**Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Habitat Regulation Assessment**

**Screening Statement**

**March 2023**

**Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Statement for the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan (PDNP)**

**Summary**

This document is the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Statement for the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan (TPNDP).

This HRA Screening Statement concludes that there is no likely significant effect on any European Site as a result of the policies contained within the TPNDP and as such the TPNDP is ‘screened out’ of the HRA process and no further HRA assessments (including ‘Appropriate Assessments’) are deemed necessary.

**Neighbourhood Planning**

Neighbourhood planning is a new community right introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and guidance on its implementation is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Statutory Land Use Plan and as such must be subject to HRA under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) [the Habitats Regulations].

**Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The Three Parishes of Adderley, Norton-In-Hales and Morton Say submitted its application to Shropshire Council for designation of its Neighbourhood Area in 2018. Between September and October Shropshire Council consulted on the proposed area. In advertising this information comments were invited through the ‘Get Involved’ section of the Shropshire Council website and e-mails circulated to all statutory consultees, as well as to adjoining Parish and Town Council areas. Shropshire Council received three responses to this consultation, none of which objected to the principle of the proposed Neighbourhood Area.

In response, at Cabinet it was agreed that the Three Parishes Plan Area was an appropriate basis for the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and notified them accordingly. A formal notice confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan area was acceptable and was published on 12th December 2018.

The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan is a community led plan that derives from the vision and objectives of people who live within the Neighbourhood Area. From the outset the Three Parishes were determined that residents be kept informed and have an opportunity to inform the content of the Plan. Communication and consultation in a variety of forms have played a major part in developing the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Plan.

The Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan is based around a number of objectives that cover the following themes, these are as follows:

* Provision of Adequate Housing
* Employment Opportunities
* Natural Environment
* Transport and Movement
* Built Environment and Heritage
* Community Facilities

These themes and the related issues have informed the preparation of 14 planning objectives that in turn led to the development of draft planning policies. It is possible that these objectives and policies may be refined as the draft plan is considered at the formal consultation stages.

**Habitats Regulation Assessment**

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) set out the process by which HRA of plans and projects must be undertaken. Further guidance has been provided by government and Natural England on the process.

Shropshire Council has undertaken several stages of HRA during the preparation of the Local Plan Review and has carried out a Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report (Submission Version). This HRA Screening Statement follows the process used in the latest HRA report and relies on the evidence gathered during that process.

Shropshire Council is the ‘Competent Authority’ in terms of HRA for the ‘making’ of the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Parish Council produced this HRA Screening Statement to accompany the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Natural England has been given an opportunity to formally comment on this HRA Screening Statement and Shropshire Council will have regard to the representations of Natural England prior to ‘making’ the Neighbourhood Plan as required under Regulation 61 (3).

The HRA process assesses the potential effects arising from a plan against the conservation objectives of any site designated for its nature conservation importance. The European Sites situated in close proximity to the borough of Shropshire Council are set out in the HRA Screening Report (Submission Version) along with their conservation objectives and an assessment of potential effect pathways.

There are no European Sites within the Neighbourhood Area, with the Blak Firs and Cranberry Bog sitting approximately 13 miles to the northeast.

**HRA Screening**

Each policy within the TPNDP has been screened to determine whether it has potential to cause a ‘Likely Significant Effect’ on any European Site.

Any policy with no ‘Likely Significant Effect’ will be screened out of the HRA process. Any policy where potential for a ‘Likely Significant Effect’ is identified will be subject to further more detailed, assessment (sometimes called an ‘Appropriate Assessment’) in line with the Habitats Regulations and relevant guidance documents.

Table 1 below considers the potential impacts arising from each of the policies within the draft Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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| **Policy** | **Assessment of Potential Impacts** | **Potential for Likely Significant Effect** |
| H1: Housing Design | This policy does not drive land use or the location of developments but provides a criteria for developments to demonstrate high quality design and contribute to the beauty and sustainability of the built environment. | No |
| H2: Housing Mix and Tenure | Gain this policy does not drive land use or the location of developments but looks for developments to meet identified local housing needs. | No |
| EMP1: Small Scale Employment | This policy looks encourage the development of new small scale businesses. The policy may also result in the conversion of existing buildings and small well-designed new buildings. Any proposals for the re-use of land or buildings on existing employment sites for uses other than employment should provide evidence through a viability appraisal and whether it benefits the local community. | No |
| EMP2: Farm Diversification | The poloicy supports farm diversification through a number of criterions. Where this isn’t possible the policy encourages rewilding opportunities. It is not thought this policy will have a significant effect on a European Site. | No |
| G1: Protecting Public Open Spaces in the Three Parishes | The policy looks to protect and develop areas of public open space, with a number if criterions that outline where developments result in either a proposal or loss of open space with appropriate mitigation measures. | No |
| G2: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity | This policy seeks to protect and enhance local wildlife species and habitats including those that are undesignated. Expecting developments to demonstrate how they will achieve at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity. | No |
| G3: Local Carbon Reduction | This policy also supports the transition to a zero-carbon economy with the policy designed to meet a high level of sustainability and energy efficiency in new developments, targeting zero carbon emissions. | No |
| T1: Linkages and Connections | The policy seeks to enhance and improve existing public rights of way, including pedestrian and cycle links as well as the Shropshire Union Canal towpath. No potential development has been identified however by which a small scale development could result in a Likely Significant Effect on a European Site. | No |
| T2: Parking | This policy looks to reduce the loss of off street public parking as well as supporting developments that improve parking capacity and minimise on street parking. The policy also supports electric charging facilities where possible. | No |
| T3: Broadband Connecting the Parishes | This policy seeks to where possible provide access to super-fast broadband through new developments, as well as improving speed of existing services. | No |
| LE1: Conservation of the Three Parishes Historic Character | This policy does not drive land use or the location of development but sets out a criteria which preserves and enhances the historic character of the Three Parishes including their listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and other heritage assets, whether designated or otherwise, considered to contribute to local or historic interest, together with their settings. | No |
| COM1: Community Facilities | This policy seeks to protect existing community facilities, whilst providing new community facilities in acceptable locations. Changes of use or redevelopment of community will also be supported where it provides benefits to the community. It is not thought that new developments would result in a Likely Significant Effect. | No |

**Conclusion of the HRA Screening Process for the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The policies within the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan have been screened under the Habitat Regulation Assessment process.

The conclusion of the HRA Screening Process is that none of the proposed policies within the draft Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan has the potential to lead to a ‘Likely Significant Effect’ on a European Site.

The draft Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan can be ‘screened out’ of the Habitat Regulation Assessment process and an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ is not required.

**Next Steps**

Natural England are given an opportunity to comment on this Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Statement and can decide to agree or disagree with the above conclusion that no further assessment work is required. Shropshire Council will have regard to the comments of Natural England as the appropriate nature conservation body under the Habitats Regulations prior to the ‘making’ of the Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan.

If, following the public consultation on the draft Three Parishes Neighbourhood Development Plan, changes are proposed to the policies contained within the Plan then an update to this HRA Screening Statement will be produced reflecting the changes made and, if significant changes are proposed, a further consultation with Natural England will be undertaken.