

# Camden Site Allocations

## Local Development Framework

Habitats Directive Assessment

March 2012



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## Habitats Regulations Assessment

### Screening Assessment: Potential impact of Camden LDF policies on sites protected in the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994

#### 1. Background

This report sets out the findings of the screening assessment that was carried out to determine whether Tasks 2 and 3 of a Habitats Regulations Assessment are required for the London Borough of Camden's Site Allocations Local Development Framework document. The Council has also undertaken a separate Sustainability Appraisal for this document, which is reported separately.

This Habitats Regulations Assessment screening report will be submitted to the Secretary of State with the Site Allocations document and other submission documents for consideration at the Independent Examination. The examination Inspector will consider the soundness of the Site Allocations, using this Habitats Regulations Assessment as part of the evidence base.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994 implement the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – known as the 'Habitats Directive'. The Habitats Directive and Regulations provide legal protection for the habitats and species of European importance.

The Habitats Directive also established a European network of nature conservation sites which is known as the Natura 2000 network. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - which protect habitats, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) - which protect birds and Offshore Marine Site (OMS), as well as RASMAR sites which protect wetlands. An Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a formal assessment of whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant or an adverse impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site.

The Department of Communities and Local Government has published draft guidance on ***Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment***. The draft guidelines set out three key stages of assessment under the Habitats Regulations:

1. Screening Assessment - likely significant effects (AA task 1)
2. Appropriate Assessment & ascertaining the effect on site integrity (AA task 2)
3. Mitigation and alternative solutions (AA task 3)

The Screening Assessment for the proposed Submission Site Allocations document determines if the document is likely to have any significant effects on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site (this will also consider the cumulative effects of the proposals) or an adverse impact on the integrity of the site. The assessment demonstrates whether tasks 2 and 3 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment will be necessary. The Natura 2000 site may be located within Camden or beyond its boundary as plans and projects may have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites located some distance away.

If the screening assessment anticipates significant adverse impacts, a full Appropriate Assessment will be required to consider the potential impacts in more detail and whether

alternatives can be adopted. If there are no viable alternatives, the Plan can only be implemented if there are “imperative reasons of overriding public interest”.

The methodology for this assessment has been taken from the Department of Communities and Local Government draft guidance *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment* and that used in *Screening Report: draft Further Alterations to the London Plan* by Forum for the Future, including *The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-Regional Strategies* (David Tyldesley and Associates, for Natural England, March 2007). It also reflects the approach to Screening Assessments taken by a number of other London boroughs. In line with common practice, this Screening Assessment extends the assessment area to approximately 10km beyond the boundaries of Camden.

## 2. Assessing likely significant effects

### 2.1 Identification of relevant sites

The European sites within approximately 10km of the London Borough of Camden have been identified on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website and are listed in **Table 1** below. Richmond Park is just beyond the 10km radius, but for completeness is included in this Screening Assessment.

**Table 1 - European sites in the London area**

Site Name	Designation & Code
<b>Epping Forest</b>	Special Areas of Conservation SAC (UK0012720)
<b>Lee Valley</b>	Special Protection Areas SPA (UK9012111) RAMSAR (UK 11034)
<b>Richmond Park</b>	Special Areas of Conservation SAC (UK0030246)
<b>Wimbledon Common</b>	Special Areas of Conservation SAC (UK0030301)

The description of these sites and the rationale for their conservation at European level has been taken from the *Screening Report: draft Further Alterations to the London Plan* which also includes supplementary information to assess the vulnerability of sites to potential adverse impacts. This is presented in **Table 2** on the following pages. The tables were compiled from the Natura 2000 forms and Natural England’s “conservation objectives” for Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSIs) with European interest.

## Table 2 Natura 2000 Site Descriptions

### Definitions

**Qualifying Features** - habitats and species relevant to the awarding of EU conservation status. The AA identifies how these features are safeguarded.

