



Bloxham Modified NDP - Habitats Regulations Screening Opinion

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to determine whether or not the Modified Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment under S106 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Section 106 (1) of the Regulations states that “ A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable it to determine whether that assessment is required.”

The modified NDP is being prepared in the context of emerging Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (CLPPR 2042). A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been completed to support the preparation of the CLPR 2042 which was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 31 July 2025. The draft Modified Neighbourhood Plan has taken into consideration the HRA undertaken to support the CLPR 2042.

The HRA for the CLPR 2042 concludes that the CLPR will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The physical scope of the Local Plan HRA in relation to European sites of interest includes Oxford Meadows SAC and Cothill Fen SAC. Part of Oxford Meadows SAC sits within the Cherwell District and Cothill Fen lies approximately 8km south of the District boundary. All other European sites are relatively remote from Cherwell, the next closest being 17km from the District boundary.

The HRA considered policy RUR1 which provides a housing figure of 75 new homes for Bloxham. The Test of likely significant effects identifies that there may be potential likely significant effects as the policy as a whole may have linkage to the following impact pathways:

- Recreational pressure
- Water resources, quality and hydrological change
- Air quality

The Appropriate Assessment stage considered these impact pathways at a local plan level in more detail but concluded that the Local Plan will not cause an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC or Cothill Fen.

Bloxham Modified Neighbourhood Development Plan

The submitted Modified Neighbourhood Plan includes the following objectives:

- To plan for a scale of housing growth that can be accommodated within the constraints of the village infrastructure
- To use new development to improve the village infrastructure and to reduce flood risk
- To conserve and enhance the special historic character of the village and its countryside setting
- To manage development so that fits well with existing residential amenity
- To support economic development to provide local job opportunities

The Neighbourhood Plan contains 15 policies, each of which is intended to contribute to one or more of these objectives

Policy BL1 sets out the spatial plan for Bloxham by:

- Providing guidance in relation to the settlement boundary.
- Identifying sites for housing beyond the settlement boundary. (Total 340 including 215 which have planning permission.
- Reference to additional homes being delivered through windfall schemes.

Policy BL2 provides criteria for the development of 125 homes on the site on land East of Tadmarton Road.

The remaining policies provide criteria for mitigation of development and seek to ensure good quality development appropriate for the area.

Bloxham Parish Council have undertaken a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Modified NDP.

Conclusions

There are no Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Area or Special Areas of Conservation within or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Bloxham Parish is approximately 20 km from the nearest European site, Oxford Meadows SAC, and therefore it is considered unlikely to have any significant effects on this SAC or others located at a greater distance from the Parish.

The Council notes the difference in housing provision between the CLPR 42 and the draft Modified NDP but has concluded that the difference will not materially impact on the likelihood of significant effects.

Therefore, it is concluded that the proposals included in the Modified Bloxham NDP are not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site and therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Planning Policy Team
Cherwell District Council
November 2025