

CONSULTATION DRAFT

WEST MIDLANDS THIRD LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

HABITAT REGULATIONS APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT

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West Midlands Third Local Transport Plan

**Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment
Screening Report**

Introduction

This report presents the analysis and findings of the screening stage of a Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment for the emerging third West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna institutes a legislative framework for the protection of European important habitats through designation as Special Areas for Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Offshore Marine Sites (OMS) and, within the UK, Ramsar sites. This network of sites is known collectively as Natura 2000.

The requirement for an Appropriate Assessment of strategic transport plans, policies and projects is outlined in article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive, and its stated purpose is to provide a critical examination of the likelihood of significant individual and in-combination impacts upon the nature conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites arising from the land use plan.

It is important to identify potential adverse impacts at an early stage in the development of plans and policies in order that any alterations necessary to ameliorate or mitigate can be made.

The precautionary principle underpins the Appropriate Assessment process, and for this reason when a clear conclusion of likelihood or significance of impacts cannot be drawn it is best practise to assume a “worst case scenario”, and undertake further investigation.

Methodology

In undertaking the screening process reliance has been placed on the recent Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports produced by partner Local Authorities in respect of:

Birmingham Core Strategy
Coventry Core Strategy
Solihull Core Strategy
Black Country Joint Core Strategy

In undertaking the screening process Local Authorities followed the best practice guidance produced by Scott Wilson et al and Oxford Brookes University in conjunction with the Department for Communities and Local Government publication *Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment*, plus Natural England Guidance on Local Transport Plans and the Natural Environment.

These guidance documents identify 3 discrete phases required to complete a full Appropriate Assessment, with the outcome of each phase determining the need for progression to the subsequent phase. In brief, these phases involve the following:

Phase 1 - Evidence gathering and screening.

Phase 2 - Appropriate Assessment: to be undertaken if significant impacts are deemed likely by the screening phase.

Phase 3 - Mitigation measures, compensation and alternative solutions to avoid impacts to protected site integrity.

This report is concerned with Phase 1, screening of Natura 2000 sites to identify and assess the likelihood and significance of impacts to sites arising from Themes or Policies within the emerging West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3, and in combination with subsidiary plans, strategies and policies. The process for screening involves the following 4 steps:

- a) Identification of Natura 2000 and an appraisal of their conservation objectives.
- b) Analysis of the project or plan being considered.
- c) Characteristics of the Natura 2000 sites.
- d) Assessment of likelihood and significance of impacts to Natura 2000 sites occurring as a result of the policy or plan.

If significant impacts are considered likely or cannot be determined, further screening will be required, which may then trigger progression to Phase 2, Appropriate Assessment.

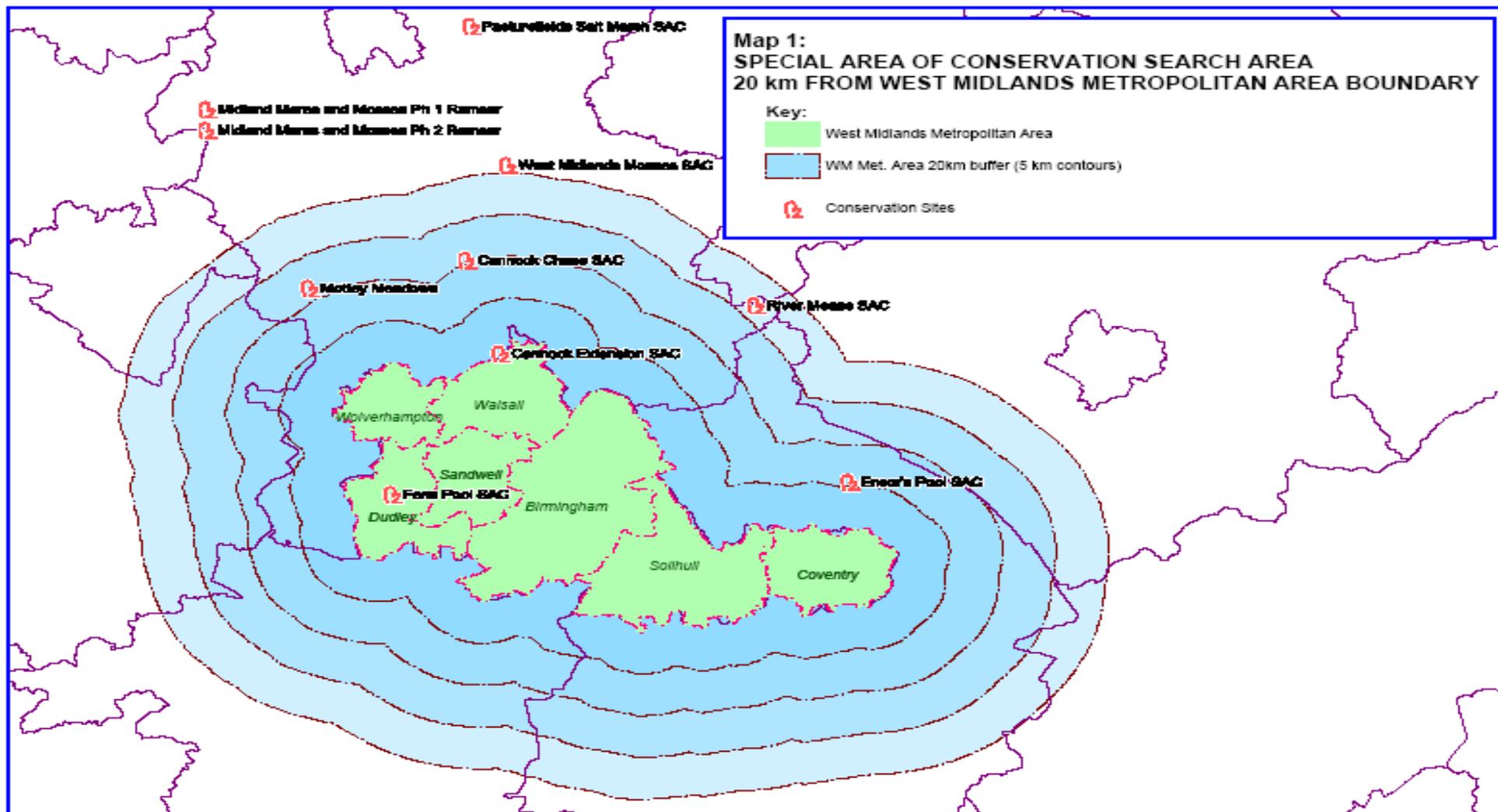
Screening

Site Identification

Natura 2000 sites have been identified using information from the Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC) website and the interactive mapping programme *Nature on the Map* supplied by Natural England. In order to identify all sites where impacts could reasonably be considered possible, a mapping search was conducted to highlight all SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites within 20km of the West Midlands Metropolitan Area boundary.

The distance of 20km followed advice from Natural England and provides a contextual framework for consideration of impacts. This search area considered all reasonable potential direct and indirect individual and in-combination impacts to Natura 2000 sites.

Best practise guidance states that all potential impacts must be appraised, and that this may require more distant sites to be considered. Although safe from immediate impacts such as land-take and management practises, distant sites may still be vulnerable to impacts from water abstraction regimes, recreational pressure, diffuse air pollution and water pollution.



Site Analysis

An important part of screening is to identify the qualifying features of interest at each Natura 2000 site, and to assess the type of impact that could impinge upon the maintenance of site integrity. An analysis of the designation features, conservation interests and specific vulnerabilities of each site is provided below:

Site	Grid Reference	Distance from WMMA Boundary	Designation and Conservation Objectives	Factors affecting site integrity
Fens Pool SAC	SK020058	Within WMMA boundary	<p>Great Crested Newt, <i>Triturus Cristatus</i> (Annex II species) – The open water, swamp, fen and inundation communities of the site provide ideal breeding habitat for the great crested newt and an important amphibian assemblage.</p> <p>Ensure maintenance of the habitat in a favourable condition for the Great Crested Newt.</p>	<p><u>Land take</u> – Development and change of land use may reduce or fragment the newts available terrestrial habitat.</p> <p><u>Recreational disturbance</u> – The site is currently threatened by recreational disturbance.</p> <p><u>Water quality</u> – The site is vulnerable due to the surrounding urban developments.</p> <p><u>Water quantity</u> – Loss of ponds would reduce breeding areas for the great crested newt.</p> <p><u>Habitat management</u> – Appropriate management is required to ensure favourable habitat is maintained for great crested newts.</p> <p><u>Non-native or invasive species</u> – The newt population would be negatively affected, due to predation, if fish were to be introduced to the site.</p>
Cannock Extension Canal SAC	SO920888	On the WMMA Boundary	<p>Floating Water Plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> (Annex II species) – The site provides favourable conditions to support very large population of this species. The population represents the very eastern limit of the plants natural range in England.</p> <p>Ensure favourable conditions for floating-water plantain are maintained. Cutting of emergents may be required if disturbance occurs</p>	<p><u>Recreational disturbance</u> – Floating water plantain requires low levels of disturbance and is vulnerable to competition from emergent species, if disturbed. Increased use of boats on this site could be detrimental.</p> <p><u>Water quality</u> – Surface runoff from surrounding roads is having a detrimental effect on water quality.</p> <p><u>Air pollution</u> – May contribute to a decline in water quality through acid and Nitrogen deposition.</p>
Ensor's Pool SAC	SP348903	5 km	White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius</i>	<u>Water Quality</u> – Pollution could affect

