

Planning

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Listening Learning Leading



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Dear [REDACTED],

Local Plan for Buckinghamshire Habitats Regulations Assessment Scoping Report

Thank you for providing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils with the opportunity to comment on the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Scoping Report.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement to produce an HRA Scoping Report, it is helpful to understand Buckinghamshire Council's intended approach. We welcome the opportunity to comment and identify potential cross-boundary issues at an early stage.

Our comments on the HRA Scoping Report are set out below:

Other Plans and Projects

In addition to identifying adopted local plans for immediately surrounding authorities, consideration should also be given to emerging local plans and neighbourhood plans, as they also have potential to result in combination effects on internationally designated sites.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working together to produce a new Joint Local Plan which will guide development in the districts to 2041. The timetable for producing the Joint Local Plan is set out in the councils' [Joint Local Development Scheme](#) (adopted December 2022). It should be noted that the timetables for producing the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 and the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire 2040 overlap. Therefore, there will be a need for engagement between the authorities to ensure that in combination effects are properly assessed through both local plan HRA processes, particularly in relation to Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and Aston Rowant SAC.

Neighbourhood plans are also underway in South Oxfordshire parishes which include parts of the Aston Rowant SAC and Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, e.g. Lewknor

Parish and Aston Rowant Parish, you can view details on our website by clicking on the parishes on our [neighbourhood plan map](#).

The HRA Scoping Report states that consideration will also be given to Local Transport Plans for Buckinghamshire and immediately surrounding authorities. This should include the [Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (adopted July 2022).

Chilterns Beechwoods SAC 500m Exclusion Zone

The HRA Scoping Report states: *“As a general rule it would be good practice to ensure that any site allocations (particularly for residential development) are not located within 500m of any European site.”* This is referred to as a 500m exclusion zone and is illustrated in Figure A2.

Caution is needed in identifying and mapping 500m exclusion zones, specifically where the exclusion zones extend into adjoining authority areas (as is currently shown in Figure A2). The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire can only direct site allocations within Buckinghamshire, and the process of site selection in South Oxfordshire will be undertaken though the preparation of the local plan and neighbourhood plans.

Yours sincerely,



Senior Planning Policy Officer
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils