

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan

June 2026

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan

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1 Introduction

- 1.0.1 This document provides a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.0.2 The main purpose of the HRA process is to prevent a plan or project from adversely affecting the integrity of a European Site, which are areas of exceptional importance for rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats or species. Extensive areas of Dorset and surrounding areas are occupied by European sites, reflecting the importance of the region for wildlife and habitats.
- 1.0.3 The HRA process involves several distinct stages of assessment which must be undertaken in order to meet the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 3.
- 1.0.4 The first of these stages is the HRA screening stage. The main purpose of the HRA screening is to assess whether a plan is likely to have a significant negative effect on a European Site, and hence whether the subsequent steps of the HRA process are required.
- 1.0.5 If the HRA screening concludes that there would be no likely significant effect on a European Site, then the plan may proceed without further assessment.
- 1.0.6 However, if it is found that the plan would have a likely significant effect on a European Site then further assessment is required through the subsequent stages of the HRA process, to ensure that the plan does not result in adverse effects upon the integrity of a European site.
- 1.0.7 The HRA screening report firstly explains the legal basis for HRA (Chapter 2) and explains the HRA process (Chapter 3), before setting out the scope of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan (Chapter 4). Following this, consideration is given to whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect upon a European site in the HRA screening exercise (Chapter 5). Given it is concluded that the Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, an Appropriate Assessment has been carried out (Chapter 6). Following the assessment, there is a conclusion (Chapter 7). The conclusion provides a summary of the content of the HRA and concludes on whether the plan will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site.

2 Legislative background to Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 2.0.1 EU Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora ('the Habitats Directive') led to the establishment of a network of 'European sites', collectively known as Natura 2000, which are areas of exceptional importance with respect to rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats or species. European Sites consist of the following ecological designations:
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs): Classified under the EU Directive (79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('the Birds Directive'), with the objective of protecting and managing areas which are important for rare and vulnerable birds as they are important grounds for breeding, feeding, wintering or migration; and
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): Classified under the Habitats Directive, these areas provide rare and vulnerable animals, plants and habitats with increased protection and management.
- 2.0.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 194) states that the following sites should be afforded the same protection as European Sites:
- Potential Special Protection Areas (pSPA): sites on which the Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area;
 - Possible Special Areas of Conservation (pSAC): sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a candidate Special Area of Conservation;
 - Ramsar sites (and listed/proposed Ramsar sites): Wetlands of international importance designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention, and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for a Ramsar site; and
 - Sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites and Ramsar sites: Sites which are included as compensation in schemes to mitigate adverse impacts upon European and Ramsar sites.
- 2.0.3 The requirement to undertake an assessment of plans or projects that are likely to have an effect upon European sites is given in Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.
- 2.0.4 The Habitats Directive is transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations implements Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and requires the competent authority to complete an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives before deciding to undertake a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Regulation 105 applies to land use plans, with Regulation 106 pertaining to Neighbourhood Development Plans specifically.

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- 2.0.5 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 state that submitted neighbourhood plans need to be accompanied by a statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood plan meets a series of 'basic conditions', which are set out in Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. These basic conditions include a requirement to demonstrate how the plan is compatible with assimilated obligations (previously referred to as EU obligations), which includes the need to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment to satisfy the Habitats Directive.

3 The Habitats Regulations Assessment Process

- 3.0.1 The UK Government's Planning Practice Guidance on Appropriate Assessment explains that there are several distinct stages of assessment which must be undertaken in order to achieve compliance with the Habitats Regulations.

3.1. TASK 1: HRA SCREENING

- 3.1.1 The HRA screening stage involves consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, either alone and in combination with other plans or projects.
- 3.1.2 A 'likely significant effect' may be defined as a 'possible significant effect; one whose occurrence cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information'.
- 3.1.3 The HRA screening stage firstly involves gathering information on the European sites that may be affected, through geographical proximity or a potential impact pathway which links the plan to an effect on a European Site.
- 3.1.4 Following this, the HRA considers whether the plan is likely to result in a significant effect upon these European sites, either alone or in combination with other projects and plans, through the test of likely significant effect.
- 3.1.5 Measures which have been specifically added to achieve the purpose of avoiding or reducing the harmful effects of a plan upon a European site, known as mitigation measures, should not be considered at the screening stage.
- 3.1.6 If the HRA screening concludes that there is no likely significant effect on a European site, then further assessment is deemed unnecessary.
- 3.1.7 However, if it is found that the plan would have a likely significant effect on a European site then the next stage of assessment, known as the Appropriate Assessment stage, is required.

3.2. TASK 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- 3.2.1 If a proposed plan or project is considered likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, then an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, must be undertaken.
- 3.2.2 The scope and content of an appropriate assessment will depend on the nature, location, duration and scale of the proposed plan and the European sites which may be affected. However, the assessment needs to be proportionate and sufficient to support the task of determining whether the plan will adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

3.3. TASK 3: MITIGATION

- 3.3.1 The competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ruled out adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.

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- 3.3.2 Where it cannot be concluded that there will be no adverse effects on a site's integrity, there is a need to consider potential mitigation.
- 3.3.3 Mitigation measures are protective measures forming part of a project and are intended to avoid or reduce any direct adverse effects that may be caused by a plan or project, to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site.
- 3.3.4 Any measures used to inform the decision about the effects on the integrity need to be sufficiently secured and likely to work in practice.

4 The Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.0.1 The submission version of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan contains 12 policies set out in 7 chapters. A list of the policies is set out in Figure 4.1 below. The neighbourhood plan does not propose to allocate any sites for development. However, Policy 9 in the plan considers how the local housing need in the plan area should be met. The vision for the plan, as set on page 3, is:

‘Our vision is that the residents of Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank will continue living in a beautiful, well cared for, supportive, active community which values its historic and rural setting and distinctive character supported by the Neighbourhood Plan. Through its variety of housing, community facilities, and business opportunities, people’s needs will be met, and the environment will have been retained and enriched. Any changes will reflect and strengthen the distinctive character of the two parishes, making a genuinely positive contribution to the community as a whole.’

Figure 4.1: Policies in the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan

Chapter	Policies
2. Environment and Heritage	Policy 1. Local Landscape Character Policy 2. Locally Important Views Policy 3. Dark Night Skies Policy 4. The importance of recreational access to the countryside Policy 5. Protecting Our Historic Environment Policy 6. Important Local Green Spaces
3. Climate Change – Renewable Energy and Flood Risk .	Policy 7. Flooding considerations
4. Community Services & Facilities	Policy 8. Important Community Facilities
5. Housing	Policy 9. Meeting Local Housing Need
6. Business Services and The Economy	Policy 10. Local employment opportunities
7. Traffic Road Safety and Transport	Policy 11. Support a safer highway network
8. Design Guidance	Policy 12. Design Guidance

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5 Habitats Regulations Assessment: Screening

- 5.0.1 The first stage of the HRA process is the screening stage, the purpose of which is to determine whether the plan is likely to result in a significant effect upon a European Site.
- 5.0.2 In order to determine whether the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in a significant effect upon a European Site, it is first necessary to identify those European Sites which may be affected by the plan. This involves gathering information about the European Sites within the neighbourhood plan area and its vicinity.
- 5.0.3 The European Sites within approximately 20km of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area are shown in Figure 5.1. Further details of these European Sites are presented in Appendix A.

Figure 5.1: European sites within 20km of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area

