

A14
Cambridge to Huntingdon
improvement scheme
Development Consent Order
Application Environmental Statement
Appendix 11.12 Annex C Update

HE/A14/EX/62

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..... Assessment of Implications on European Sites

..... Updated PINS Advice Note 10 Screening Matrices

July 2015

The Infrastructure Planning Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedure) Regulations 2009

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme

Assessment of
implications on European sites

PINS advice note 10 screening matrices

UPDATED

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

- 1.1.1 This report is an amended Annex C: PINS advice note 10 screening matrices from *Appendix 11.12 of the Environmental Statement: Assessment of implications on European sites Stage 1: No significant effects report* submitted with the Development Consent Order Application in December 2014.
- 1.1.2 The matrices have been amended following the request from the Examining Authority in the last paragraph of Annex G of the letter issued under Rule 6 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) on 17 April 2015, which stated:
- “Though matrices were supplied with the application, amendment of the matrices to more accurately identify evidence is recommended. The matrices will need to be supplied as word versions as well as pdfs. The date by which the completed matrices must be received from the applicant will be discussed at the Preliminary Meeting.”*
- 1.1.3 This matter was raised by Robbie Owen of Pinsent Masons on behalf of Highways England at the Preliminary Meeting on 13 May 2015.
- 1.1.4 The note of the Preliminary Meeting stated the following in relation to the Rule 6 advice:
- “In relation to the request in Annex G of the letter of 17 April, for two matrices in relation to the Habitats Regulations 2010 as amended, RO suggested that the applicant could provide these by 7 July 2015 (Deadline 3).”*
- 1.1.5 In the absence of guidance from the Examining Authority, it has been assumed that the interpretation stated by Robbie Owen at that meeting (that the requirement of the advice was for more accurate referencing of evidence and not any additional evidence) is the appropriate one. However, this interpretation was not reported in the summary note of the meeting.

2 Annex C: PINS advice note 10 screening matrices

2.1 Potential Impacts

2.1.1 Potential impacts upon the European sites which are considered within the submitted Habitats Regulations Assessment report (A14 6.3 ES Appendix 11.12) are provided in the table below. Impacts have been grouped where appropriate for ease of presentation.

- Habitat Loss and Habitat Fragmentation;
- Changes to Water Levels and Water Quality;
- Inappropriate Management;
- Air Pollution; and
- Introduction of invasive species.

Table C.1: Impacts considered within the screening matrices:

Designation	Impacts in submission information	Presented in screening matrices as
Portholme SAC 6510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation	Habitat loss / fragmentation
	Changes to water levels and water quality. Air pollution	Indirect changes to conditions
	Inappropriate management. Introduction of invasive species	Inappropriate management and alien introductions
Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar Seasonally flooded washland; spined loach; waterbird assemblage (breeding and wintering); scarce invertebrates and plants.	Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation	Habitat loss / fragmentation
	Changes to water levels and water quality. Air pollution	Indirect changes to conditions
	Inappropriate management. Introduction of invasive species	Inappropriate management and alien introductions
Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC 1308 <i>Barbastelle-Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation	Habitat loss / fragmentation
	Changes to water levels and water quality. Air pollution	Indirect changes to conditions
	Inappropriate management. Introduction of invasive species	Inappropriate management and alien introductions

Stage 1: Screening matrices

2.1.2 The European Sites included within the screening assessment are:

- Portholme SAC (Matrix 1);
- Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar (Matrix 2); and
- Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC (Matrix 3).

2.1.3 As no likely significant effects have been identified, there is no requirement for matrices to summarise the implications for the integrity of each European site.

2.1.4 Evidence for likely significant effects on their qualifying features is detailed within the footnotes to the screening matrices below.

Matrix Key:

✓ = Likely significant effect **cannot** be excluded

✗ = Likely significant effect **can** be excluded

C = construction

O = operation

D = decommissioning

2.1.5 Where effects are not applicable to a particular feature they are greyed out.

2.1.6 All decommissioning effects are greyed out, as roads are not designed and managed to be decommissioned and thus consideration of effects during a decommissioning phase would be irrelevant. Were any decommissioning of all or part of the road to be proposed in the future, a separate project would be developed, which would be accompanied by a specific assessment of the implications for European sites. The issue of decommissioning was also raised at the Preliminary Meeting on 13 May 2015, namely that roads are not designed and managed to be decommissioned (as opposed to developments such as power stations) and thus the decommissioning column in the matrices is irrelevant to the A14 scheme and should be disregarded, but this was not included in the note of that meeting. As such, in the absence of guidance from the Examining Authority, it has been assumed that this approach towards decommissioning effects (i.e. to disregard them) in the matrices is the appropriate one.

2.1.7 Evidence in the matrices refers to Appendix 11.12: Assessment of Implications for European Sites of the Environmental Statement (document reference 6.3). This is referred to in the footnotes as the AIES. Figures referred to are figure numbers from the Environmental Statement (document reference 6.2).

Stage 1 Matrix 1: Portholme SAC

Name of European site: Portholme SAC												
Distance to NSIP: 37 m at nearest point												
European site features	Likely Effects of NSIP											
	Habitat loss / fragmentation			Indirect changes to conditions			Inappropriate management and alien introductions			In combination effects		
Stage of Development	C	O	D	C	O	D	C	O	D	C	O	D
6510 Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	x _a	x _b	x _c	x _d	x _d	x _c	x _e	x _e	x _c	x _f	x _f	x _c

Evidence supporting conclusions

a: There would be no habitat loss from the site during the construction phase as the site is 37m from the nearest point of the scheme. As the site is an independent, isolated habitat, there would be no fragmentation either (see paragraphs 6.2.2 to 6.2.4 in the AIES and Figure 11.14: AIES European sites).

b: There would be no habitat loss during operation of the road as there are no effects on habitat loss/fragmentation, which necessarily occurs at site clearance during the construction phase.

c: Roads are not designed and managed to be decommissioned and thus consideration of effects during a decommissioning phase would be irrelevant.

d: Best practice construction methods will prevent significant pollution during the construction phase. There would be an overall reduction in road surface area in the Huntingdon area and a reduction in average traffic flows. This would result in benefits to the SAC related to decreased surface water run-off (and therefore flood risk and water quality improvements) and an improvement in air quality (due to a reduction in NO_x and total nitrogen) in the operational phase. Changes in the water and air environment are predicted to be insignificant and in places beneficial (see *paragraphs 6.3.2 to 6.3.19 and 6.5.2 to 6.5.21 in the AIES*).

e: The scheme would not affect the traditional grazing and cutting for hay techniques currently employed at the SAC during either the construction or operational phases. Invasive species have been recorded near the scheme but best practice construction techniques would control spread of such species where present during the construction phase (see *paragraphs 6.4.2 to 6.4.5 and 6.6.2 to 6.6.8 in the AIES*).

f: As there will be no habitat loss or fragmentation due to the scheme, there will be no in-combination effects with other developments (see *paragraphs 6.2.4; 6.3.8, 13, 17 and 19; 6.4.5, 6.5.21 and 6.6.7 in the AIES*).

Stage 1 Matrix 2: Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar

Name of European site: Ouse Washes SAC/SPA/Ramsar												
Distance to NSIP: 9,124 m												
European site features	Likely Effects of NSIP											
	Habitat loss / fragmentation			Indirect changes to conditions			Inappropriate management and alien introductions			In combination effects		
Stage of Development	C	O	D	C	O	D	C	O	D	C	O	D
Seasonally flooded washland; spined loach; waterbird assemblage (breeding and wintering); scarce invertebrates and plants	xg	xh	xi	xj	xj	xi	xk	xk	xi	xl	xl	xi

Evidence supporting conclusions

g: There would be no habitat loss from the site during the construction phase as the site is over 9km from the nearest point of the scheme. There would be no significant loss or fragmentation of habitat used by mobile species from the SPA/Ramsar (see paragraphs 6.2.5 to 6.2.9 in the AIES and Figure 11.14: AIES European sites).

h: There would be no habitat loss during operation of the road as there are no effects on habitat loss/fragmentation, which necessarily occurs at site clearance during the construction phase.

i: Roads are not designed and managed to be decommissioned and thus consideration of effects during a decommissioning phase would be irrelevant.

j: Changes in the water and air environment are predicted to be insignificant and in places beneficial during both the construction and operation phases. The site or habitats likely to be used by features from the site are not likely to be significantly affected (see *paragraphs 6.3.20 to 6.3.23 and 6.5.22 in the AIES*).

k: The scheme would not affect the management of the site or any habitat significantly used by features from the site during either the construction or operational phases. Invasive species have been recorded near the scheme but best practice construction techniques would control spread of such species where present during the construction phase (see *paragraphs 6.4.6 and 6.6.9 to 6.6.12 in the AIES*).

l: Other projects in the area (e.g. large residential developments) could conceivably act in combination to affect habitat used by mobile species from the site or through changes to water quantity and quality. The abundance of suitable habitat in the area and distance from the site however make it unlikely that any in-combination effects on the site would occur. As the effects of the scheme are likely to be beneficial for changes in the water environment, no in-combination effects are predicted (see *paragraphs 6.2.10; 6.3.24; 6.4.6; 6.5.22 and 6.6.11 in the AIES*).

Stage 1 Matrix 3: Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC

Name of European site: Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC												
Distance to NSIP: >10 km												
European site features	Likely Effects of NSIP											
	Habitat loss / fragmentation			Indirect changes to conditions			Inappropriate management and alien introductions			In combination effects		
Stage of Development	C	O	D	C	O	D	C	O	D	C	O	D
1308 Barbastelle- <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	xm	xn	xo	xp	xp	xo	xq	xq	xo	xr	xr	xo

Evidence supporting conclusions

m: There would be no habitat loss from the site during the construction phase as the site is over 10km from the nearest point of the scheme. Habitat used by barbastelle bats from the SAC could conceivably be fragmented by the scheme if the SAC population used areas near to the scheme and connective habitat was affected. However, it is unlikely that the SAC population use any habitat areas near to the scheme (see paragraphs 6.2.11 to 6.2.19 in the AIES and Figure 11.14: AIES European sites).

n: There would be no habitat loss during operation of the road as there are no effects on habitat loss/fragmentation, which necessarily occurs at site clearance during the construction phase.

o: Roads are not designed and managed to be decommissioned and thus consideration of effects during a decommissioning phase would be irrelevant.

p: Changes in the water and air environment are predicted to be insignificant and in places beneficial during both the construction and operational phases. No habitat likely to be used by SAC barbastelle bats is likely to be significantly affected (see *paragraphs 6.3.25 and 6.5.23 in the AIES*).

q: The scheme would not affect the management of the site or foraging / commuting habitat outside the site that is likely to be used by SAC bats during either the construction or operational phases. Invasive species have been recorded near the scheme but best practice construction techniques would control spread of such species where present during the construction phase (see *paragraphs 6.4.7 and 6.6.13 in the AIES*).

r: Other projects in the area (e.g. large residential developments) could conceivably act in combination to reduce the connectivity and foraging resource for barbastelle bats to the north of the area of importance for the SAC. However, the lack of connectivity between the area of importance for the SAC and the area in the vicinity of the scheme also suggests it is unlikely that any in combination effects on barbastelle bat habitat in the vicinity of the scheme would have an adverse effect on the SAC (see *paragraphs 6.2.20; 6.3.25; 6.4.7; 6.5.23 and 6.6.13 in the AIES*).