant.

1.2.5 As per the adopted plan, the proposed plan retains a focus on growth within the 'Arc of Opportunity', a spatial area that recognises the industrial history of the southern and western edges of the borough with huge potential for new housing to meet strategic needs for London. The northern parts of the borough, covered by 'Urban Newham' policy S6, are already densely developed with more limited scope for growth, though intensification around transport hubs is promoted.

1.2.6 Further to the NPPF, the London Plan sets out development priorities and the strategic planning framework for London. It sets Borough housing targets and

² Based on mid-2015 GLA projections as recommended

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Policy H1

⁵ 2017 LBN Employment Land Review + GLA projections

identifies locations of strategic importance for London's growth. For Newham, the current target⁶ of the 2016 London Plan is 19,945 homes between 2015 and 2025, 1,994 units per year when expressed as an annual target. The revised Local Plan proposes a new target of 43,000 homes over a 15 year period from 2018 to 2023. This represents an increase in potential annual growth compared to the adopted target of approximately 873 homes. It is also worth noting that the Draft London Plan published December 2017, includes a higher target than the Proposed Submission Local Plan, 38,500 homes over the ten years between 2019 and 2029, or a further 983 homes annually compared to the draft Local Plan.

1.2.7 Whilst no targets can provide a fixed representation of actual delivery, they do establish a baseline for growth predictions during the plan periods, demonstrating that the scale of housing delivery, together with employment growth (60,000 new jobs) is likely to be significant. As is the case with the current plan review, new housing and any increase in housing need, (including finalised strategic pan-London apportionments) will continue to be planned for through Local Plan reviews, that evaluate the potential for (and impacts of) future growth.

1.3 Regulatory basis of HRA

European Directives

1.3.1 Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna) states:

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.'

1.3.2 Article 6 (4) states: 'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.'

National Regulations

1.3.3 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (hereafter referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations') implement the provisions of the Habitats Directive in UK law. Mirroring the EU Directive, Regulation 61(1) of the Habitats Regulations states:

⁶ Targets contained within this paragraph exclude the LLDC area of Newham, which as a separate plan-making authority has its own housing target within the London Plan.

‘A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which-

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.’

The ‘competent authority’ in this case is the London Borough of Newham, as local planning authority.

Case Law

1.3.4 Two recent court decisions have informed the handling of HRA requirements in the UK, both of which are recognised in this report. The Wealden judgement (March 2017) confirms that, when assessing the capacity for development to contribute to air pollution impacts on Natura2000 sites, this should include assessment of other plans and projects in combination. The CJEU’s People Over Wind /Sweetman 2 judgment (April 2018) clarified that measures that are intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European Site should not be considered at screening stage. The effect of this decision is considered to be that, if specific measures are included within the plan which are intended to avoid or reduce likely significant impact, reliance should not be placed on these measures at screening stage to reach or to support a conclusion that no likely significant effects would arise, but that in such circumstances the HRA should proceed to appropriate assessment stage.

1.4 Stages of HRA

1.4.1 As set out in guidance by the European Commission (2001), HRA requires a stage-by-stage approach; these can most simply be categorised as:

Stage 1: Determination of likely significant effect;

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment to determine effect on site integrity;

Stage 3: Consideration of alternatives; and

Stage 4: Consideration of imperative reasons of over-riding public interest, and compensation measures.

1.4.2 This document covers Stage 1, in order to determine whether the revised Local Plan will have any previously untested likely significant effects on European sites, and whether an Appropriate Assessment is necessary.

1.4.3 As with other elements of the IIA process, HRA is ordinarily the subject of consultation throughout the plan production process. While this HRA has been prepared in light of Natural England representations made during the last stage of public consultation (reg.19) and as such has *not* been the subject of wider consultation, the Council notes that no other comments on the handling of HRA were received from other parties throughout previous consultations. Natural England are the statutory consultee for HRA matters in the UK and have had the opportunity to see and comment on this report.

2 The European Sites

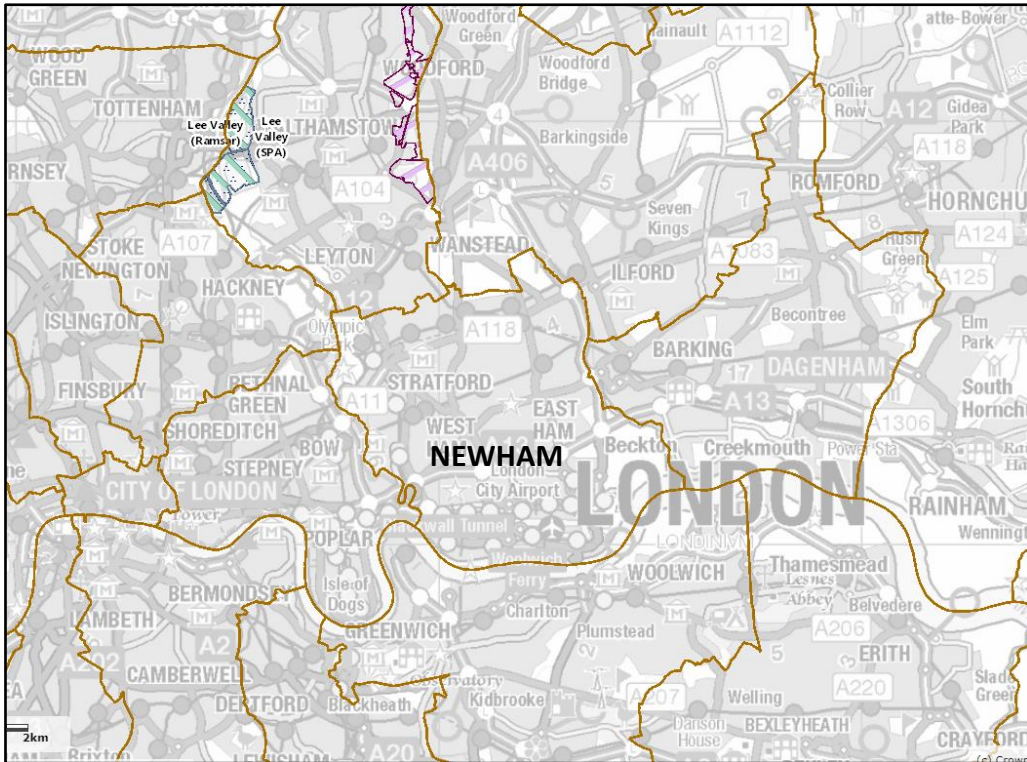
2.1 Sites of relevance

2.1.1 The European sites to which HRA applies include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Ramsar sites, including any marine components of SAC or SPA. Collectively these form the 'Natura 2000' network of European conservation sites.

2.1.2 The Magic Map web resource⁷ to which guidance points identifies two European sites within 15km of the Borough boundary, Epping Forest SAC and Lee Valley SPA/Ramsar site as shown below. While the River Thames is a proposed Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) it is not a designated SAC or SPA and thus not subject to HRA.

Map 1: Newham in relation to Natura 2000 Sites

⁷ <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/magicmap.aspx>



2.2 Lee Valley SPA / Ramsar

2.2.1 Regarding relevant zones of influence, a 400m buffer is frequently used to define a zone within which housing developments would have a likely significant effect on conservation assets (e.g. the ‘exclusion zone’ defined by Guildford Borough Council for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in 2015). Such 400m zones are based on the increased likelihood of domestic cat predation and increased levels of human access.

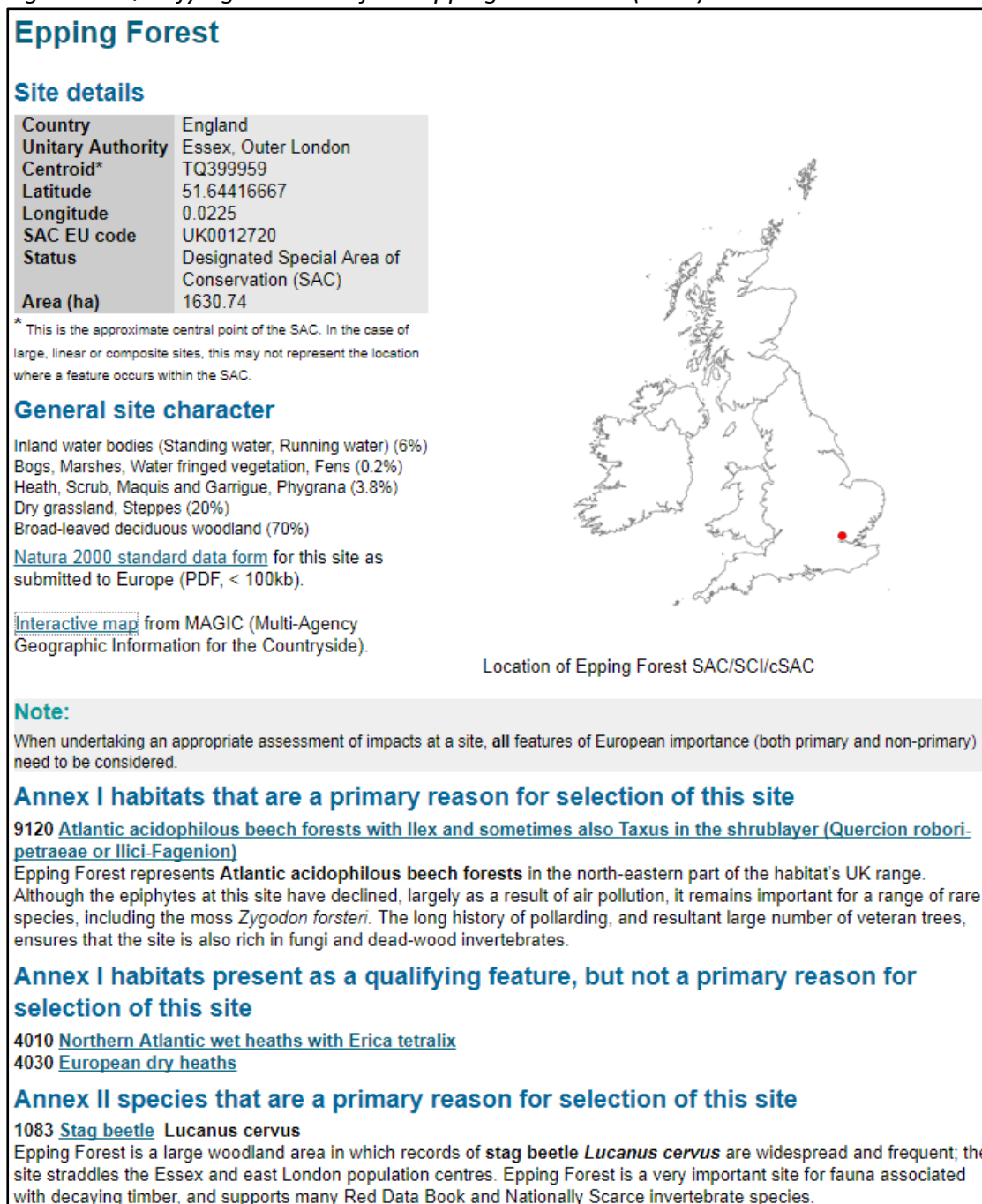
2.2.2 At its nearest point, Newham’s plan area (noting that the LLDC area no longer falls under the Newham Local Plan) is ~4.3km from the designated SPA. As no issue with the consideration of the Lee Valley SPA / Ramsar site has been raised by Natural England, and as any impacts would likely be less than those associated with the Epping Forest SAC (as the SPA lies ~ twice as far away), it is screened out of the remainder of this assessment.

2.3 Epping Forest SAC

2.3.1 Qualifying features of the Epping Forest SAC are summarised by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) as follows⁸. Note there are no maps available that show distribution of qualifying features at site level.

⁸ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0012720>

Figure 1: Qualifying Features of the Epping Forest SAC (JNCC)



2.3.2 Further information is available from the SAC Citation⁹ hosted by Natural England¹⁰:

Site description:

Epping Forest is a large ancient wood-pasture with habitats of high nature conservation value including ancient semi-natural woodland, old grassland plains, wet and dry heathland and scattered wetland. The semi-natural woodland is particularly extensive but the Forest plains are also a major feature and contain a variety of unimproved acid grasslands.

The semi-natural woodlands of Epping Forest include important beech *Fagus sylvatica* forests on acid soils, which are important for a range of rare epiphytic species, including the moss *Zygodon forsteri*. The long history of pollarding, and resultant large number of veteran trees, ensures that the site is also rich in fungi and invertebrates associated with decaying timber. Records of stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* are widespread and frequent.

Areas of acidic grassland transitional with heathland are generally dominated by a mixture of fine-leaved grasses. In marshier areas, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* frequently becomes dominant. Broad-leaved herbs typical of acidic grassland and heathland are frequent, including heather *Calluna vulgaris*. The site also contains an example of wet dwarf-shrub heath with both heather and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*.

2.3.3 Natural England in partnership with Natura 2000 also sets out the following Conservation Objectives¹¹:

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.**

⁹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5153389482606592>

¹⁰ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5908284745711616>

¹¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4926121657237504>

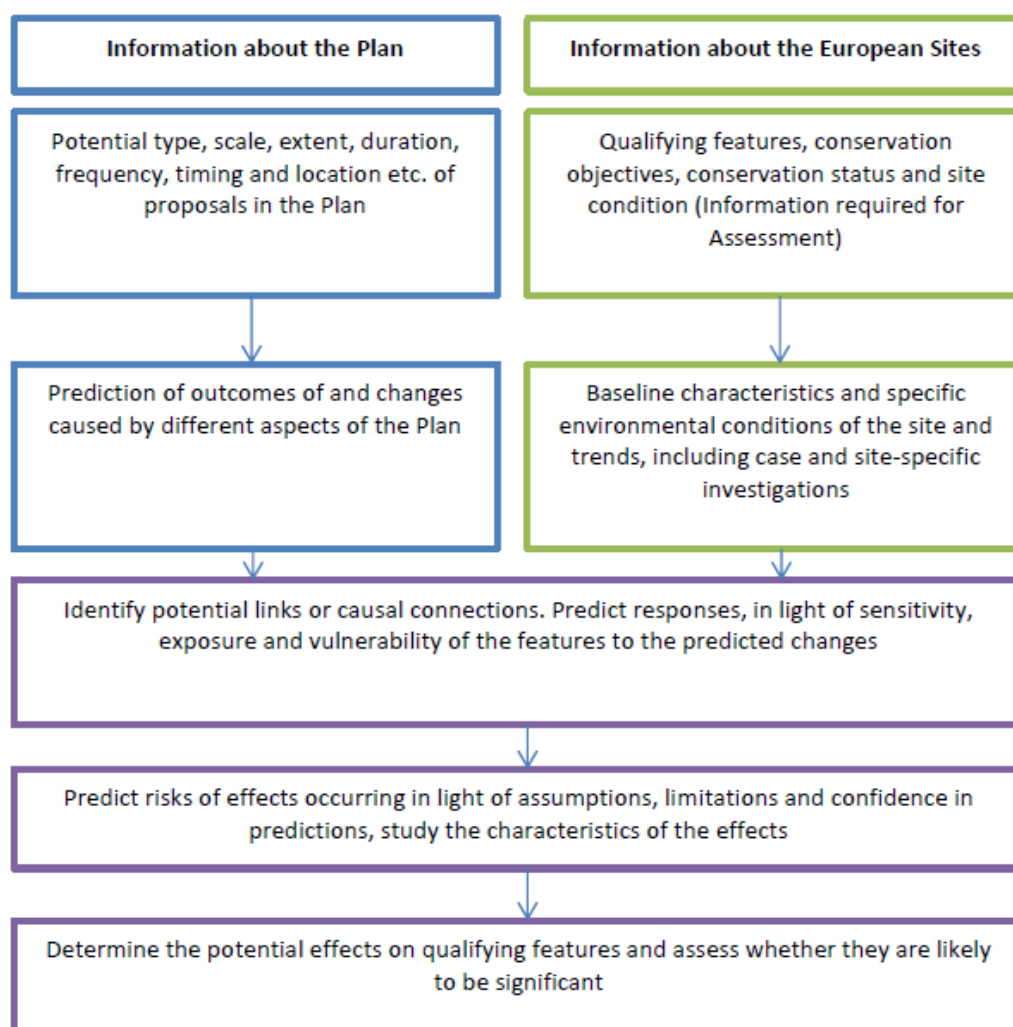
3 Scope and methodology

3.1 Approach to assessment

3.1.1 The approach to assessment follows guidance in Tyldesley & Chapman (2013) on carrying out Stage 1 screening assessments of plans. It essentially requires the combination of two strands of information:

- information about the plan and its likely outcomes, and
- information about the qualifying features of relevant European sites, their conservation objectives, site condition and identified vulnerabilities.

3.1.2 This process can be illustrated by the following flowchart:



3.1.3 In order to focus on those areas of the revised Local Plan which may have an effect on the qualifying features, the assessment first considers information about the European site, and in particular the sensitivity of qualifying features to pressures or threats which may affect the maintenance or attainment of favourable

conservation status. It then considers how these vulnerabilities may be affected by the Plan’s remit, and then screens policies accordingly, considering how these might be linked to effects or how they otherwise interact with or mitigate them.

4 Likelihood of Significant Effects

4.1 Sensitivity of qualifying features in relation to plan remit

4.1.1 As per requirements under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive, Information regarding the ongoing status of UK Natura 2000 sites is reported by the JNCC on a 6-yearly basis. The most recent of these was the 3rd iteration issued in 2013¹². Conservation status of qualifying features within the Epping Forest SAC was reported as follows, in regard to habitats and species:

Table 1: Conservation Status of Qualifying Features

Habitat	Area	Structures and functions	Future prospects	Overall assessment
H9120: Beech forests on acid soils	Inadequate, stable	Bad, stable	Bad, stable	Bad, stable
H4010: Wet heaths	Favourable	Bad, declining	Bad, improving	Bad, stable
H4030: Dry heaths	Favourable	Bad, declining	Bad, improving	Bad, stable

Species	Population size and trend	Habitat for the species	Future prospects	Overall assessment
S1083: stag beetle	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable

¹² <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/article17>

Site condition

4.1.2 Common Standards Monitoring (CSM) was developed by the JNCC as a means of assessing the ongoing condition of protected sites in a standardised way¹³. Seven categories for the condition of interest features were established; these are used in Natural England's SSSI unit condition reporting, available online¹⁴.

4.1.3 While a number of latest reporting lines date from 2010, several have been updated as recently as 2017. The commentary and 'adverse condition reasons' presented alongside 'unfavourable' unit assessments make clear that air pollution, and the associated effects of nitrogen and acid deposits, are the primary cause of adverse conditions. In addition, some issues of public access and disturbance are noted.

4.1.4 Natural England produces Site Improvement Plans (SIP) for each Natura 2000 site to provide an overview of the current and predicted issues affecting the qualifying features and outline priority measures required to improve their condition. The plan summary of the latest SIP for Epping Forest¹⁵ (version 1.1 dated December 2016) is reproduced below:

Table 2: Epping Forest SAC: Site Improvement Plan

Plan Summary				
<i>This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.</i>				
Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths, H9120 Beech forests on acid soils	Establish a Site Nitrogen Action Plan	Natural England
2 Undergrazing	Pressure	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths	Partnership agreement to ensure sufficient resources for appropriate grazing	Natural England, Conservators of Epping Forest
3 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths, H9120 Beech forests on acid soils	Identify key areas and agree a plan to maintain SAC features	Natural England, Conservators of Epping Forest
4 Changes in species distributions	Threat	H9120 Beech forests on acid soils	Investigate tree health and recruitment in key areas to establish a baseline for monitoring. Agree actions and implement a management plan	Natural England, University(ies), Conservators of Epping Forest
5 Inappropriate water levels	Threat	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Hydrological monitoring, and a possible water level management plan	Environment Agency, Natural England, City of London (Epping Forest)
6 Water Pollution	Threat	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Investigate water quality run-off from roads, agree actions and implement a management plan	Essex County Council, Natural England, Conservators of Epping Forest
7 Invasive species	Threat	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath	Investigate impact, agree actions and implement a management plan	Natural England, University(ies), The Heather Trust, Conservators of Epping Forest
8 Disease	Threat	H9120 Beech forests on acid soils	Investigate impact, agree actions and implement a management plan	Forestry Commission, Natural England, University(ies), Conservators of Epping Forest
9 Invasive species	Pressure/Threat	H9120 Beech forests on acid soils	Investigate impact and review the current monitoring programme, agree actions and implement a management plan	Forestry Commission, Natural England, University(ies), Conservators of Epping Forest

¹³ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2217>

¹⁴ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportUnitCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1001814&ReportTitle=EPPING%20FOREST>

¹⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6663446854631424>

4.1.5 Given its remit and the distance of the plan area to the designated site (>2kms), Newham's Local Plan is not considered likely to have any effects (alone or in combination with other plans) in relation to the issues of undergrazing (2), changes in species distribution (4), inappropriate water levels (5), disease (8), or invasive species (7&9).

4.1.6 However, given the potential for regional growth to increase traffic levels and recreational use of open space, the potential effect that Newham's Local Plan could have in relation to identified issues 1 (Air pollution – atmospheric nitrogen deposition), 3 (Public access/disturbance), and 6 (Water pollution) need to be considered. The remainder of this report will focus on these three issues as affected by two causal links which require consideration, namely traffic flows (which have the potential to create air and run-off pollution) and recreational intensity. The SIP confirms that while the identified issues affect the three qualifying habitats of the SAC, air pollution and public access do not affect the qualifying species (the stag beetle). The next section examines the spatial aspects of these potential impact pathways and the extent of likely significance alone or in combination with the plans of authorities in closer proximity to the SAC.

4.2 Traffic trends and effects

Commuting flows between Newham and the European site

4.2.1 2011 census information (as analysed by the 2016 [Outer North East London Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#), page 25) shows that 60% of people working in Newham live in the borough, while 45% of all those living in Newham also stay within the borough for work. The next most likely work destinations for Newham residents are Westminster / the City of London (15%) or Tower Hamlets (10%), both of which are accessed by east-west travel and most likely via the public transport network.

Table 3: SHMA (2016) Travel to Work Tables

Figure 3: Residence Location by Work in North East London Boroughs (Source: Census 2011 - Note: Top five values shown, based on at least one borough having no less than 5%)

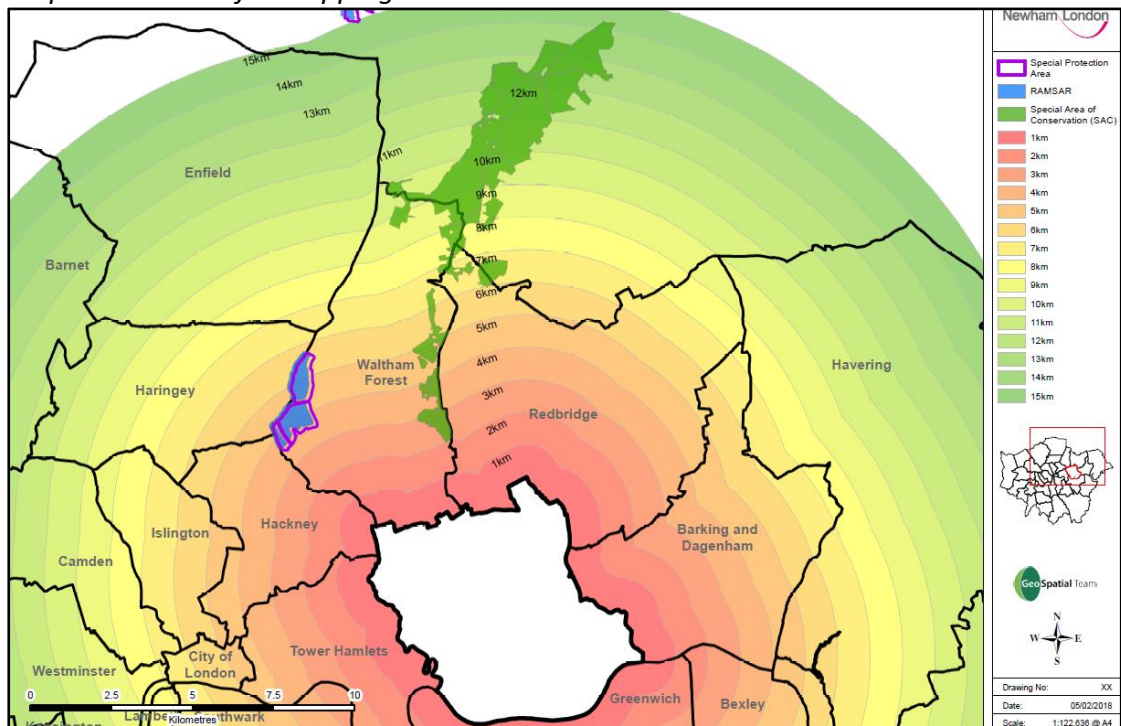
		Work in									
		Barking and Dagenham		Havering		Newham		Redbridge		Waltham Forest	
Reside in	Barking and Dagenham	54%	Havering	66%	Newham	60%	Redbridge	63%	Waltham Forest	68%	
	Havering	13%	Barking and Dagenham	8%	Redbridge	8%	Barking and Dagenham	7%	Redbridge	7%	
	Redbridge	8%	Redbridge	5%	Barking and Dagenham	5%	Havering	7%	Newham	4%	
	Newham	5%	Thurrock	4%	Waltham Forest	5%	Waltham Forest	5%	Epping Forest	3%	
	Thurrock	5%	Brentwood	3%	Havering	4%	Newham	4%	Enfield	3%	

Figure 4: Work Location by Resident in North East London Boroughs (Source: Census 2011 - Note: Top six values shown, based on at least one borough having no less than 5%)

		Reside in									
		Barking and Dagenham		Havering		Newham		Redbridge		Waltham Forest	
Work in	Barking and Dagenham	43%	Havering	50%	Newham	45%	Redbridge	41%	Waltham Forest	43%	
	Havering	9%	Westminster City of London	12%	Westminster City of London	15%	Westminster City of London	14%	Westminster City of London	15%	
	Westminster City of London	9%	Barking and Dagenham	7%	Tower Hamlets	10%	Tower Hamlets	8%	Camden	5%	
	Redbridge	8%	Tower Hamlets	5%	Camden	4%	Newham	7%	Tower Hamlets	5%	
	Newham	7%	Redbridge	5%	Redbridge	3%	Waltham Forest	5%	Islington	4%	
	Tower Hamlets	6%	Thurrock	3%	Islington	3%	Barking and Dagenham	4%	Hackney	4%	

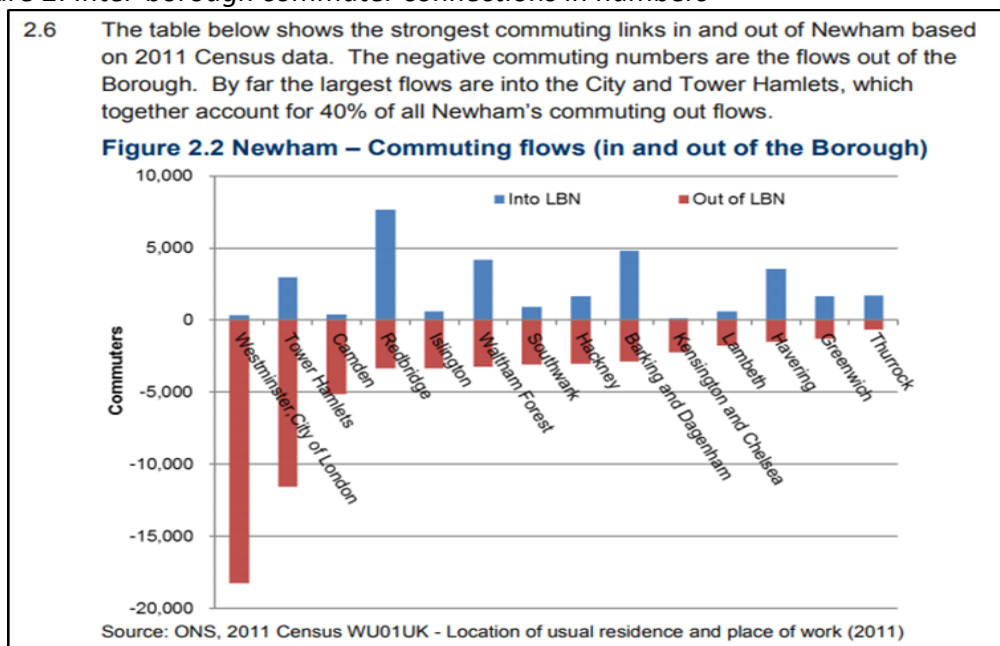
4.2.2 The information shows that the proportion of travel to/from work between Newham and Waltham Forest or Redbridge (the boroughs that house the nearest parts of the Epping Forest SAC and would have to be travelled to or through to be within a 200m impact range of the European site, as shown by the map below) is negligible (3% to Redbridge, less for Waltham Forest). Moreover, only 4% of Waltham Forest’s workforce lives in Newham with no record of Waltham Forest residents working in Newham. Similarly 4% of Redbridge’s workforce lives in Newham, with 7% of Redbridge residents working in Newham. There is no distinction as to the proportion of journeys made by road in this spatial commuting data, however it is reasonable to assume that figures are likely to be further reduced once public transport connections (such as the Central Line and National Rail lines into Stratford) are considered.

Map 2: Distances from Epping Forest SAC



4.2.3 LBN’s 2017 [Employment Land Review Demand Assessment](#) uses the same 2011 census information but presents it (at page 5) using overall numbers rather than percentages.

Figure 2: Inter-borough commuter connections in numbers



4.2.4 These travel patterns are corroborated by other studies and strategies that examine the longstanding traffic problems in and around the Epping Forest along with contributing factors and possible solutions / mitigation approaches.

4.2.5 The [Redbridge Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) (July 2016) notes ongoing issues of traffic congestion including on the A406 and A12 (the major roads closest to Epping Forest). Whilst this is likely to increase further with growth it states, the opening of Crossrail gives scope for relief, alongside new bus services such as the East London Transit. Of these, Crossrail is most relevant for commuting to/from Newham, with the East London Transit presently focused on connections between Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge.

4.2.6 Waltham Forest's Strategic Infrastructure Plan: Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment (dating from 2009) discusses the alleviation of road traffic, in part to Newham and the wider Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area by schemes including the Lea Bridge station re-opening (achieved in 2015) and the re-instatement of the Hall Farm Curve to establish a direct link between Chingford and Stratford.

4.2.7 Epping Forest District Council [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) (December 2017, prepared to accompany their [Submission Version Local Plan](#)) identifies 'out migration' (i.e. residents of the district commuting out for work) as the primary source of traffic congestion (page 21), as well as focussing on planned growth within the district itself (as opposed to elsewhere) putting increased pressure on existing provision (page 20).

4.2.8 The [Essex County Council Local Transport Plan](#) aims to reduce emissions and improve air quality (one of 5 key outcomes) and sets out priorities for West Essex (in which Epping Forest falls) that include greater connectivity for rural communities; improving Underground connections to London; improving the sustainable transport offer to increase modal share; improving access to Stansted Airport by sustainable modes; and lobbying Government for improvements to the M11 and West Anglia rail services (page 185). While the ECC plan does not comment specifically on car journeys between Newham and the areas surrounding the European site, it is apparent that none of the priorities identified appear to directly relate to road traffic flows between Newham and West Essex within the 200m vicinity of Epping Forest SAC.

4.2.9 Whilst the impact of Newham's residential growth therefore appears unlikely to impact significantly on the SAC, it is possible that Newham's growing economic base could induce more commuter flows from Waltham Forest and Redbridge (and potentially beyond) into Newham via road travel. However, a sample review of Travel Plans and EIAs submitted with Major development schemes, including employment based ones, in Newham over the last 3 years found no reporting of likely effects on the European site, presumably due to the prevalence of public transport access and more localised labour movement. The likelihood of travel between the development locations and the vicinity European site was also notably absent. While this is not in itself conclusive regarding 'in combination' effects of

growth within Newham, it is an indication that such travel and its effects was not considered a likely or significant eventuality by the independent experts who prepared and reviewed such EIAs and Travel Plans .

4.2.10 Nonetheless, it is clear that there is some commuter travel between the relevant authority areas which could impact on roads and air quality affecting the SAC, and there is development planned through the Local Plan that could increase this (albeit at a proportionally lower rate to increases in other directions). Whilst unlikely to be significant in itself, these movements could potentially be significant in combination with the growth projected in neighbouring authorities, notably Waltham Forest and Redbridge; in line with the precautionary principle advanced by the Habitat Regulations therefore, this effect is will be further explored below.

Freight movements

4.2.11 Natural England's distance criteria confirms that the roads of interest when considering the effects of exhaust pollution on nitrogen deposits are those within 200m of the conservation asset. Road mapping combined with the SAC boundary (map 3 below) indicates that the significant roads linking Newham to the European site are the North Circular (A406) and A12; note the M11 falls outside the relevant 200m zone. The North Circular in particular is an important freight route for Newham businesses, in conjunction with the A13 (which is in excess of 6km from the SAC) and M11; note that much freight traffic would be expected to use the M11 rather than take the A406 onwards through Epping Forest. The A12 is far less significant to Newham with the bulk of commercial/freight movements on it passing through (i.e. to Tower Hamlets) rather than having its origin/destination in Newham; the only freight movements on the A12 that might be expected to relate specifically to Newham would be from the western part of the Royal Docks and to some extent Cody Road.

4.2.12 High baseline traffic on the North Circular means that contributions from traffic generated by additional developments that feed onto it (such as in the Beckton area) are unlikely to be regarded as 'significant'; the Environment Agency significance threshold is a 1% 'process contribution' to the relevant air quality standard (Critical Level or Critical Load). Nevertheless, it is again possible that in combination with other development plans in the area, growth could contribute to potential significant effect.

4.3 Pollution dispersal and deposition from within Newham

4.3.1 As per Natural England's understanding of a 200m zone of influence, air quality impacts (and associated water quality impacts) from *within* Newham (i.e. not those generated by road travel towards/past Epping Forest SAC) are screened out. The contribution to nitrogen deposits of dispersal from within Newham is already accounted for as part of background data on London's air quality (i.e. baseline).