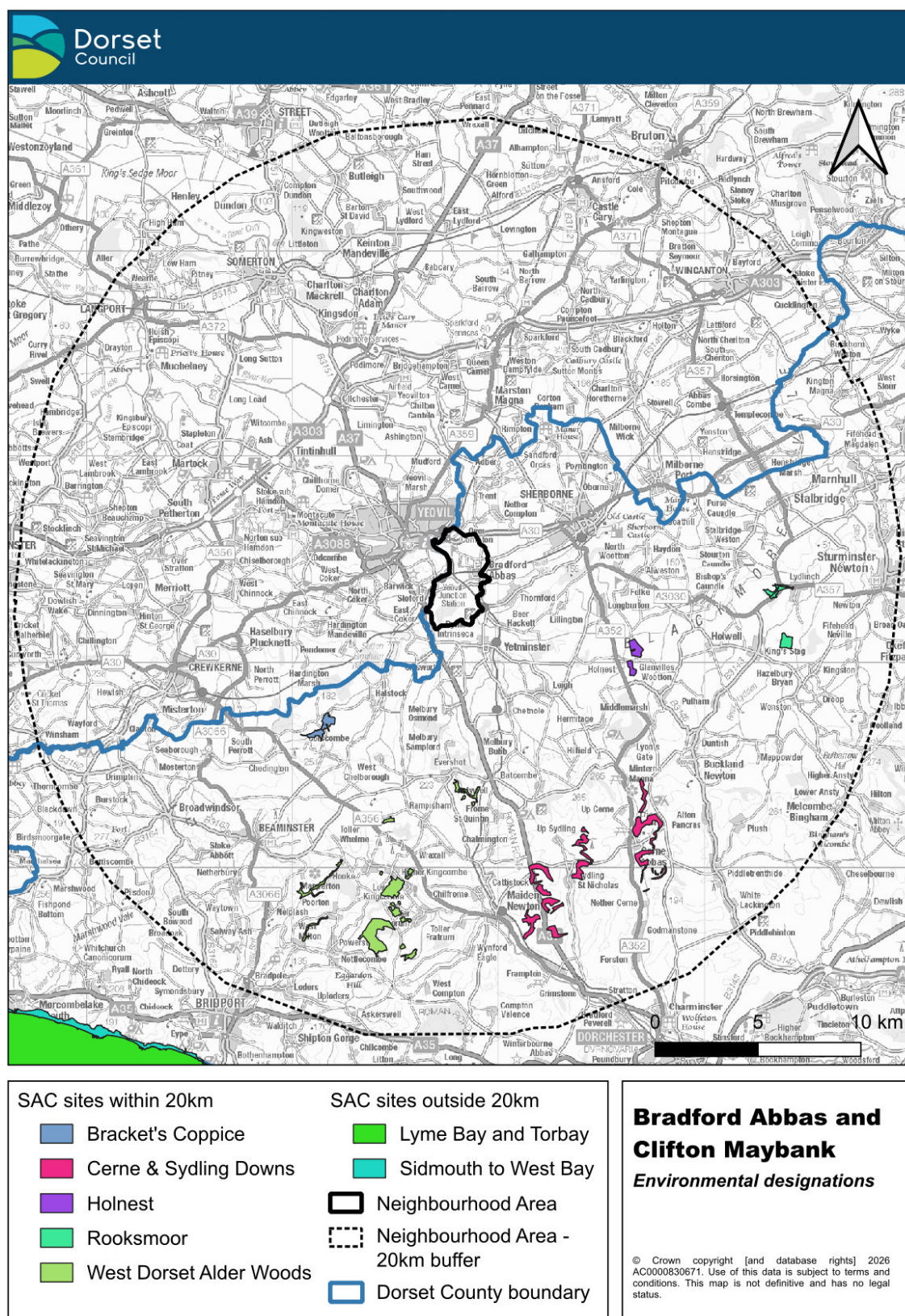
European Site	Designation	Approx. Distance/orientation from Neighbourhood Plan area
Holnest	SAC	8 km to the south east
Bracket's Coppice	SAC	7.5 km to the south west
West Dorset Alder Woods	SAC	15 km to the south
Rooksmoor	SAC	15 km to the east
Cerne & Sydling Downs	SAC	14 km to the south
Somerset Levels & Moors	SPA & Ramsar	14 km to the north west

- 5.0.4 Maps showing the location and extent of the European sites are shown in the Figures on the following pages.

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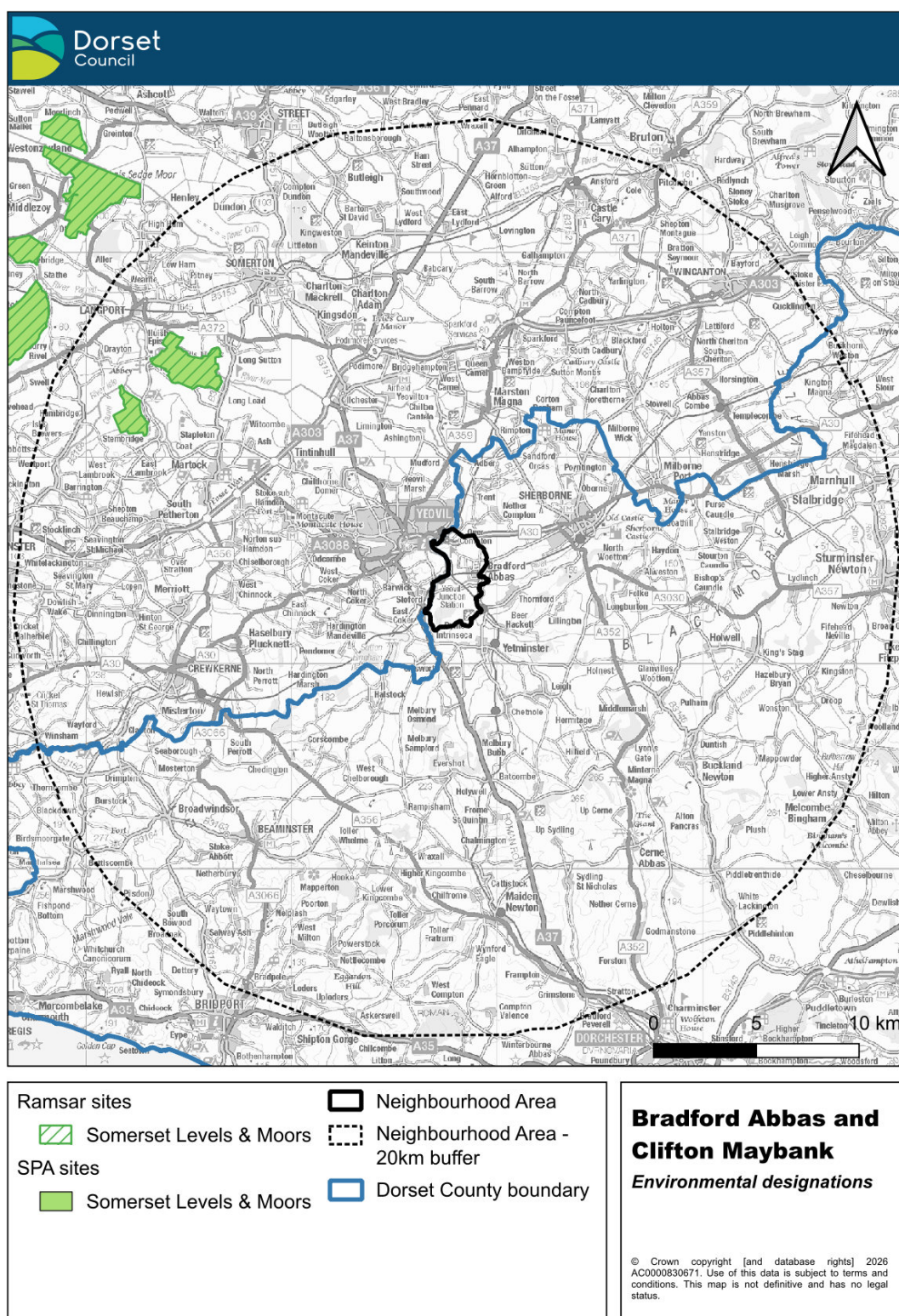
Figure 5.2: Land designated as a SAC within 20km of Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area



