

Draft 1

ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON A EUROPEAN SITE

CONSERVATION OF SPECIES AND HABITAT REGULATIONS

PART A: THE PROPOSAL	
Type of plan or project:	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD): Final cabinet draft.
Application / plan reference no:	NR
National grid reference:	Bath & North East Somerset –
Application site:	NR
Brief description of proposal:	Issues and Options Paper for providing permanent and transit pitches

Introduction

The Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations DPD will identify sites to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Bath and North East Somerset between 2011 and 2026. It will also include more detailed planning policies against which Gypsy and Traveller associated development will be determined.

Evidence for B&NES indicates the following need:

A total of 20 transit pitches and 1 yard are required in the period to 2016 in Bath & North East Somerset.

A total of 22 permanent pitches are required in the period to 2016 in Bath & North East Somerset.

The options document sets out the approach and criteria for selecting these sites and includes a call for potential sites. It does not at this stage identify any specific sites. Given that sites could come forward from anywhere across the district there is some potential that sites proposed could affect European sites within and adjacent to B&NES. However, policy CP11 of the Core Strategy sets out clear criteria that must be considered when planning Gypsies, Travellers and

Travelling Showpeople accommodation. The criteria include the requirement to have no adverse impact on protected habitats and species, nationally recognised designations and natural resources. This requirement is reflected in the issues and options paper, which states:

- Developments should have no adverse impact on protected habitats and species, and natural resources. The importance of protected land will be recognised through the site selection criteria.

If this statement is strictly applied there is no reason to suggest any European site would be adversely affected. However, the options paper also sets out a scoring system to help apply the selection criteria to select sites. In terms of assessing potential impacts to European Sites this approach could be problematic and their needs to be greater clarification upfront (para 4.12) in how the scoring system and selection criteria will be used. An insert into the table along the lines suggested would be useful:

On land affecting European protected species?	Yes No	- -	To be subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess full impact after scoring matrix is applied.
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PART B: THE EUROPEAN SITES AFFECTED:	
Site names:	

Conservation objectives and special interest features:

European Site	Conservation Objectives	Interest Features
Bath & Bradford on Avon Bat SAC	<p><i>to maintain*, in favourable condition, the habitats for the population of:</i></p> <p>1) Greater Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>) (all component SSSIs)</p> <p>2) Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) (all component SSSIs)</p> <p>3) Bechstein's Bat (<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>) (Box Mine SSSI)</p>	<p>**Greater horseshoe bat (GHB) <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> - This site in southern England includes the hibernation sites associated with 15% of the UK Greater Horseshoe bat population and is selected on the basis of the importance of this exceptionally large over-wintering population. The Combe Down and Bathampton Down SAC component has both a hibernation and maternity roost function for greater horsehoes.</p> <p>*Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> - The Bath & Bradford on Avon SAC site comprises an extensive network of caves, mines and manmade tunnels which are used by bats for hibernation, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. The stone mines have been identified as a hibernation site for Lesser horseshoe bats.</p> <p>**Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> - Small numbers of Bechstein's bats have been recorded hibernating in abandoned mines in this area, though maternity sites remain unknown.</p>

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Is the proposal directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European sites for nature conservation? No

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY EFFECTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Scope of potential effects

A) effects travellers site allocations

B)

European site	Range of potential impacts	Potential occurrence and mechanism of impacts	Likely significant effect	Response
Bath & Bradford on Avon Bat SAC	Loss & damage to roost sites Disturbance to bats Loss & damage of foraging habitats Loss & damage of flight-lines	These impacts could occur if sites are allocated in close proximity to the SAC and on land which supports important bat foraging and flightline habitat features; or at locations where important livestock grazing could be compromised	Low given stated requirement to have no adverse impact on protected habitats and species. However there needs to be greater clarification that the scoring matrix is one tool in site selection.	

B) Potential in-combination effects

Discussion and assessment of Likely Effects and their significance

With greater clarification about the selection process to demonstrate that European Sites and species must be safeguarded no adverse effects are considered likely.

Is the potential scale or magnitude of any effect likely to be significant:

- a) Alone ? No
- b) In combination with other plans or projects? No

PART D: COUNCIL'S CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion:

Is the proposal likely to have a significant effect on a European site? No

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Signed:		Date:	
Name of Supervising Officer	Mark Minkley	Job Title:	Team Leader – Environment Team
Signed		Date:	

PART E: CONSULTATION WITH NATURAL ENGLAND

Natural England's comment on conclusion:

Name of Natural England Officer:		Job Title:	
Signed:		Date:	

IF THE PROPOSAL IS LIKELY TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT WILL BE REQUIRED