**Current Condition and Threats** - provides information concerning the current status of sites, recognised trends, and potential threats

- *Favourable condition* - the SSSI is being adequately conserved and is meeting its “conservation objectives”, however, there is scope for enhancement
- *Unfavourable recovering condition* - often known as 'recovering'. SSSIs are not yet fully conserved but all the necessary management measures are in place. Provided that the recovery work is sustained, the SSSI will reach favourable condition in time. In many cases, restoration takes time.
- *Unfavourable no change* - the special interest of the SSSI is not being conserved and will not reach favourable condition unless there are changes to site management or external pressures. The longer the SSSI unit remains in this poor condition, the more difficult it will be, in general, to achieve recovery.
- *Unfavourable declining* - the special interest of the SSSI is not being conserved and will not reach favourable condition unless there are changes to site management or external pressures. The site condition is becoming progressively worse.

Site Name	Designation & Code	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Threats	Result of July 2006 SSSI Condition Survey	Key ecosystem factors
		Habitat	Species			
<b>Epping Forest</b>	SAC UK0012720	To maintain in favourable condition:  Acidophilous beech forests with <i>Ilex</i> and sometimes	To maintain in favourable condition, the habitats for the population of:  Stag beetle,	The reintroduction of pollarding and wood pasture management is helping to reverse the decline of the epiphytic bryophyte population.  Existing air pollution is	Area favourable - 30% Area unfavourable recovering - 34% Area unfavourable no change - 26% Area unfavourable declining - 10%	Extent Natural processes and structural development Regeneration potential Composition Species Population size of species Number of old broadleaved

Site Name	Designation & Code	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Threats	Result of July 2006 SSSI Condition Survey	Key ecosystem factors
		Habitat	Species			
		<p><i>Taxus</i> in the shrub layer for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK.</p> <p>European dry heaths and North Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> of which both areas are considered to support a significant presence.</p>	for which this is one of only 4 known outstanding localities in the UK.	<p>thought to contribute to poor condition of parts of the site.</p> <p>Increasing recreational pressure could have an impact on heathland areas.</p>		<p>trees</p> <p>Population structure of old broadleaved trees</p> <p>Condition of old broadleaved trees</p> <p>Quantity and size of fallen broadleaved dead wood</p> <p>Position and degree of exposure of old broadleaved trees and stumps. Condition and position of available dead timber.</p>
Lee Valley	<p>SPA UK9012111</p> <p>RAMSAR UK 11034</p>	To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the populations of an Annex I	<p>bittern * gadwall ** shoveler</p> <p>Under RAMSAR criteria 2, the</p>	Most of the site is in favourable condition. There are currently no factors having a significant adverse effect on the site's ecological character. However, a significant increase in	There are a number of SSSI's contained within the Lee Valley RAMSAR site of which Walthamstow Reservoirs,	<p>Disturbance</p> <p>Extent and distribution of habitat</p> <p>Landscape</p> <p>Landform</p> <p>Vegetation characteristics</p> <p>Water area</p>

Site Name	Designation & Code	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Threats	Result of July 2006 SSSI Condition Survey	Key ecosystem factors
		Habitat	Species			
		species* and populations of migratory bird species**, of European importance with particular reference to:  Open water and surrounding marginal habitats.	site also supports a nationally scarce plant species and a rare invertebrate.	recreational pressure could impact upon wintering wildfowl numbers.	Waltham Abbey and Turnford and Cheshunt Pits are 100% favourable. Walthamstow Marshes are 36% favourable and 63% unfavourable but recovering.	Water depth Food availability
<b>Richmond Park</b>	SAC UK0030246		To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the population of:  Stag beetle, for which this is one of only 4 known outstanding localities in	The site is surrounded by urban area and therefore experiences high levels of recreational pressure. This does not directly affect the European interest feature. The whole site has been declared an NNR.	Area favourable - 6% Area unfavourable recovering - 8% Area unfavourable no change - 86%	Population size of species Number of old broadleaved trees Population structure of broadleaved trees Condition of old broadleaved trees – state of decay Quantity and size of fallen broadleaved dead wood Position and degree of exposure of old broadleaved trees and stumps. Condition and position of available