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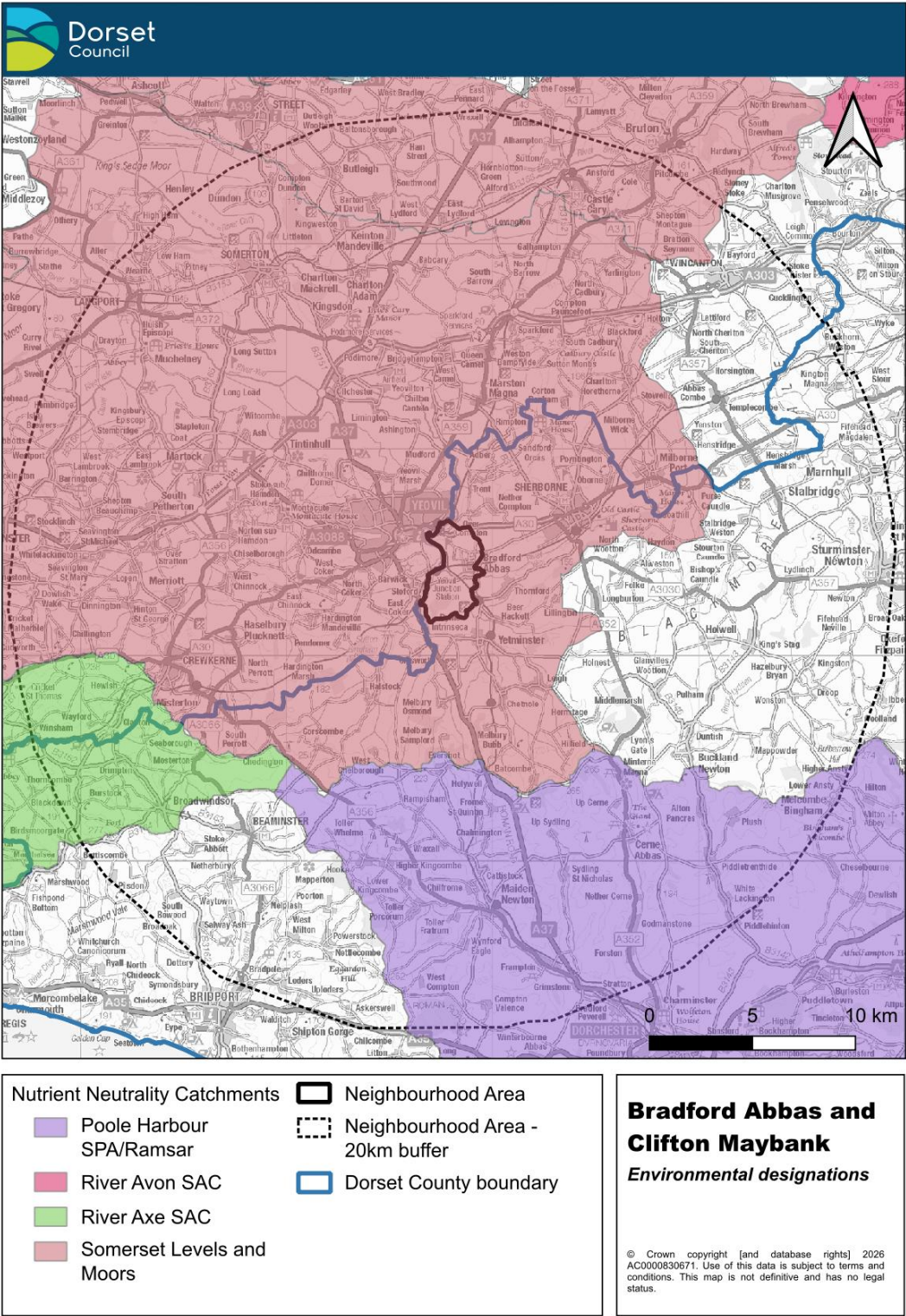
Figure 5.3: Land designated as a SPA and a Ramsar site within 20km of Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area



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Figure 5.4: Map showing the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area in relation to the Nutrient Neutrality Catchment Area for the Somerset Levels & Moors SPA and Ramsar Site



- 5.0.5 Having identified the characteristics of the European sites within approximately 20km of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan Area, it is now possible to identify those European Sites which may be linked to the plan through a known 'pathway'.
- 5.0.6 A 'pathway' may be defined as the means by which a change in activity leads to an effect. In this instance, a pathway may be defined as the means by which a change in activity due to the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan leads to an effect on a European Site.
- 5.0.7 At the initial stage of the screening, all of the potential pathways were identified by considering the potential threats, pressures and activities to the European Sites provided in the official citation which are relevant given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan (Figure 5.5). Those potential threats, pressures and activities that were not considered to be linked to the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan through a pathway were discounted from further consideration.
- 5.0.8 It is of note that only one potential threat, pressure or activity, which is in relation to the Somerset Levels & Moors SPA and Ramsar Site, has been identified for further consideration. This is because the neighbourhood area is located within the hydrological catchment area for the Somerset Levels & Moors SPA and Ramsar Site. No threats, pressures or activities have been identified in respect of other European sites within 20km of the plan area given there is no viable pathway for the plan to cause effect due to the limited scale of proposals in the plan and the distances to these European sites.

