



Appendix C

Natural England Assessment Categories

Appendix A Key to Natural England Guidance Assessment Categories

Key

The following categories and sub-categories used in the assessment are taken from the Natural England HRA guidance (The Habitats Regulations Assessment of Local Development Documents. Final Draft Guidance by David Tyldesley and Associates for Natural England, January 2009). It should be noted that the assessment categories used in the matrices are based on background information listed in the main HRA report and the nature of significant or adverse effects is not described in the matrices themselves for the sake of brevity.

General Categories

- (a) **Category A:** elements of the plan / options that would have no negative effect on a European site at all;
- (b) **Category B:** elements of the plan / options that could have an effect, but the likelihood is there would be no significant negative effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects;
- (c) **Category C:** elements of the plan / options that could or would be likely to have a significant effect alone and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted;
- (d) **Category D:** elements of the plan / options that would be likely to have a significant effect in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted;
- (e) **Category E:** elements of the plan / options the effects of which will be more appropriate for lower tier assessments, in accordance with the criteria set out in Part 4 above;
- (f) **Category F:** elements of the plan / options the effect of which depends on how the plan is implemented.

Sub-categories

Category A: No negative effect	A1	Options / policies that will not themselves lead to development e.g. because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or they are not a land use planning policy.
	A2	Options / policies intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.
	A3	Options / policies intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European Site.

	A4	Options / policies that positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas
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Category B – no sub-categories

Category C: Likely significant effect alone	C1	The option, policy or proposal could directly affect a European site because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development onto a European site, or adjacent to it
	C2	The option, policy or proposal could indirectly affect a European site e.g. because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be very close to it, or ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it or it may increase disturbance as a result of increased recreational pressures
	C3	Proposals for a magnitude of development that, no matter where it was located, the development would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site
	C4	Options, policies or proposals for developments or infrastructure projects that could block options or alternatives for the provision of other development or projects in the future, which will be required in the public interest, that may lead to adverse effects on European sites, which would otherwise be avoided
		Any other options, policies or proposals that would be vulnerable to failure under the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage; to include them in the plan would be regarded by the EC as ‘faulty planning’
		Any other proposal that may have an adverse effect on a European site, which might try to pass the tests of the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage by arguing that the plan provides the imperative reasons of overriding public interest to justify its consent despite a negative assessment

Category D: Likely significant effects in combination	D1	The option, policy or proposal alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if its effects are combined with the effects of other policies or proposals provided for or coordinated by the LDD (internally) the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant
	D2	Options, policies or proposals that alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if their effects are combined with the effects of other plans or projects , and possibly the effects of other developments provided for in the LDD as well, the combined effects would be likely to be significant

	D3	Options or proposals that are, or could be, part of a programme or sequence of development delivered over a period, where the implementation of the early stages would not have a significant effect on European sites, but which would dictate the nature, scale, duration, location, timing of the whole project, the later stages of which could have an adverse effect on such sites.
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Category E: Appropriate for lower tier assessment	E1	An option, policy or proposal would have no effect where no development could occur through the policy itself, because it is implemented through later policies in the same DPD, which are more detailed and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites and associated sensitive areas. These kinds of policies may be found in the Core Strategy where a broad quantity of development may be specified as being delivered through a more specific policy in a later chapter or section of the DPD
	E2	An option, or policy that makes provision for a quantity / type of development (and may indicate one or more broad locations e.g. a particular part of the plan area), but the detailed location of the development is to be selected following consideration of options in later, more site specific DPD. The consideration of options in the later DPD will need to assess potential effects on European Sites.

Category F – no sub-categories