Site Name	Designation & Code	Qualifying Features		Current Condition and Threats	Result of July 2006 SSSI Condition Survey	Key ecosystem factors
		Habitat	Species			
			the UK.			dead timber.
<b>Wimbledon Common</b>	SAC UK0030301	<p>To maintain in favourable condition:</p> <p>The European dry heath, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heath with <i>Erica tetralix</i>, for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.</p>	<p>To maintain in favourable condition the habitats for the population of:</p> <p>Stag beetle, for which this is one of only 4 known outstanding localities in the UK.</p>	<p>The site is located in an urban area and therefore experiences intensive recreational pressure which can result in damage to the sensitive heathland areas.</p> <p>Air pollution is also thought to be having an impact on the quality of the heathland habitat.</p>	<p>Area favourable - 40%</p> <p>Area unfavourable but recovering - 59%</p>	<p>Population size of species</p> <p>Number of old broadleaved trees</p> <p>Population structure of broadleaved trees</p> <p>Condition of old broadleaved trees – state of decay</p> <p>Quantity and size of fallen broadleaved dead wood</p> <p>Position and degree of exposure of old broadleaved dead trees and stumps</p> <p>Condition and position of available dead timber</p>

Source: Screening report: 'Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan' (Forum for the Future, September 2006)

## 2.2 Screening assessment of Camden's Site Allocations

### Coding the potential impacts

**Table 3** below provides a slightly adapted version of the coding criteria produced by Tyldesley and Associates guidance on Appropriate Assessments. These criteria are used to assess whether Camden's Site Allocations are likely to impact on European sites.

**Table 3 - Coding used for recording effects/impacts on European Sites**

<b>Reason why policy will have no effect on a European Site</b>	
<b>1</b>	The policy will not itself lead to development (e.g. it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or it is not a land use planning policy)
<b>2</b>	The policy makes provision for a quantum / type of development (and may or may not indicate one or more broad locations)
<b>3</b>	No development could occur through this policy alone, because it is implemented through other DPD policies that are more strategic or more detailed and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on a European Site and associated sensitive areas.
<b>4</b>	Concentration of development in urban areas will not affect European Site and will help to steer development and land use change away from a European Site and associated sensitive areas.
<b>5</b>	The policy will help to steer development away from a European Site and associated sensitive areas, e.g. not developing in areas of flood risk or areas otherwise likely to be affected by climate change.
<b>6</b>	The policy is intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.
<b>7</b>	The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, and enhancement measures will not be likely to have any effect on a European Site.
<b>Reason why policy could have a potential effect</b>	
<b>8</b>	The policy steers a quantum or type of development towards, or encourages development in, an area that includes a European Site or an area where development may indirectly affect a European Site.
<b>Reason why policy would be likely to have a significant effect</b>	
<b>9</b>	The policy makes provision for a quantum, or kind of development that in the location(s) proposed would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. The proposal must be subject to appropriate assessment to establish, in light of the site's conservation objectives, whether it can be ascertained that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

Source: *Screening report: 'Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan'* (Forum for the Future, September 2006)

## 2.3 Policy Analysis

**Table 4** below provides an assessment, taking a precautionary approach, of each the sites contained in Camden Council's Site Allocations document.



**Table 4 - Assessment of policies contained within the Site Allocations document**

Policy No	Policy	Why policy will have no impact on sites	Why the policy is likely to have an impact on sites	Essential recommendations to avoid potential effects on European Sites
<b>King's Cross and Surrounds</b>				
1	King's Cross Growth Area	4		
2	Camden Town Hall Extension	4		
3	Lighthouse block, Pentonville Rd	4		
4	277a Grays Inn Road	4		
5	Midland Road Site, land rear of British Library	4		
6	4 St Pancras Way (St Pancras Hospital)	4		
7	103 Camley Street	4		
8	Land west of Westminster Kingsway College, 45 Sidmouth Street	4		
<b>Euston Station and Surrounds</b>				
9	Euston Station, Euston Road	4		
10	Bhs Warehouse, 132-140 Hampstead Road	4		
11	Granby Terrace	4		
12	110-122 Hampstead Road (Former National Temperance Hospital)	4		
13	1-39 Drummond Crescent (Euston Traffic Garage)	4		
14	Westminster Kingsway College, Regents Park Centre, Longford Street	4		
15	Land at Goldsmith's House and adjoining land, Cumberland Market Estate, Park Village East/Augustus St	4		
<b>Central London - Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area</b>				
16	St Giles Circus / Denmark Place	4		
17	6-17 Tottenham Court Road and 5, 6 & 12 Hanway Place	4		