Figure 5.5: The potential threats, pressures and activities to European sites within 20km of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan area

Potential threat, pressure or activity	European Site
Water pollution	Somerset Levels & Moors SPA & Ramsar Site

- 5.0.9 Following the identification of the possible pathways, the habitats regulations assessment screening then considered these possible pathways in more detail to determine whether or not they represent a credible or plausible pathway.
- 5.0.10 The following sections of this chapter explores the potential pathway which has been identified according to the threat, pressure or activity.

5.1. WATER POLLUTION

SOMERSET LEVELS & MOORS SPA & RAMSAR SITE

- 5.1.1 The neighbourhood area falls within the hydrological catchment of the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA). The site is also listed as of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar) as the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site.

- 5.1.2 The Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site, underpinned by multiple SSSI's, is designated for its internationally important wetland habitats and species. The ditches and channels of the wetland are a component of this broad habitat type, supporting a diverse range of fauna and rare invertebrate species.
- 5.1.3 In relation to the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA, based on their current understanding, Natural England is satisfied that additional nutrients from typical new developments are unlikely, either alone or in combination, to have a likely significant effect on the internationally important bird communities for which the site is designated.
- 5.1.4 However, the interest features of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site, including many of the ditches and channels, are considered unfavourable, or at risk, from the effects of eutrophication caused by excessive phosphates. These are largely derived from a combination of point and diffuse pollution sources, which result in algal blooms.
- 5.1.5 Natural England's advice, therefore, is that additional residential units within the catchment are likely to add phosphate to the designated site via wastewater treatment effluent, thus contributing to the existing unfavourable condition and further preventing the site in achieving its conservation objectives.
- 5.1.6 As previously set out, the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area is located within the hydrological catchment of Somerset Levels & Moors SPA and Ramsar Site. Consequently, there could be likely significant effects arising from the neighbourhood plan on the Ramsar Site as a consequence of new additional residential development resulting from policies in the plan.

6 Appropriate Assessment

- 6.0.1 The HRA screening has identified a likely significant effect upon the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site as a result of water pollution.
- 6.0.2 Therefore, the Appropriate Assessment set out below is required to determine whether the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan would result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of this European Site.

6.1. WATER POLLUTION

- 6.1.1 The HRA screening has identified a likely significant effect from water pollution upon the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar site, given the potential for new additional residential development resulting from policies in the plan.
- 6.1.2 The submission version of the neighbourhood plan highlights the issue of the unfavourable condition of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site. Paragraph 2.9.1 of the plan reads as follows:

‘Natural England has advised that, in light of the unfavourable condition of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar Site, before determining a planning application that may give rise to additional phosphates within the Ramsar Site catchment, competent authorities (the local planning authority) should undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This is to ensure mitigation measures are in place to address nutrient neutrality so the local planning authority is satisfied that the requirements of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) are met.’
- 6.1.3 The above wording is supported. Furthermore, it is proposed that wording should be inserted at the end of Policy 9 (Meeting Local Housing Need) in the plan stating that *‘Housing development will only be supported if it can achieve phosphate neutrality in respect of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site’*. Additional text will also need to be added to the supporting text to the policy to provide context and reasoning for the requirement in the policy.
- 6.1.4 The wording included in paragraph 2.9.1 of the plan, and the additional wording proposed above, will ensure that nutrient neutrality is achieved across the plan area and an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site is prevented.

7 Conclusion

- 7.0.1 The HRA screening exercise considered the potential threats, pressures and activities which may affect the European sites within 20km of the Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area.
- 7.0.2 The HRA screening identified a likely significant effect as a result of water quality impacts upon the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site, as a result of the plan.
- 7.0.3 The Appropriate Assessment has concluded that adverse effects upon the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site from water quality can be avoided by the inclusion of the wording in paragraph 2.9.1 of the plan and inserting wording at the end of Policy 9 (Meeting Local Housing Need) in the plan stating that '*Housing development will only be supported if it can achieve phosphate neutrality in respect of the Somerset Levels & Moor Ramsar Site*'. Additional text will also need to be added to the supporting text to the policy to provide context and reasoning for the requirement in the policy.
- 7.0.4 Given the inclusion of the wording in paragraph 2.9.1 of the plan, and subject to the suggested additional wording above being included at the end of Policy 9 in the plan, it is concluded that the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Plan will not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site.

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Appendix A: Details of European Sites within 20km of the Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Area

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European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
Bracket's Coppice SAC	Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site): Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) Annex 2 species: Bechstein's bat <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species, and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Grazing; Problematic native species; Air pollution, air-borne pollutants
Cerne and Sydling Downs SAC	Annex 1 habitats: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites)	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation	Grazing; Fertilisation; Interspecific floral relations;

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European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
	Annex 2 species (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site): Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas</i> (<i>Eurodryas</i>, <i>Hypodryas</i>) <i>aurinia</i>	Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species • The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats • The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species • The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely • The populations of qualifying species, and, • The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Other ecosystem modifications
Holnest SAC	Annex 2 species: Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of the habitats of qualifying species	None given

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European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
		- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species - The supporting processes on which the habitats of qualifying species rely - The populations of qualifying species, and, - The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	
Rooksmoor SAC	Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site): Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) Annex 2 species: Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas</i> (<i>Eurodryas</i>, <i>Hypodryas</i>) <i>aurinia</i>	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; - The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species - The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats - The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely	Mowing / cutting of grassland; Grazing; Air pollution; Biocenotic evolution, succession

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European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
		- The populations of qualifying species, and, - The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	
Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar	Ramsar criterion 2: Supports 17 species of British Red Data Book invertebrates. Ramsar criterion 5: Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 97155 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003) Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): Species with peak counts in winter: Tundra swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, Northern lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>.	Natural England considers the Conservation Advice packages for the overlapping European Sites to be sufficient to support the management of the Ramsar interests at this site.	None reported
Somerset Levels and Moors SPA	Bewick's Swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> (non-breeding) European Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (non-breeding); Eurasian Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> (non-breeding); Northern Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (non-breeding); Waterbird Assemblage.	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; - The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features - The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features	Cultivation; Modification of cultivation practices; Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions

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European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
		- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely - The population of each of the qualifying features, and, The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.	
West Dorset Alder Woods SAC	Annex 1 habitats: Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) Annex 1 habitats (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site): Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) Old acidophilous oak woods with <i>Quercus robur</i> on sandy plains Annex 2 species: Marsh fritillary butterfly <i>Euphydryas</i> (<i>Eurodryas</i>, <i>Hypodryas</i>) <i>aurinia</i> Annex 2 species (present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for selection of this site): Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; - The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species - The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats - The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely - The populations of qualifying species, and,	Invasive non-native species; Problematic native species; Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources); Grazing; Forest and Plantation management & use.

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European Site	Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Potential threats, pressures and activities with impacts
		The distribution of qualifying species within the site.	

Date: 29 July 2026
Our ref: 552705



Nick Cardnell
BY EMAIL ONLY

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T [REDACTED]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Habitats Regulations Assessment - Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank Plan Apr 2026

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 01 May 2026.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

No objection

The proposed neighbourhood plan area of Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank lies within the hydrological catchment of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar. Listed Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar) are protected as a matter of Government policy (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 194).

It is proposed in the Appropriate Assessment that wording should be inserted at the end of Policy 9 (Meeting Local Housing Need) in the plan stating that 'Housing development will only be supported if it can achieve phosphate neutrality in respect of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site' and Natural England concur. Additional text will also need to be added to the supporting text to the policy to provide context and reasoning for the requirement in the policy.

The wording included in paragraph 2.9.1 of the plan, and the additional wording proposed above, will ensure that nutrient neutrality is achieved across the plan area and an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site is prevented.

Natural England concur with the Appropriate Assessment for Bradford Abbas & Clifton Maybank plan. The authority should be mindful of the need to secure any mitigation/avoidance measures which have been identified as being required to avoid harm to the habitat's sites. Suitable legally binding agreements may be required which will need to consider mitigation which must be in place prior to commencement/occupation of any development or where ongoing impacts are long term in perpetuity.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely
Rosalind Tuck

Higher Officer,
Sustainable Development, Dorset
Wessex Area Team
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