

**Appropriate Assessment for retrospective works for conversion of a barn to a dwellinghouse at White Barn, Anchors Paddock, Holt BH21 7DS**

This document represents the Habitats Regulations Assessment undertaken by Dorset Council as Competent Authority in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

HRA Screening

In accordance with People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (Case C-323/17), Dorset Council has concluded that, discounting any mitigation, the above application will have a likely significant effect on the Dorset Heathlands SAC, SPA and Ramsar from recreational pressure and air quality impacts.

Designated site	LSE Y/N	Cause of Adverse effects
Dorset Heathlands SPA	Y	<p>The Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is designated on account of the rare and vulnerable wet and dry heathland habitats, which support the Southern damselfly <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i>.</p> <p>The Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) is notified on account of heathland bird species including nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>, Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>, and Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> during the breeding season, and Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> and Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> over winter.</p> <p>The Dorset Heaths Ramsar site is designated on account of the high species richness, supporting nationally scarce wetland plant and invertebrate species, and high ecological diversity of wetland habitat types and transitions, with wet heaths and acid mire habitats present.</p> <p><i>Recreational pressure</i></p> <p>The intensification of residential development in Dorset and the resultant pressures placed upon the Dorset Heaths by the increase in population close to the protected areas has resulted in adverse impacts upon the Dorset Heaths. Various studies have found that public access to lowland heathland, from nearby development, has led to an increase in wild fires, damaging recreational uses, the introduction of incompatible plants and animals, loss of vegetation and soil erosion and disturbance by humans and their pets amongst other factors have an adverse effect on the heathland ecology.</p> <p>According to the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-25, an adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), residential development within 400m of the Dorset Heaths</p>
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar		
Dorset Heaths SAC		

	<p>European Site is not permitted due to impacts upon the designation. Residential development within the area between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths will result in a likely significant effect which must be adequately mitigated in order to avoid an adverse effect upon integrity of the designation.</p> <p>The proposed development is for a retrospective permission for one new dwelling located approximately 1.9km from the Dorset Heaths SAC, and Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar, and so results in an increase in overnight accommodation and population between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths.</p> <p>Therefore, the proposed development is considered likely to have a significant effect upon the Dorset Heaths European site as a result of recreational pressure.</p> <p><i>Air Quality</i></p> <p>The deposition of airborne nitrogen-based pollutants may result in the enrichment of soils within the heathland habitat. This favours faster growing plants and the spread of species not normally found on heathlands which outcompete and inhibit the recovery of the heathland habitats. Ammonia and nitrogen oxides also have direct toxic effects on plant communities.</p> <p>Therefore, emissions to air of nitrogen-based pollutants may result in the degradation of the heathland habitat and contribute to the European Site being in an unfavourable condition.</p> <p>There are multiple sources of airborne nitrogen-based pollutants, including agriculture and vehicle exhaust emissions.</p> <p>Given the potential for the proposed development to result in additional traffic within close proximity of the Dorset Heaths, it is considered likely to have a significant effect upon the Dorset Heaths European site as a result of air quality.</p>
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Appropriate Assessment

The HRA screening identified likely significant effects upon the Dorset Heathlands SAC, SPA and Ramsar from recreational pressure and air quality impacts. Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment is required to determine whether the proposal would result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Dorset Heathlands SAC, SPA and Ramsar (see following table).

<p><b>Designated site affected</b></p>	<p>Confirmation that adverse effects on integrity are avoided for <u>all</u> features with avoidance/mitigation secured by adherence to the SPD <u>Y</u>/N</p>
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Dorset Heathlands SPA	<i>Recreational pressure</i>
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar	According to the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-25, residential development within 400m of the Dorset Heaths European Site is not permitted due to impacts upon the designation.
Dorset Heaths SAC	<p>Residential development within the area between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths will result in a likely significant effect which must be adequately mitigated in order to avoid an adverse effect upon integrity of the designation.</p> <p>Smaller scale residential development of typically less than approximately 40-50 dwellings in the area between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths is considered to have an 'in-combination' effect when considered with other development in the area. This in-combination' effect may be mitigated against through a contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) and a contribution towards a strategic Heathland Infrastructure Project (HIP) is also required.</p> <p>Larger scale development of typically 50 or more dwellings in the area between 400m and 5km from the Dorset Heaths will have an 'alone' impact and will require bespoke mitigation through a Heathland Infrastructure Project (HIP).</p> <p>Given the scale and location of the proposed development, a SAMM and a contribution towards a strategic HIP will be required, which will be collected through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).</p> <p>The contribution is considered sufficient to address the potential recreational pressure impacts upon the Dorset Heaths.</p> <p><i>Air quality</i></p> <p>The screening stage identified a likely significant effect upon the Dorset Heaths SAC, SPA and Ramsar from air quality.</p> <p>The adopted Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy 2020-25 SPD provides an approach to addressing the adverse effects of airborne nitrogen upon the Dorset Heathlands European Site.</p> <p>The strategy suggests a series of mitigation measures, paid for through developer contributions. The types of measure include direct measures targeting vehicle emissions adjacent to heathland. These include projects to encourage modal shift to other forms of transport, reduce vehicle speeds adjacent to heathlands, encourage the use of zero emission vehicles and through heathland management alongside roads. The strategy also addresses wider measures to reduce nitrogen deposition from agricultural land near to heathlands, or</p>

	<p>the re-siting or cleaning up of certain operations that generate emissions.</p> <p>The proposed development will provide a financial contribution to the Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy 2020-25 SPD through CIL. The contribution is considered sufficient to address the potential air quality impacts upon the Dorset Heaths.</p>
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Having concluded that the application will have a likely significant effect in the absence of avoidance and mitigation measures on the above European sites, this document represents the Appropriate Assessment undertaken by Dorset Council as Competent Authority in accordance with requirements under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Appropriate Assessment concluded that the proposed development will not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site subject to the stated mitigation measures being appropriately secured.