18	The Royal Mail Sorting Office, 21-31 New Oxford Street	4		
19	Land Bound by New Oxford Street, Museum Street and West Central Street	4		
<b>Central London - High Holborn Opportunity Area</b>				
20	12-42 Southampton Row & 1-4 Red Lion Square	4		
21	Land Bounded by 50-57 High Holborn, 18-25 Hand Court , 45-51 Bedford Row & Brownlow Street	4		
<b>Central London - Bloomsbury Fitzrovia</b>				
22	Middlesex Hospital Annex, Cleveland Street	4		
23	Arthur Stanley House, 44-50 Tottenham Street	4		
24	Grafton Way, Odeon Cinema Site	4		
25	Senate House (north block) Malet Street	4		
26	26 Gordon Square and 15 Gordon Street	4		
27	20-22 Gordon Street	4		
<b>Central London – Farringdon</b>				
28	Phoenix Place	4		
29	Herbal House, 10 Back Hill	4		
30	Land bound by Wren Street, Pakenham Street, Cubit Street, Langton Walk	4		
<b>West Hampstead and Swiss Cottage Area</b>				
31	187-199 West End Lane	4		
32	156 West End Lane	4		
33	O2 Centre Car park	4		
34	100 Avenue Road, Swiss Cottage	4		
35	Belsize Road Car Park	4		
<b>Camden Town and Surrounds</b>				
36	Hawley Wharf and 39-45 Kentish Town Road	4		

37	202-212 Regents Park Road (Roundhouse car park)	4		
38	2-12 Harwood Street and Rear of 34 Chalk Farm Road	4		
39	Bangor Wharf, Georgiana Street	4		
40	57-71 Pratt Street, 10-15 Georgiana Street	4		
41	24-58 Royal College Street	4		
<b>Other Localities - Kentish Town and Gospel Oak</b>				
42	115-117 Wellesley Road (including 2-16 Vicars Road) and Lismore Circus Health Centre & Nursery	4		
43	19-37 Highgate Road, Day Centre and 25 and 37 Greenwood Place	4		
44	Kentish Town Police Station, 10a, 12a 14 Homes Road	4		
45	20 Highgate Road	4		
<b>Other Localities – Hampstead</b>				
46	Former Nurses Hostel, 29 New End	4		
<b>Other Localities - Primrose Hill</b>				
47	40-49 St Edmunds Terrace, former car park and adjacent land to south of Barrow Hill Reservoir	4		