			<p><i>pallipes</i> (Annex II species) – Isolated away from other river systems the site provides a refuge area for a very large population of the species (approx 50,000)</p> <p>Ensure maintenance of the habitat in a favourable condition for the White-clawed Crayfish</p>	<p>crayfish at all stages of the life cycle.</p> <p><u>Water Quantity</u> – Site may be threatened by water abstraction</p> <p><u>Habitat management</u> – Site is being managed as a Local Nature Reserve.</p> <p><u>Non-native or invasive species</u> – Population will be vulnerable to the invasive signal crayfish or the threat of diseased crayfish from the Midlands area.</p>
Cannock Chase SAC	SJ982188	10 km	<p>European dry heaths (Annex I habitat) – The most extensive example of lowland dry heath in the Midlands consisting of NVC heath types H8 <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Ulex gallii</i> and H9 <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>. The vegetation character is intermediate between the heaths of Northern and Southern England, and supports important populations of butterflies and beetles.</p> <p>Northern Atlantic Wet Heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> (Supporting Annex I habitat)</p> <p>Ensure maintenance of the European dry heaths with reference to H8 <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Ulex gallii</i> and H9 <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> – <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> communities, to a favourable condition.</p> <p>Ensure maintenance of the North Atlantic wet heaths to a favourable condition with reference to M16 <i>Erica tetralix</i> – <i>Sphagnum compactum</i> communities.</p>	<p><u>Recreational pressure</u> - High visitor numbers are leading to trampling, soil erosion, and vegetation damage.</p> <p><u>Water quantity</u> - Ground water levels are threatened by abstraction.</p> <p><u>Air pollution</u> - NOx deposition is 18 times above the critical load, which is negatively impacting upon heath-land vegetation community composition.</p>
Mottey Meadows SAC	SJ840134	11 km	<p>Lowland hay meadows <i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i> (Annex I habitat) – The site is a large example of a nationally rare grassland. It supports <i>Fritillaria meleagris</i> in the most northern</p>	<p><u>Water quality</u> - Nutrient-rich agricultural run-off threatens the community composition of the meadows.</p> <p><u>Water quantity</u> - This site is highly vulnerable to changing water levels due to</p>

			<p>part of its range and a number of other rare meadow species.</p> <p>Ensure habitat is maintained as designated and in a favourable condition.</p>	<p>the high dependency of the species mix on the autumn/ winter ground water table.</p> <p><u>Air pollution</u> - The site is vulnerable to NOx deposition due to being close to critical loading point. An increase in NOx may alter community composition unfavourably.</p> <p><u>Habitat management</u> - Traditional management regimes are necessary to maintain the site in favourable condition</p>
River Mease SAC	SK260114	17 km	<p>Water course of plain to montane levels with <i>Ranunculon fluitsntis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation (Annex 1 habitat)</p> <p>Spined loach <i>Cobitis taenia</i> (Annex II) - The site supports beds of submerged plants and sandy sediments which supports a good riverine population of the spined loach and provides further habitat opportunities.</p> <p>Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> (Annex II species) – The sinuosity of the river and the macrophyte cover provides suitable habitat to support a population of the species.</p> <p>White-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamovius pallipes</i> and Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Annex II supporting species) are both present within the habitat.</p> <p>Ensure the river is maintained at a favourable status for floating formations of water crowfoot species (<i>Ranunculus spp</i>), population of bullhead, spined loach and white-clawed crayfish. Maintain the river and the surrounding lands to provide suitable habitat for populations of Otter.</p>	<p><u>Recreational disturbance</u> – Increased recreational use of the river may increase water pollution and bank erosion.</p> <p><u>Water quality</u> – Land use in the surrounding area causes diffuse pollution and sedimentation, factors which are likely to have a negative impact on the bullhead and white-clawed crayfish.</p> <p><u>Water quantity</u> – River water levels can be adversely affected by abstraction. Agricultural practices are noted to induce 'high competition for water resources' (SAC Natura 2000 data form).</p>
West Midlands	SK026282	20 km	Natural dystrophic Lakes and Ponds	<u>Recreational pressure</u> - The site is

Mosses SAC

(Annex I habitat) – This site is a rare example of dystrophic lakes and ponds in the English lowlands. It consists of 3 lakes, one of which has a high diversity of flora and fauna due to its unusual base rich character.

Transition mires and quaking bogs (Annex I habitat) – The floating rafts of sphagnum dominated vegetation support a mix of sedges *Carex spp* and cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and are confined in their geographical range to the Midlands area of England.

Ensure maintenance of both habitats as designated, to favourable condition

vulnerable to recreational activities that may increase trampling erosion and an increased risk of accidental burning.

Water quality - Polluted run off poses a threat to vegetation

Water quantity - Site integrity is dependant upon appropriate ground water levels

Air pollution - The site is currently exceeding critical load of NOx deposition.

Midlands Meres and Mosses Phase I Ramsar

Various locations across Staffordshire, Shropshire & Cheshire,

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This site comprises a matrix of 16 lowland peatland and water bodies. The range of habitats are botanically diverse, supporting 5 nationally scarce wetland plant species and invertebrate assemblages

(Conservation objectives not available)

Recreational Pressure - The site is vulnerable to trampling and erosion in areas of public access.

Water quality - Eutrophication and sedimentation are detrimental to site integrity.

Invasive species - Invasive species are already threatening the site

Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)

A Local Transport Plan sets out a vision for an area, it analyses travel problems and opportunities, and then sets clear objectives, policies and targets. It also includes a programme of integrated transport and maintenance capital schemes that will help to achieve these targets and provides the basis for gaining Government approval for Major Schemes – those that cost more than £5 million.

LTP3 only deals with investment in and management of local transport networks. Responsibility for investment in motorways, trunk roads and strategic rail schemes lies with Government bodies such as the Highways Agency and Network Rail. In order to achieve an integrated approach, therefore, LTP3 has been prepared in close co-operation with these organisations.

The starting point for LTP3 has been the development of a clear Shared Vision which sets out what the West Midlands Metropolitan Area will be like at the end of the LTP3 period, and how LTP3 will make a positive and integral contribution to that change.

The Shared Vision is:

“To make the West Midlands Metropolitan Area more prosperous, healthier and safer, offering a high quality and attractive environment where people will choose to live, work and visit, and where businesses thrive and attract inward investment.”

This Shared Vision builds on the national transport goals and applies them to the particular circumstances of the West Midlands Metropolitan Area:

- Supporting economic growth, reflecting the Area’s major contribution to the regional and national economies
- Tackling climate change
- Is safe, secure and healthy
- Presenting equality of opportunity to all, in an area of wide cultural and ethnic diversity, and
- Enhancing our health, quality of life and the built environment

The Shared Vision has been developed into a number of Key Outcomes, Strategic Principles, Key Objectives and Long Term Themes through which the Plan is developed and delivered. These are set out in the table below.

TWO KEY OUTCOMES				
These are the principal “deliverables” that LTP3 seeks to achieve, based on both national policy and the findings of our Vision and Issues consultation.				
Economic Recovery and Closing the Output Gap			Creation of a Clean Green Low Carbon Future	
THREE STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES				
These determine the basis of the Strategy.				
Smarter Management - Making the best use of the transport assets and capacity we already have.	Smarter Choices - Encouraging People to move from car use through providing attractive, effective and efficient alternatives which reduce our carbon footprint	Smarter Investment – Targeting our scarce resources at programmes, initiatives and schemes that support either or both of the first two strategic principles.		
FIVE KEY OBJECTIVES				
These Key Objectives underline the Key Outcomes, build upon them and provide a set of more detailed goals.				
KO1 – To underpin economic regeneration	KO2 – To Contribute towards tackling climate	KO3 – To improve health, personal security and the	KO4 – To enhance equality of opportunity and	KO5 – To enhance equality of life of people in

and growth in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, including support for housing development and population growth, job creation and for low carbon technologies.	change through achieving a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gas emissions and ensure the resilience of the transport system to any changes to the West Midlands Metropolitan Area's climate.	safety of people travelling in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.	social inclusion by enhancing access for all to services and other desired destinations within and adjacent to the West Midlands Metropolitan Area	the West Midlands Metropolitan Area and the quality of the local environment.
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TEN LONG-TERM THEMES

These define more detailed outcomes and outputs

Transport Asset Management – A Foundation for Growth	Making Best Use of The Strategic Highway Network	Modal Transfer and The Creation of Sustainable Travel Plans	Regeneration, Thriving Centres and Gateways	A Rail and Rapid Transit Network “Backbone for Development”	Improved Local Accessibility and Connectivity	Sustainable and Efficient Freight Transport.	Effective and Reliable Transport Integration	Improved Safety and Security	Reduced Carbon Through Green Technologies
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POLICIES

The Long Term Themes are further augmented by a number of Policies. These Policies are statements of intent, which show how each of the Long Term Themes will be delivered in practice, through specific interventions and actions. These are closely related to the specific project and programme proposals set out in the Implementation Plan 1 (IP1). These are outlined in the table below and the direct and indirect impact on Natura 2000 sites with the West Midlands Metropolitan Area buffer zone are considered. Map 2 also identifies LTP3 Phase One Implementation Plan major Schemes (IP1) in relation to sites with environmental designations.

Analysis and implications of Local Transport Plan 3 policy area objectives

The issues, objectives and options that form a basis for policy areas in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3 have been analysed individually to isolate possible pathways for direct and indirect impacts that may have a significant impact upon the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

Policy	Priorities for action	Potential effects of long term theme on Natura 2000 sites
Transport Asset Management		
AM1 Maintenance Service Levels	Ensure that current maintenance service levels are maintained.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
AM2 Highways Maintenance	Improve the performance of the Highway Network through proactive maintenance	
AM3 Service Delivery.	Improve the performance of delivered services.	
Making the Best Use of the Highway Network		
SN1 Functional Networks	Effective focusing of resources and co-ordination across District boundaries	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
SN2 Cross-Boundary Traffic Management	Co-ordinate cross-boundary policies with neighbouring authorities and the Highways Agency.	
SN3 Smart Routes Network	Co-ordinate the development and implementation of a Smart Route network.	Minor positive benefits may be achieved as Smart Routes provide the potential for less 'stop-start car journeys, leading to lower emissions. Modal transfer is encouraged by making public transport, cycling and walking more attractive. Improvements to traffic signals and other control systems should improve junction efficiency and greater fuel economy when driving. Bus services may also become more reliable and thereby encourage modal shift. Unobstructed journeys are more carbon efficient.
SN4 Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC)	Use Urban Traffic Management and Control to support Highways Management.	
SN5 MATTISSE System	Use MATTISSE to support LTP3 objectives effectively.	

SN6 Monitoring Congestion	Monitor performance of traffic and public transport services to tackle congestion.
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Modal Transfer and the Creation of Sustainable Travel Patterns

MT1 Car Parking	Ensure car parking provision supports the aim of encouraging sustainable transport patterns.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
MT2 Managing Travel Demand	Manage travel demand to encourage sustainable travel patterns.	Minor positive benefits on emissions may be achieved as travel by more sustainable modes are encouraged
MT3 Encouraging Sustainable Travel Patterns through Smarter Choices	Promote modal shift towards sustainable travel modes for work, school and leisure journeys.	A major expansion of the canal network for transporting goods or waste is not considered realistic in the lifetime of this plan. As the floating water – plantain associated with Cannock Extension Canal SAC increased public use will have no significant direct or indirect impact on this site.
MT4 - Increasing Levels of Cycling	Increase levels of cycling to improve health, the environment, reduce car use and improve the accessibility of people without access to a car.	
MT5 - Increasing Cycle Integration with Public Transport	Increase opportunities for cyclists to integrate and interchange with public transport	
MT6 - Increasing Levels of Walking	Improve the attractiveness of walking as a travel choice.	
MT7 Canal Bridges	Ensure that bridges over canals on key routes are, as far as possible, free of weight restrictions.	
MT8 Navigable Waterways	Ensure that all canals are safeguarded as navigable waterways to support water-based local economic activity.	

MT9 Access to the Canal Network	Ensure that access to the canal network, particularly by pedestrians and cyclists is safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced.
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Regeneration, Thriving Centres and Gateways

REG1 Transport Infrastructure and Regeneration	Make the best use of existing transport infrastructure and services.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
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REG2 - High Speed Rail	Maximise the benefits and opportunities High Speed Rail will bring.	Although Fens Pool is vulnerable to the surrounding urban developments, there are no proposals in LTP3 which impact on the site. The Stourbridge – Walsall rail route runs to the west of the A481. The possible reopening of the line for freight or passengers will use existing infrastructure and is not likely to impact on Fens Pool SAC.
REG 3 High Speed Rail Sustainable Access	Ensure the benefits and opportunities can be accessed by people and businesses.	
REG4 Access to Major Visitor Attractions	Overcome deficiencies in on-street set-down and pick-up facilities in the vicinity of major visitor attractions.	
REG5 Coaches	Identify adequate long-stay coach parking facilities convenient to town and city centres and near major attractors.	

REG6 BIA	Ensure high quality surface access to the Airport to support existing and projected passenger growth.
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REG7 NEC Access	Ensure high quality sustainable surface access to the NEC site
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A Rail and Rapid Transit Network as a “Backbone for Development”

RR1 Expanding Rail Network Capacity	Expand local rail network capacity to meet forecasted growth in patronage.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
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RR2 Making the most of	Develop schemes to increase capacity and
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the existing Rail Network	reliability for both passenger freight services.	Expansion of rail involves using existing infrastructure and corridors and modal shift from car to rail will have a minor positive effect on emissions.
RR3 Passenger Rail Standards and Network Accessibility	Deliver high levels of services standards and accessibility.	
RR4 Expanding the Rapid Transit Network	Expand the rapid transit network	
RR5 'Ultra Low Carbon' Rapid Transit	Ultra low emission at source with an aspiration target for Zero Emission as technology permits	
RR6 Birmingham City Centre Accessibility	Develop interim rapid transit to improve access in and around Birmingham City Centre	

Improved Local Accessibility and Connectivity

LA1 General Accessibility	Encourage service providers to embed accessibility considerations within their service delivery investment programmes.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
LA2 Equalities	Ensure the access needs of groups defined in the Equalities Act 2010 are met as far as practicable.	Minor Positive benefits may be achieved by improving accessibility to key facilities by modes other than the private car. Introduction of low carbon fleet of buses will provide further benefits.
LA3 Socially Necessary Services	Secure socially-necessary local bus services to ensure access to local facilities.	However complimentary bus services may have minor negative effects in encouraging journeys that otherwise may not have occurred.
LA4 Local Bus Services	Improve service levels and accessibility to essential services and facilities.	
LA5 Cost of Travel	Ensure that cost of travel is not a barrier to accessibility to employment opportunities and services.	
LA6 Bus Network	Create a high-quality bus network.	

- LA7 Ring and Ride To increase social inclusion through a thriving Ring and Ride.
- LA8 Community Transport To increase social inclusion through a thriving community transport sector.

Sustainable and Efficient Freight Transport

- SF1 Lorry Parking Increase the availability of HGV parking in appropriate locations. There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone.
- SF2 Effective Delivery Access Ensure effective and reliable freight deliveries can occur in all types of centres.
- SF3 Improving Environmental Performance Support national and locally led initiatives to accelerate the introduction of low carbon transport. Growth of road freight without environmental improvements will increase carbon emissions. Urban freight consolidation centres, supported by the use of electric vehicles for local delivery will have positive impacts on local air quality. Whilst air freight is a carbon intensive activity it does not account for a significant amount of movements. Although transfer of freight via water has very low carbon emissions opportunities are very limited.
- SF4 Enhanced Rail Freight Network Capacity Develop and enhance rail freight network capacity, efficiently and reliability.
- SF5 Expanding Rail Freight Terminal Capacity Encourage the development of rail freight terminals to meet future growth.
- SF6 Air Freight Support Air Freight whilst paying due regard to associated impacts.
- SF7 Supporting Water Freight Support initiatives in developing opportunities for water based freight movements

Effective and Reliable Transport Integration

- TI1 Strategic Park and Ride Develop strategic park and ride capacity at appropriate locations. There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone
- TI2 Local Park and Ride Develop increased local park and ride capacity appropriate to local demand.

TI3 Public Transport Information	Ensure high quality information is accessible to all about public transport services.	Minor positive benefits may be achieved by greater integration to encourage modal switch to public transport thus reducing carbon emissions.
TI4 Modal Integration	Develop seamless integration between all types of transport modes.	
TI5 Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles	Ensure taxis and PHVs continue to play a role in an integrated transport offer.	
TI6 Bus Lanes	Develop an integrated approach on access to bus lanes across the Metropolitan Area.	

Improved Safety and Security

SS1 Road Safety	Reduce further casualties resulting from road traffic collisions.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone
SS2 Road Safety Co-ordination	Achieve greater co-ordination between road safety partners	Minor positive benefits may be achieved as safer roads encourage transfer to active modes. Improved safety and security should encourage greater use of public transport
SS3 Powered Two Wheelers	Take account of the needs of P2Ws and promote their safe use.	
SS4 Public Transport Safety	Reduce actual and perceived safety concerns towards public transport use.	

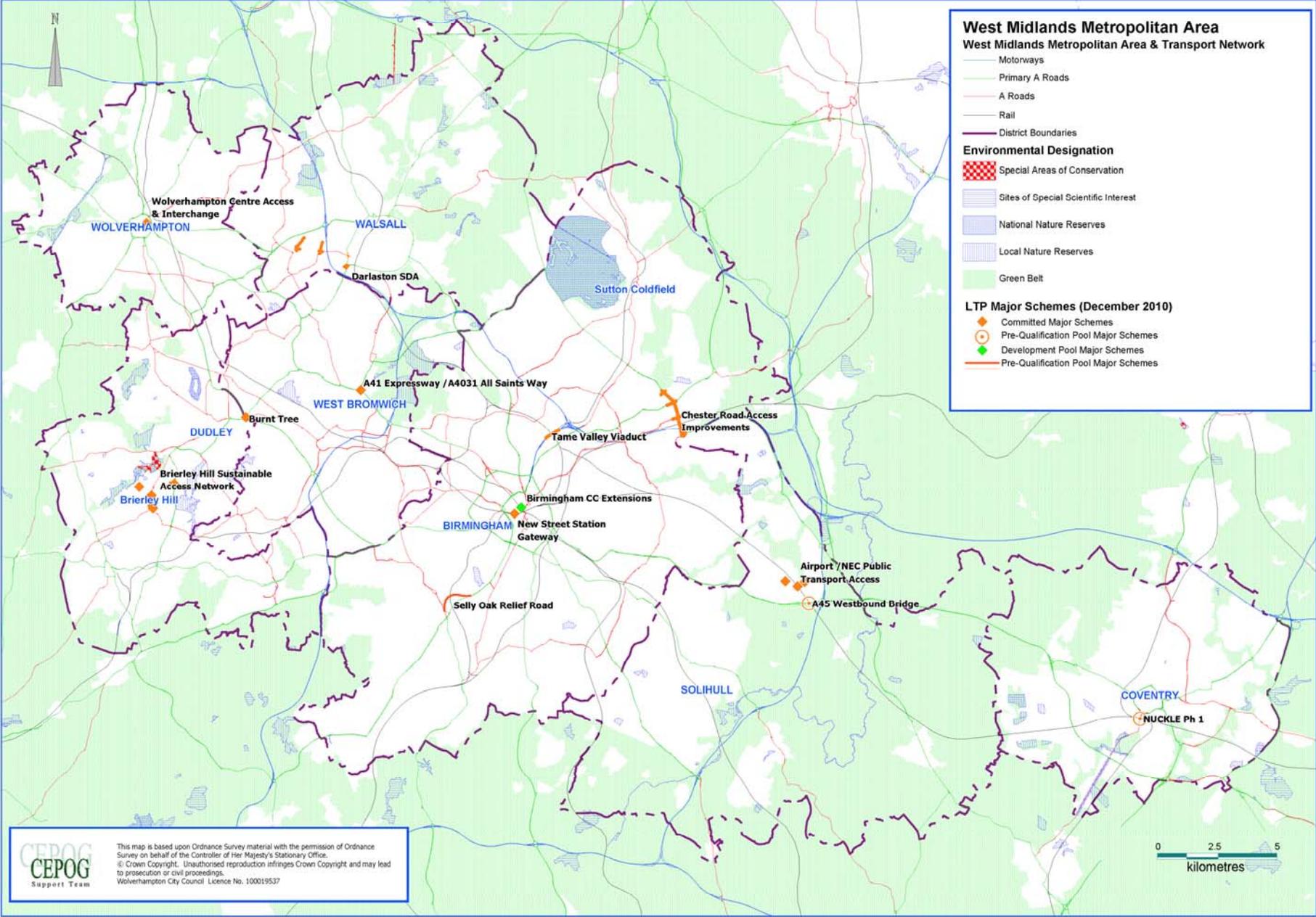
Reduced Carbon Through New Technologies

GT1 Accelerated Low Carbon Technology	Support the roll-out of low carbon infrastructure and the development of low and zero carbon public service and private vehicles.	There are unlikely to be any significant direct or indirect impact on any of the Natura 2000 sites within the buffer zone
GT2 - Human Health	Reduce air pollution emissions from transport	Low carbon public and private vehicles have a positive impact on emissions.

GT3 Emissions Standards Improve local air quality in pursuit of UK standards and European Directive limits

GT4 Noise Nuisance Minimise noise nuisance from the transport network

Map 2: Draft LTP3 Major Schemes and Environmental Designations



Conclusion

This Screening Report has considered the potential effects of LTP3 alone in supporting the targeted regeneration proposed in the Core Strategies within the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.

The West Midlands LTP3 seeks to continue to develop a transport network that will reduce congestion, improve access and promote sustainable forms of transport thereby improving air quality and reducing diffuse air pollution. LTP3 seeks to make better use of existing transport infrastructure and does not involve any direct land take that will affect any of the European sites.

In respect of the two sites which fall within the Metropolitan Area, Fens Pool SAC in Dudley and Cannock Canal Extension SAC on the Walsall - Cannock boundary:

The outcome of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy HRA Screening Report (June 2010) concluded that there would be no likely significant effect on Fens Pool SAC so long as the recommended changes to the plan proposals were followed. In the case of Fens Pool SAC the main recommendation was to protect land around the SAC to safeguard potential meta populations, avoid habitat isolation and to maintain or enhance connectivity of suitable habitat (i.e. east-west open space links are created and maintained between Saltwells Nature Reserve and Fens Pool SAC). As a consequence, Natural England agreed that it was not necessary to proceed to the next stage of the HRA in terms of particular use.

The Cannock Extension Canal is a cul-de-sac canal, in which the conditions for open-water plants, including floating water-plantain is dependent upon a balanced level of boat traffic. In respect of the Cannock Extension Canal SAC the Black Country Joint Core Strategy Examination (October 2010) found that it was unrealistic to expect any major expansion of the canal network for transporting industrial goods or waste and there are also environmental constraints in preparing the canals for increased freight transport. The examination concluded that “we are content that the JCS policies are appropriate regarding the future potential of BC canals and strike a suitable balance between the various interests including a possible small increase in use for freight transport.”

Neither the Coventry nor Solihull Core Strategy HRAs consider that there will be any significant impacts on Ensors Pool, Nuneaton. The possible impacts on Ensors Pool are thought to be through air pollution and recreational pressure.

Cannock Chase SAC is reported to be vulnerable to recreational pressure and disturbance in respect of additional homes in the Black Country potentially leading to an increased number of visitors to Cannock Chase. The Black Country Joint Core Strategy Examination (October 2010) recognised that the SAC is part of the wider Cannock Chase, and acknowledged the need to carry out further work on likely visitor patterns and the ability of the Black Country Councils to create and improve alternative publicly accessible open spaces for local residents. The Examination suggested that the direct and indirect impact arising from increased urban populations be addressed in more localised Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) schemes.

It is therefore concluded that no LTP3 policies will directly result in land-take, contribute to the proliferation of invasive and/or non-native species, lead to alteration of hydrological regimes, necessitate changes in habitat management or affect water quality at any of the Natura 2000 sites listed. The principal source of potential impact will be from population growth and development leading to increased recreation pressures, and air quality issues associated with increased road and air traffic volume. These are issues that LTP3 seeks to address through sustainable transport policies.