

REPORT OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT OCTOBER 2007.

Summary of Appropriate Assessment of effects of Proposed Changes draft of East of England Plan on European Sites.

Epping Forest SAC – traffic generated air quality (from M25, and B1393 whilst M11 traffic diverted during improvement works).

Finding: Although parts of the site would remain above both the limit value and the critical load, the effects of the policies in combination with the Regional Transport Strategy would be unlikely to conflict with the conservation objectives, and the policies considered are not predicted to affect the integrity of Epping Forest SAC for reasons of air quality.

Reasons: M25 – forecast reduction in vehicle emissions predicted to more than offset increase due to more vehicles, though deposition rates close to motorway above critical limits in both 2003 and 2021; B1393 – increased deposition due to diverting traffic less than 1% compared with rate without that traffic, though deposition rates close to road above critical limits in both 2006 and 2015.

Comment: Consultants aware of Robert West Associates report in 2005, which concluded that a small increase in traffic would lead to a significant increase in pollution. In response to officer queries the consultants have advised that:

- (i) Robert West may have over-estimated predicted emissions from data, and did not take into account improvements in vehicle technologies, tighter emission and fuel standards, and changes in vehicle flows/speeds/mix by 2021;
- (ii) deposition rates for nitrous oxide emissions are predicted by 2021 to be above critical limits only up to 70m from the M25 edge (compared with 200m at present), and considerable reductions from current levels are expected closer to the motorway;
- (iii) although deposition rates for nitrogen emissions are predicted to fall by modest amounts, the sources are regional (or even international) rather than local; and
- (iv) further calculations about predicted nitrous oxide impacts close to the B1393, B172, A121 and A104 show all to be much less than those by the M25, and at or above critical limits only in close proximity to the roads.

Epping Forest SAC – Recreation Pressure.

Finding: No effect on integrity of Epping Forest SAC.

Reasons: Alternative recreational resources expected in Harlow area (Green Infrastructure Plan) – in any event Forest has very wide catchment, including North London; relevant habitats/species not highly sensitive to recreational use; and management regime of Forest designed to protect sensitive areas.

Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar Site – Water Quality.

Finding: Wastewater management could have adverse effects.

Reasons: Localised expansion of Rye Meads sewage treatment works could lead to loss of adjoining wildlife habitat; poor water quality and flood risk, if treatment capacity not increased, could adversely affect water quality dependent flora and fauna.

Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar Site – Recreation Pressure.

Finding: No effect on integrity of SPA and Ramsar Site.

Reasons: Alternative recreational resources expected i.e. Harlow Green Infrastructure Plan, green space between Hatfield and St Albans, Watling Chase Community Forest – in any event Lee Valley Regional Park has very wide catchment, including North London; management objectives and Site Management Plans by LVRPA designed to reconcile recreational use with wildlife importance and sensitivity.