Map 3: Main roads connecting with Newham passing within 200m of the SAC



4.4 Recreational patterns in Newham

4.4.1 Figures from Natural England's 'Engagement with the Natural Environment' survey, as reported in the Public Health Outcomes Framework¹⁶, show Newham residents use of outdoor spaces for health and exercise reasons is comparatively low, expressed as 10.1% compared to the London average of 12.3% and the national average of 17.9%.

4.4.2 The major factors known to influence people's decision to use parks and open spaces are location/proximity; aesthetics; amenities; maintenance standards; and perceptions of safety¹⁷. While clear data on the relevance of proximity / convenience to the use of outdoor recreation spaces use does not exist (in general or for Newham), Liveability surveys¹⁸ show that the most frequently used parks by Newham residents are West Ham Park, Central Park, and Plashet Park, followed by Beckton District Park, Plaistow, Stratford, and Little Ilford. As summarised by Newham's forthcoming Park Investment Activation Plan¹⁹ these more popular spaces tend to be larger, and with better provision of facilities (sports facilities, playgrounds and toilets for example) when compared to lower-usage spaces like Star Park, King George V Park and Keir Hardie Recreation Ground. This contrasts to the more informal natural green space recreational opportunity presented by Epping Forest, which may mean, together with distance, that recreational opportunities there are less likely to be pursued.

4.4.3 Nonetheless, research by Footprint Ecology on behalf of the City of London Corporation (the Conservators of Epping Forest) has included surveys conducted across the years 2010 to 2014 to establish the spatial distribution of visitors to the forest. While visitors from Newham make up a relatively small fraction of the visitor data recorded (see Map 4 below), new research (forthcoming) establishes a 6.2km zone of influence in relation to recreational disturbance on the Epping Forest which includes parts of Newham.

4.4.4 As map 5 below shows, roughly the northern 'half' of the borough falls within the newly suggested 6.2km zone of influence. Significantly, the vast bulk of Local Plan growth falls outside this zone (e.g. in Canning Town / Custom House and the Royal Docks / Beckton). Housing projections for Strategic Site allocations (the sites to which the majority of the plan's housing growth is directed) show 71.46% outside the zone of influence with only 28.54% within it²⁰.

¹⁶ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data>

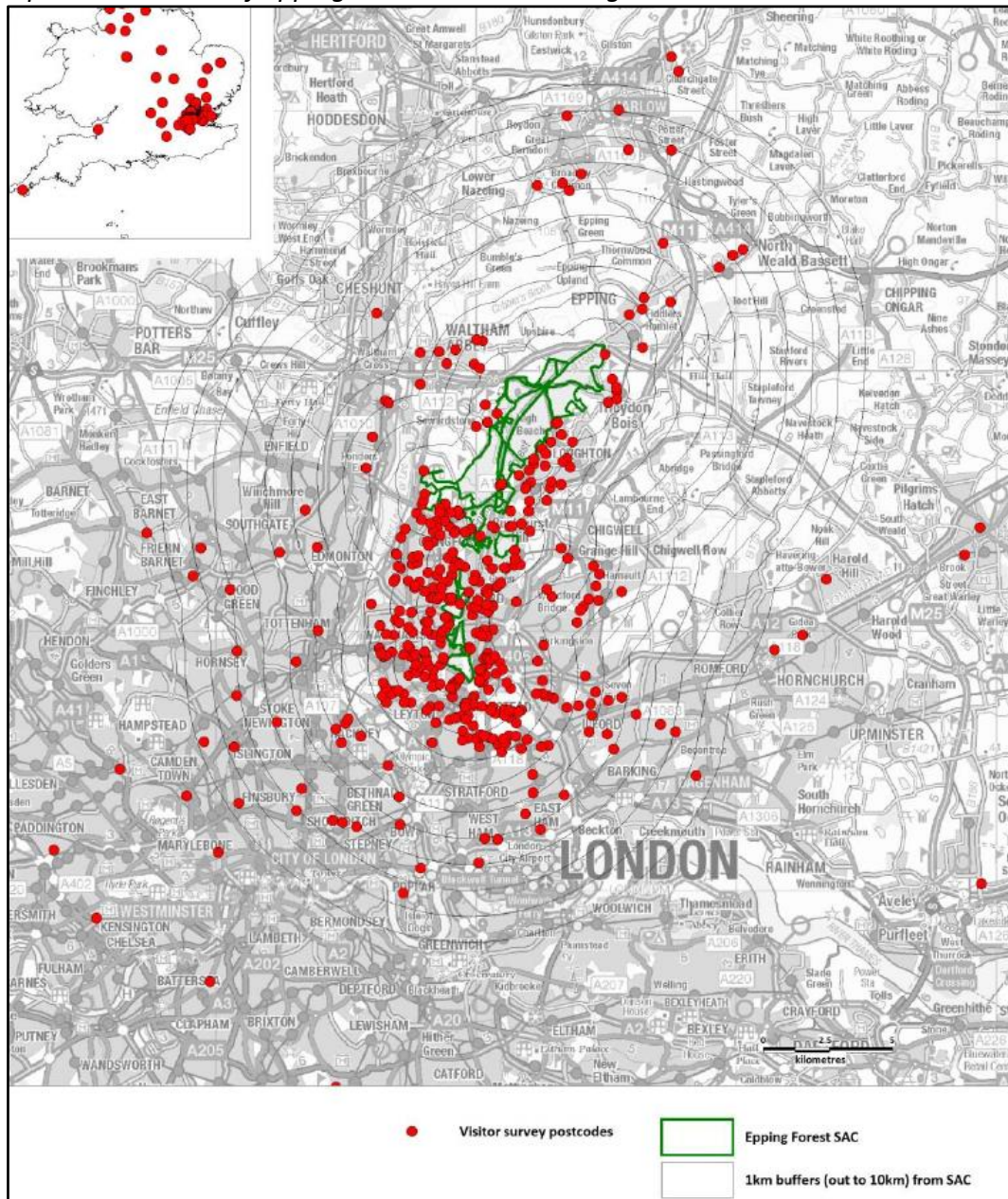
¹⁷ Characteristics of urban parks associated with park use and physical activity, McCormack et al 2010 GR1 [McCormack, G., et al \(2010\) Urban Green Nation: Building the Evidence Base](#)

¹⁸ LB Newham 2015

¹⁹ publication was expected February 2018

²⁰ Figures for individual Strategic Site allocations are not published as they prejudice the planning consent process, background data can be supplied to the Inspector if needed.

Map 4: Distribution of Epping Forest SAC visitor origins



4.4.5 Thus, while the information that is available suggests that residents of Newham are not likely to comprise a significant proportion of recreational visitors to the Epping Forest, that the plan may contribute to 'in combination' effects given wider growth across the region and in Waltham Forest and Redbridge must be considered.

4.5 Emerging Evidence

The Council is aware that Natural England is currently involved in a collaborative investigation process²¹ regarding in-combination air quality and recreational disturbance impacts, and apportionment of them (in terms of origin) in order to ensure that the asset is protected well into the future, given the levels of growth expected across east London, London generally and the wider south-east. The output of this investigation cannot plainly be predicted at this stage. Given the timeframe of the plan, it is important that it recognises that evidence may change in the course of the implementation period and thus any site specific HRA which may be necessary should be carried out in accordance with the information which is available at the time.

5 Screening Assessment

5.1.1 As established above, while significant effects on the European site are considered unlikely in isolation, the possibility of in combination effects in relation to air (and hence water) quality and recreational use must be considered. This screening assessment will identify plan policies of relevance to the identified issues and consider whether significant in-combination effects are likely, when considering implementation of the plan as a whole. As confirmed above, regard has not been had within this screening assessment to any measure intended to avoid or reduce impact on the European site. However, it is considered appropriate, and consistent with the recent case law referred to above, to have regard for the purposes of this screening exercise to the operation of general policies of the Plan which are intended to secure appropriate and sustainable development and which, although not intended to avoid or reduce impact on any European site, may nonetheless have some relevance to effect of the Plan on such sites e.g. policies which seek to reduce reliance on the private car, to address the water consumption and waste water demands of development or to provide appropriate levels of amenity space to meet the reasonable needs of future residents).

5.1 Initial Screening

5.1.2 Key policy areas with the potential to impact on Epping Forest SAC can be defined as those which could impact on the Conservation Objectives (see para 2.3.3),

²¹ Under the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding with West Essex and East Herts authorities

or which would exacerbate or mitigate the Pressures and Threats set out in the Site Improvement Plan (Table 2). The following is a typically used list of screening criteria, against which Local Plan policies are initially screened in as relevant (as highlighted in red). Policies which allocate sites for development are only screened in if the scale of the development is strategic, given the above discussion of significance. INF3 is not screened in, as its primary strategic lead is taken from the Joint East London Waste Plan which has in itself been subject to HRA.

- Policies governing impacts upon a European site – **SC4**
- Policies affecting overall levels of growth **S1, H1, J1**
- Policies affecting development location within or movement to within European Site 'risk zone'
 - Traffic on roads passing within 200m (for freight) **S3, S5, S2, S6**
 - 6.2km (for recreation use and associated reasonably possibility of commuting by road) **S2, S4, S6, H1,**
- Policies affecting recreational opportunities, particularly within 6.2km of Epping Forest SAC; **S2, S4, S6, INF7, INF9**
- Policies affecting air quality, particularly those relating to transport planning and vehicle use; **SC5, SP9, INF1, INF2**
- Policies affecting water quality and water supply; **SC4, INF4, SC1**
- Policies relating to climate change. **SC1**

5.1.3 These policies are considered in more detail below, with those that should benefit or have neutral effect on the SAC screened out.

5.2 Second Screening of Local Plan policies

Policy	Assessment and reasoning	Screening conclusion
Spatial Policies		
S1 Spatial Strategy & Strategic Framework	While this policy does not allocate sites (this is done via the area-specific policies below) it does set the overall vision of growth enshrined in the plan, showing the change from the previous position of 37,500 homes over the 2012-2027 plan period to the proposed position of 43,000 new home over the 2018-2033 plan period. It also concerned with good growth, including an understanding of cumulative impacts and infrastructure deficits, as well as positively planning for new infrastructure needs. Whilst this is intended to have an overall at least neutral effect, the policy is screened in to examine whether this balance is achieved appropriately.	Screened in
S2 Stratford and West Ham	This policy allocates the following Strategic Sites for mixed use: S05 Stratford Central, S10 Abbey Mills, and S29 Plaistow North. All are within the 6.2km zone of influence and S05 may also generate impacts on the A406 (via the Romford Road). However, significant new open space is also specified in the Lea River Park, to serve the needs of existing and this new development, and improvements to sustainable transport both of which should help further reduce the likelihood of significant effects. Policy is screened in to look at the balance of these effects in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
S3 Royal Docks	This policy allocates the following Strategic Sites which might be expected to generate freight traffic on the A12: S09, S07; and S04 which might generate freight traffic onto the A406. However, it also promotes wharf re-activation and consolidation which should help promote more sustainable freight overall and reduce the likelihood of this effect.. Whilst this should have an overall neutral effect, the policy is screened in to examine whether this balance is appropriately affected in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
S4 Canning Town and Custom House	Under this policy, Strategic Site S11 (Parcelforce) is allocated for mixed use development within the 6.2km zone of influence and it also promotes Strategic Sites which may give rise to freight generating movements on the A12 and/or North Circular (via the A13) in Canning Town town centre (S14) and Canning Town Riverside (S12). However, significant new open space is also specified in the Lea River Park to serve the needs of existing and new development and improvements to sustainable transport both of which should help reduce the likelihood of these effects. Policy is screened in to look at the balance of these effects in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
S5 Beckton	Under this policy, no Strategic Sites are within the 6.2km zone of influence, but there may be potential freight movements onto the A406 associated with SIL development in S01, although scope for river transport is also	Screened in

	acknowledged, and future river crossings may divert freight traffic towards Kent-based ports instead of the M11. Scoped in to examine the balance of these effects in conjunction with other policies.	
S6 Urban Newham	This policy allocates the following Strategic Sites for mixed use: S24 Woodgrange Road West, S25 East Ham Market, S26 East Ham Town Hall Campus, S03 East Ham Western Gateway, and S27 Queen's Market. All are within the 6.2km zone of influence and the commercial elements of S25, S24 and S27 may also have freight traffic impacts on the North Circular or A12. However the policy also promotes new recreational opportunities in the Metropolitan open land in the east of the borough to serve the needs of the development. Screened into to examine the balance of these effects in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
Theme: Successful Places		
SP9 Cumulative Impact	This policy concerns the need for all scales of development to consider cumulative impacts in relation to various problem issues which include air quality, water quality, and parks deficiency. Given its reiteration of the importance of avoiding any increase in specified pollutants the policy, and avoid increases in parks deficiency, the policy is likely to have neutral or positive on air quality and recreational impact and hence significant effects so is screened out.	Screened out
Theme: Jobs, Business and Skills		
J1 Business and Jobs Growth	This policy concerns jobs growth and the desirability of attracting new business to the borough and nurturing developing business, affecting possible commuting levels and freight traffic. As such it is directly linked to growth though it does not allocate specific development sites. However, it also speaks to increasing local employment and balancing the needs of the economy with other needs including that of the environment, so could have a neutral effect by reducing commuting across borough boundaries and appropriate checks and balances. Screened in to look at this balance in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
Theme: Homes		
H1 Building Sustainable Mixed Communities	This policy concerns the overall delivery of new homes to meet identified needs, as such it directly relates to growth. Whilst it additional refers to good growth considerations including density sensitive to local context and character and be appropriate in relation to open space availability, transport, retail, community and other supporting facilities. Screened in to examine the balance of this in implementation in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
Theme: Sustainability & Climate Change		
SC1 Environmental Resilience	This policy seeks to promote environmental resilience, whereby development will both protect the environment and become more resilient to it – minor amendments add reference to source protection zones for instance.. Screened out as likely to have at least a neutral effect.	Screened out
SC4 Biodiversity	Promotes biodiversity net gain and enhancement, including via avoiding significant adverse impacts on protected	Screened

	species and habitats, taking into account direct, indirect and cumulative effects.. Minor amendments proposed clarify expectations in relation to SACs and evolving information about in-combination significant effects, including joint working via Duty to Co-operate where necessary on monitoring and implementation of a strategic solution where indicated. Should have a positive effect so screened out.	out
SC5 Air Quality	Likely to have a positive effect given its more stringent approach to air pollution, including 'at least air quality negative' requirements, so screened out.	Screened out
Theme: Infrastructure		
INF1 Strategic Transport	Seeks to manage the effects of growth by providing adequate strategic transport infrastructure, notably significant investment in non-car modes to encourage modal shift away from cars, and wharves to encourage river based transport. However, it also includes some projects which may generate traffic and air quality impacts in of themselves at least in the construction phases. The policy does however make more explicit reference to assessment of negative environmental impacts and clear options appraisal. Screened in to look at the balance of these impacts in implementation in conjunction with other policies.	Screened in
INF2 Sustainable Transport	Seeks to manage the effects of growth by promoting modal shift to sustainable modes for private travel and commercial/logistics movements, as well as appropriate consideration and mitigation of network impacts. Should have an overall positive effect so screened out.	Screened out
INF4 Utilities Infrastructure	Seeks to ensure growth is adequately provided for in relation to utilities infrastructure, facilitating strategic investment to ensure the longer term sustainability of water supply. Screened out as should have a neutral or positive impact on the SAC.	Screened out
INF6 Green Infrastructure & the Blue Ribbon Network	Protects green infrastructure and the blue ribbon network in conjunction with SC4, acknowledging its multiple role, and assessing impacts in relation to these, having regard for cumulative impacts, and particular regard for quantum in areas of parks deficiency. Proposed minor amendment clarifies the presumption in favour of site protection. Screened out as should have a positive effect in offsetting recreational intensification.	Screened out
INF7 Open Space & Outdoor Recreation	Seeks to ensure that outdoor recreation opportunities are commensurate with growth, increasing accessibility, quality and quantity where relevant and re-stating the protection afforded by INF6.. Identifies strategic opportunities for this to occur in the east and west of the borough in conjunction with spatial policies. Proposed minor amendments clarify the role of the IDP in setting out mitigation of increased recreational intensity on existing parks and open spaces via strategic projects, currently including the Lea River Park.	Screened out
INF9 Infrastructure Delivery	Seeks to ensure infrastructure sufficiency, working to reinforce other infrastructure and good growth policies in ensuring growth impacts, including infrastructure deficits, are adequately addressed. Embeds the IDP in policy through	Screened out

	which GI projects providing for good growth are highlighted as priorities.	
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5.3 Findings

5.3.1 Of those policies that remain screened in, the next step is to assess whether in-combination significant effects are *likely* (in relation to the issues and vulnerabilities identified), when considering implementation of the plan as a whole. In combination effects of the Plan when taken together with the Plans of other Boroughs will be considered in the next section of this report.

Table 4

Relevant Aspects	Assessment Outcome and recommendations
Spatial Policies	
<p>S1: Further to setting out overall growth aims, the policy specifies that this must occur within the parameters of ‘good growth’, meaning the balancing of jobs and homes and ensuring growth is accompanied by timely delivery of supporting infrastructure including that to address existing deficits and cumulative impacts. Examples of this include specification around new and enhanced open spaces connecting through a green grid; significant modal shift to be achieved through investment in the quality and connectivity of strategic and local route and communications networks; and development being context sensitive, maximising integration of green infrastructure and other sustainable design, technologies and management features. The implementation section is clear that the policy is implemented <i>via</i> other thematic policies which, as discussed above, provide for neutral or positive effects on the SAC.</p>	<p>No significant effects likely. Implementation would take place in conjunction with thematic policies, which themselves (subject to the modifications set out below) will ensure that regard is had, when considering the effect of development, to impacts arising from the development (alone or in-combination), in particular in terms of nature conservation and biodiversity, on sites other than the application site (including where appropriate to any European site).</p>
<p>S2: The policy sets the spatial parameters for employment and residential growth in Stratford & West Ham, and includes reference to improved provision, quality and access to open space, including significant strategic projects the Lea River Park and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, both of which provide increased opportunities for recreation in high quality / partly natural local green spaces.. The policy also specifies enhancement of public transport access including interchange and capacity improvements that should benefit passengers in the wider sub-region, helping to encourage modal shift and improvements to air quality in this area. The</p>	<p>No significant effects likely. This conclusion is based on the information available at this time and having regard to the operation of general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward (see para.5.1.1. above).</p> <p>Given the ongoing investigations in relation to in-combination effects on air quality and recreational disturbance at Epping Forest, the plan could be future-proofed by adding a reference within Strategic Site allocations S05, S10, S29 that identifies a potential for HRA being required at planning application stage and that any such HRA</p>

Relevant Aspects	Assessment Outcome and recommendations
<p>implementation section is clear that thematic policies direct further relevant considerations: as per section 5.2 above, the particularly relevant ones in this context would be SP9, SC5, SC4, INF2, INF7 and INF6. As discussed in section 5.2 above, these provide for neutral or positive effects on the SAC.</p> <p>Strategic Site allocations specify various on-site infrastructure requirements to complement the plan's strategy, including improved local connectivity, and highlight constraints and further information.</p>	<p>should be completed having regard to the information which is available at the time. This addition is considered justified given the length of time it can take for Strategic Sites to come forward.</p>
<p>S3: The policy sets the spatial parameters for growth in the Royal Docks and is clear that implementation should be in conjunction with thematic policies – of which INF2, SC4 and SC5 will be of most relevance for this assessment. As discussed in section 5.2 above, these provide for neutral or positive effects on the SAC.</p> <p>The policy includes employment development on several Strategic Sites which may increase traffic on the A12 and/or A406. In addition however, it provides for wharf safeguarding, consolidation and reactivation which should help offset any additional freight movements.</p>	<p>No significant effects likely. This conclusion is based on the information available at this time and having regard to the operation of general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward (see para.5.1.1. above).</p> <p>Given the ongoing investigations in relation to in combination effects of traffic flows on nitrogen deposits at Epping Forest, the plan should be future-proofed by adding a reference within Strategic Site allocations S07, S09 and S04 that identifies a potential for HRA being required at planning application stage and that any such HRA should be completed having regard to the information which is available at the time. This addition is considered justified given the length of time it can take for Strategic Sites to come forward.</p>
<p>S4: This policy sets the spatial parameters for growth in Canning Town and Custom House and is clear that implementation should be in conjunction with thematic policies – of which INF2, INF6, INF7, SC4 and SC5 will be of most relevance for this assessment. As discussed in section 5.2 above, these provide for neutral or positive effects on the SAC.</p> <p>Whilst introducing significant new housing, notably around West Ham station (S11) which falls within the zone of influence for recreational impact, and other Strategic Sites</p>	<p>No significant effects likely. This conclusion is based on the information available at this time and having regard to the operation of general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward (see para 5.1.1. above).</p> <p>Given the ongoing investigations in relation to in combination effects on air quality and recreational disturbance at Epping Forest, the plan could be future-proofed by adding a reference to Strategic Site allocations S11, S14, S12 that identifies a potential for HRA</p>

Relevant Aspects	Assessment Outcome and recommendations
<p>which could increase freight flows close to the SAC, policy S4 also sets out improved provision, quality and access to open space including the significant strategic project of the Lea River Park. This will offer significant elements of natural greenspace, access to which will be improved (e.g. Bow Creek Ecology Park) as well as improving public transport, walking and cycling routes. This should help to lessen the likelihood of recreational and air/water quality impacts on the SAC.</p>	<p>being required at planning application stage and that any such HRA should be completed having regard to the information which is available at the time. This addition is considered justified given the length of time it can take for Strategic Sites to come forward.</p>
<p>S5: The policy sets the spatial parameters for growth in Beckton and is clear that implementation should be in conjunction with thematic policies – of which INF2, SC4 and SC5 will be of most relevance for this assessment. As discussed in section 5.2 above, these provide for neutral or positive effects on the SAC.</p> <p>The policy includes employment development on S01 which may increase traffic on the A406. In addition however, it provides for key improvements to strategic transport infrastructure, including an expanded DLR depot (which will be employment generating with limited freight movements), a new DLR station and river crossings (which may alter traffic volumes and patterns potentially away from the northbound A406 e.g. to Kent based ports), and encourages river transport where possible, all of which should help to lessen any traffic and air/water quality impacts arising.</p>	<p>No significant effects likely. This conclusion is based on the information available at this time and having regard to the operation of general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward (see para.5.1.1. above).</p> <p>Given the ongoing investigations in relation to in combination effects on air quality at Epping Forest, the plan should be future-proofed by adding a reference to Strategic Site allocation S01 that identifies a potential for HRA being required at planning application stage and that any such HRA should be completed having regard to the information which is available at the time. This addition is considered justified given the length of time it can take for Strategic Sites to come forward.</p>
<p>S6: This policy sets the spatial parameters for growth in Urban Newham and is clear that implementation should be in conjunction with thematic policies – of which INF2, INF6, INF7, SC4 and SC5 will be of most relevance for this assessment. As discussed in section 5.2 above, these provide for neutral or positive effects on the SAC.</p> <p>S6 includes reference to opportunities for improvements to open space accessibility particularly along the eastern edge of the area, providing increased opportunities for</p>	<p>No significant effects likely. This conclusion is based on the information available at this time and having regard to the operation of general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward (see para.5.1.1. above).</p> <p>Given ongoing investigations in relation to in combination effects on air quality and recreational disturbance at Epping Forest, the plan should be future-proofed by adding a reference to Strategic Site allocations in</p>

Relevant Aspects	Assessment Outcome and recommendations
<p>recreation and access to natural greenspace locally which should help to lessen the likelihood of pressure on the more distant SAC.</p>	<p>the area (S24, S25, S26, S27, S03) that identifies a potential for HRA being required at planning application stage and that any such HRA should be completed having regard to the information which is available at the time. This addition is considered justified given the length of time it can take for Strategic Sites to come forward.</p>
J1	
<p>Whilst promoting economic growth, the policy recognises the need for it to be strategically managed to balance the needs of (inter alia) the economy and environment. It does this through supporting a diversification to newer, cleaner economic sectors, promoting the development of modern, high quality industrial and business units, spatial criteria that reinforce the requirement of accessible locations for businesses that employ and attract (as visitors/customers) large numbers of people enabling modal shift and attention to managing compatibility with residential uses. However, it could be clarified that other environmental considerations as set out in the SC policies will also apply.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects given that implementation will occur in conformity with general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward, notably SC4, SC5 and INF2 (see para.5.1.1. above). A minor modification to make this clear is included.</p>
H1	
<p>Although the policy overall promotes considerable growth and population increase, it remains cognisant of the need to consider environmental impacts, through ensuring that adequate infrastructure (including private/ public open space) is delivered in line with growth. This should offset any added recreational pressure, though needs to be more clearly tied to Policy INF7 / other infrastructure policies.</p> <p>The balance is achieved through delivering densities that are reflective of the local context, ensuring the development of quality neighbourhoods. However, it is worth noting that a great deal of both the identified housing supply and any accompanying infrastructure needs are transposed into site allocations within the spatial policies and</p>	<p>No likely significant effects given that implementation will occur in conformity with general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward, notably SC4 and SC5 (see para.5.1.1 above).</p> <p>However, policy wording could be amended to refer to density being related to 'environmental capacity' and to clarify in the implementation section that this process of consideration of "environmental capacity" may require impact on any European site to be considered, having regard to all relevant information available at the time and other relevant policies.</p>

Relevant Aspects	Assessment Outcome and recommendations
that other environmental considerations will apply as set out in the SC policies and INF7.	
INF1	
<p>As with all the infrastructure policies, the policy helps to mitigate the impact of growth, and deliver on the sustainable transport agenda which should benefit air (and hence water) quality to some extent around the Epping Forest Area.</p> <p>There is a clear expectation in the policy regarding the explicit articulation of the options appraisal process including environmental and spatial impacts of the transport proposals. However, this is not backed up in the implementation section with clarification as regards which policy considerations would support this.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects given that implementation will occur in conformity with general policies of the plan which will control the detail and operation of development when it comes forward (see para.5.1.1 above).</p> <p>However, it should be clarified in the implementation section that policies SC1-5, SP5, INF6&7 and INF2 will be relevant.</p>

5.3.2 While the findings above are that the plan’s policies, when implemented in full (and in tandem with other development plan policies of a general nature that promote e.g. air quality improvements, traffic reduction, and enhancement of green space due to other plan objectives (see para.5.1.1. above) are not likely to cause or to contribute to significant in combination effects on the European site, some changes are proposed in order to ‘future proof’ the plan and provide links to the potential output of investigations currently underway, to which reference has been made above . As well as clarifications around the intention of polices and their interaction with other policies as noted above, the following amendments to ‘positive’ policies are proposed in order to further enhance their effectiveness:

- a) Addition to Policy SC4 making clear that [any future evidence concerning] direct and indirect impacts, cumulative and in combination on European sites, including those outside the Borough, should be considered within any HRA which accompanied a planning application, with the implementation section confirming that the Authority will work with other partners under the Duty to Co-operate obligation and generally to ensure impacts on Epping Forest SAC are kept under review so that assessments can use the best available information²² The technical criteria and implementation section should also be clarified to make clear the expectation of screening for HRA on Strategic Sites at planning application stage, and that off-site contributions may be acceptable where indicated in relation to in combination effects on the SAC,.
- b) Addition to Policy INF7 making it clear that if significant developments are considered likely to give rise to increased recreational intensity in Epping

²² See paragraph 5.4.2 for discussion

Forest (as signalled by Strategic Site allocations and a 6.2km zone of influence) , specific considerations of impacts on the SAC may be needed as part of a site specific HRA having regard to the information at that stage that is available.

- c) Addition to SC5 making it clear that, if significant developments are considered likely to give rise to traffic increases on the sections of the A12 / A406 that pass within 200m of the SAC, specific consideration of impacts on the SAC may be needed as part of a site specific HRA having regard to the information at that stage which is available..
- d) Addition to INF2:1vi clarifying that cumulative impacts that need to be taken into account in this assessment of network effects include those on traffic flows affecting /water quality in the vicinity of the SAC

5.3.3 Point a) - c) above are particularly important to ‘future proof’ the plan so it can respond to any potential changes in impacts/impact pathways and/or our understanding of them at application stage.

5.3.4 Given the findings and recommendations set out in Table 4, likely significant effects from the policies within the Plan can be ruled out based on current evidence and understanding. The Plan, in being written as a coherent document designed to be implemented in the round, with a few minor amendments provides a robust policy approach to proactively assessing and preventing (through its spatial strategy e.g. of promoting modal shift and improving open space provision and access within Newham) any likelihood of effects that contribute to in-combination significance for the Epping Forest SAC

5.4 In combination effects of other plans and proposals

5.4.1 However, while current findings are that the revisions to Newham’s Local Plan policies and proposals are not considered likely to give rise to significant effects on the Epping Forest SAC (either alone or in combination), it is also necessary to consider in- combination effects of other relevant plans.

5.4.2 Local and sub-regional positive policies and associated implementation actions are in turn supported by a broader national and regional framework with which such policies have to be consistent and in general conformity. This wider policy framework is also appropriately assessed and cognisant of obligations in relation to European Sites. Indeed, it is clear that policies introduced at the National and European level in terms of vehicle emissions standards, and Pan-London level such as the ULEZ, stricter controls on parking provision, and investment in non-car modes to promote modal shift are highly influential in achieving necessary changes

in technologies and behaviour, with traffic in London reducing overall²³, and road traffic emissions, particularly Nitrogen Oxide emissions projected to significantly improve (by 20%) post 2019²⁴ with consequent improvements to air quality. These policies are not only seeking to mitigate overarching environmental impacts of growth, but also improve the status quo. Similarly, the 'good growth' agenda at the London level, echoing national policy, also requires new development to provide appropriate levels of open space to meet the needs arising from that development. The delivery of appropriate levels of open space is likely to have the effect of reducing visits to, and hence the pressure on, existing spaces, including, where relevant, European sites.

5.4.3 In light of these matters and generally, it is not considered, on the information available, that the submitted Plan will give rise to any likely significant effects any relevant European site when considered in combination with the plans of other authorities.

5.4.4 Indeed, each plan in the area where development may affect the vulnerabilities of Epping Forest SAC (broadly defined as Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Epping Forest, East Herts, Harlow and Uttlesford District Council, Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils) as it comes forward must assess and mitigate its own effects (and those in combination with other plans) as overseen by Natural England.

5.4.5 However, and notwithstanding this a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between a number of authorities (in Hertfordshire and Essex), Natural England, and City of London has been agreed by which further investigation is being undertaken in respect of, in particular, in-combination impacts on the SAC, to appraise their significance, and understand proportionate responses (i.e. linked to the apportionment of causation. This investigation is on-going and any relevant outputs will be considered within HRAs carried out through the implementation of the policies of the Plan. Appropriate modifications have been suggested which will make this explicit and which confirm that such HRAs should be carried out having regard to the information which is available at the time, including that which may arise as an output from these investigations.

6 Summary & Conclusions

6.1.1 This assessment has acknowledged the potential for firstly significant effects, and secondly having assessed these to be unlikely, of in-combination significant effects on the designating features of the Epping Forest SAC arising from

²³ London Travel Survey; A local example of this is that improvements to public transport connections in Stratford as part of Olympic delivery saw a 15% drop in traffic along the Stratford High Street before / after the 2012 Games, which has been sustained.

²⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/ulez-will-start-in-2019-to-tackle-toxic-air>

population growth and economic growth provided for within the Newham's Local Plan Review. In the key areas of planned residential development, economic development and infrastructure development, and through policies positively managing biodiversity, air quality, sustainable transport, green infrastructure and recreational opportunity, the assessment indicates that there would be no likely significant effect on European sites as a consequence of implementing the Local Plan in the round (and subject to the modifications proposed).

6.1.2 Potential negative effects of increased population size and growth in car and freight traffic on the Epping Forest SAC are in fact largely effectively pre-empted and prevented by the already existing spatial pattern of development and commuting and freight movements, and distribution of planned growth. Policies framed at the national and pan-London level concerned particularly with air quality improvement, the reduction of congestion, improved vehicular emissions, and promotion of active travel, further reinforce trends that are reducing the overall likelihood of air/water quality effects arising.

Therefore the policies within the plan can be screened out and an Appropriate Assessment for the local plan is not necessary,.

Data sources

The following documents and web-based sources have been reviewed:

Information about European sites

- Natural England digital boundary datasets
- Natural England Site Improvement Plans
- Natural England SSSI Unit Condition Assessment digital boundary datasets
- City of London Visitor Surveys for Epping Forest.

7.1.3 Local Plan and its potential ecological effects

- Proposed Submission Local Plan and supporting documents including Policies Map Changes, Integrated Impact Assessment, and Options Appraisal

7.1.4 In-combination assessment

London Plan:

- [Adopted London Plan](#) (2016) and associated HRA
- Draft London Plan (2017) and associated [HRA](#) (Nov 2017)
- [Mayor of London's Transport Strategy](#) (2018) and associated [Integrated Impact Assessment](#) including HRA
- [Mayor of London's Water Strategy](#); and
- [Mayor of London's Draft Environment Strategy](#)

London Borough of Waltham Forest:

- Draft Local Plan: Direction of Travel and associated [Sustainability Appraisal](#) including HRA screening

London Borough of Redbridge:

- [Local Plan](#) (2018) and associated [HRA](#) (Feb 2017)

Epping Forest District Council:

- [Local Plan Submission Version 2017](#) and associated [HRA](#) (Nov 2017)

Harlow District Council:

- Draft [New Local Plan](#) and supporting documents
- [HRA Screening Report](#) (Oct 2010)

Essex County Council:

- [Essex County Council Local Transport Plan 2011](#)
- [Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy](#)

East Herts District Council:

- [Draft Local Plan Secretary of State Submission](#) version and associated HRA
- [Draft Local Plan: Main Modifications Consultation](#) and associated HRA

Uttlesford District Council:

- [Draft New Local Plan](#) and supporting Sustainability Appraisal

Hertfordshire County Council:

- [Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2031](#) (2011)