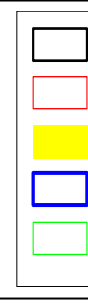
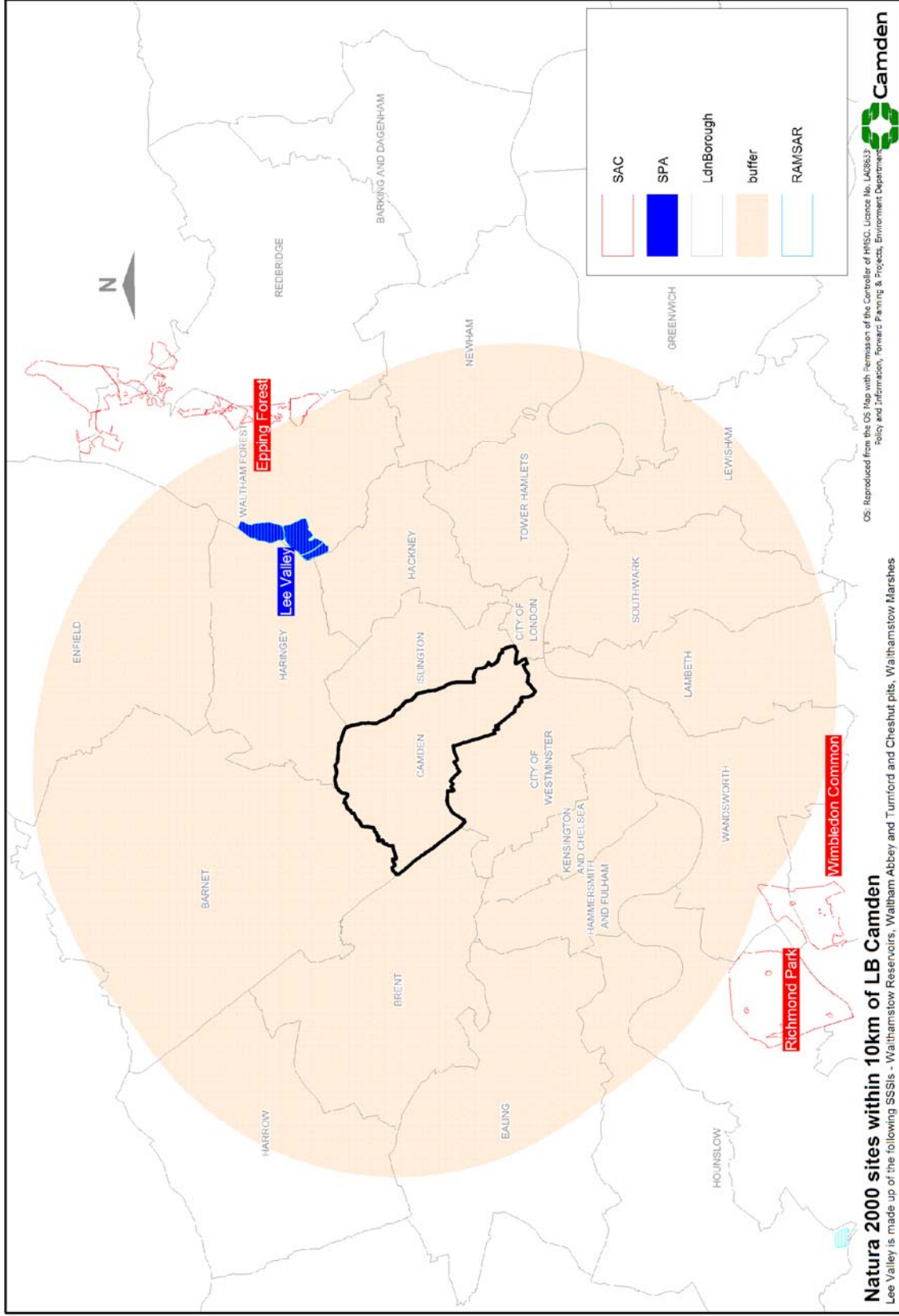
### 3. Conclusion

None of the proposed sites were found to have likely significant effects on the sites of European importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of the sites.

For all of the Site Allocations the following reason was given, *“Concentration of development in urban areas will not affect European Site and will help to steer development and land use change away from a European Site and associated sensitive areas.”*. This was considered appropriate given that all of the development sites are relatively remote from the European site; are on brownfield land; and proposals are usually for intensification purposes.

The collective impact of development in Camden has been assessed as part of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Habitats Screening Assessment. This assessment found that the potential direct or potential indirect impacts identified for Camden would not have significant impact upon sites of European importance for habitats and species.

It is considered that the sites in the Site Allocations DPD are unlikely to have significant effects on sites of European importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites. Therefore it is not considered necessary to carry out Task 2 (Appropriate Assessment) and Task 3 (mitigation and alternative solutions) of the Habitats Regulations Assessment.



## References

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