

**Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Plymouth City Council  
City Centre & University Area Action Plan**

**Screening Report**

**October 2009**

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# 1. Introduction

This document has been produced to determine whether policies and proposals of Plymouth City Council's (PCC) Local Development Framework (LDF) Area Action Plan (AAP) for City Centre & University will have a significant adverse impact on nearby Natura 2000 sites.

## 1.1 Background

The Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna – the 'Habitats Directive' provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of interest to the EU in a favourable condition. This is implemented through a network of protected areas referred to as Natura 2000 sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive requires Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on a European site. This means that the effects of such plans/projects on Natura 2000 sites need to be assessed to ensure that the integrity of these sites is maintained. The City Centre & University Area Action Plan is such a plan.

The Natura 2000 sites are of two types – Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). SAC's stem from the Habitats Directive, and are mainly habitat features, whereas SPA's are features comprising populations of bird species. Each Natura 2000 site has a number of qualifying features, for which conservation objectives have been developed.

The purpose of a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 Site. The assessment must determine whether the plan would adversely affect the integrity of the site in terms of its nature conservation objectives. Where negative effects are identified other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.

The Habitats Directive applies the precautionary principle to SPA's and SAC's. Plans can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site(s) in question. Plans may still be permitted if there are no alternatives to them and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest as to why they should go ahead. Previous rulings show that these cases are rare. In such cases, compensation will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

The HRA for Plymouth's LDF Core Strategy was completed in early February 2007. This identified a number of necessary avoidance measures required to manage impacts associated with the Core Strategy and identified a number of suggested changes to the document that will be incorporated before it is adopted. A summary of the conclusions from Core Strategy Habitat Regulation Assessment is included in Appendix 1. Consideration of the potential for the City Centre & University AAP to have a significant effect will be made in the light of this existing work.

It is intended that this HRA will be used to identify any necessary changes to policy, or alternatives / mitigation that could improve the AAP prior to its final adoption.

## 1.2 Methodology used for this Habitat Regulations Assessment

DCLG (2006) guidance on Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment (consultation document) recommends a 3 stage process:

1. Screening. Determining whether the plan 'either alone or in combination with other plans or projects' is likely to have a significant effect on a European site
2. Appropriate Assessment. Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation

objectives, the plan 'either alone or in combination with other plans or projects' would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site. If not, the plan can proceed.

3. Mitigation & Alternatives. Where the plan is assessed as having an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of a site, there should be an examination of mitigation measures and alternative solutions. If it is not possible to identify mitigation and alternatives it will be necessary to establish the '*imperative reasons of overriding public interest*' (IROPI). This is not considered a standard part of the process and will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances.

All 3 stages of the process are referred cumulatively as Habitat Regulations Assessment, to clearly distinguish the whole process from the step within it referred to as the Appropriate Assessment.

### **1.3 Consultation with Natural England**

Natural England (NE) has been positively engaged in PCC's work on Habitat Regulations Assessment since its inception in November 2006. An open & constructive dialogue has been maintained throughout the process, and NE have endorsed the conclusions of the HRAs so far completed for Plymouth's existing Development Plan Documents.

NE have been consulted on this report for the City Centre & University Area Action Plan and they are in agreement with the conclusions reached, and with the measures recommended to avoid or mitigate adverse effect on integrity of Natura 2000 sites. The specific additional wording that articulates these measures within the plan will need to be agreed prior to the AAP's adoption.

## 2. Screening

The principle aim of this chapter is to ‘screen’ the potential of City Centre & University AAP for its likely impact on the Natura 2000 sites within 15 kilometres of the Area Action Plan boundary.

The screening process aims to be a first sieve of the European sites that the AAP could possibly affect. This section:

- Identifies European sites within 15km of the City Centre & University AAP boundary (section 2.1);
- Summarises what the possible effects of the AAP on those sites could be (Section 2.2);
- Lists existing trends that could affect the sites ‘in combination’ with the AAP; (Section 2.3)
- Considers the possible effects of the AAP in relation to the ecological requirements of the sites qualifying features & screen out sites that are unlikely to be affected by the Core Strategy. (Section 2.4)
- Considers the specific AAP visions, objectives, policies & proposals that may cause an adverse impact relevant to the Natura 2000 sites, and screen out those that will have no significant effect (Section 2.5)

In undertaking the screening stage of Plymouth's LDF Core Strategy HRA a highly precautionary approach was adopted. At that stage no assumptions or allowances were made for existing regulatory mechanisms (e.g. EA's regulatory role), management structures (e.g. Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum), or the LDF's policies or proposals that seek to conserve, or enhance the natural environment. The role these tools have to play in ensuring that the Plymouth's LDF does not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites where examined in detail as part of Core Strategy Appropriate Assessment.

The policies and proposals contained within the AAP are built upon the foundations expressed within the Core Strategy. Therefore in determining whether there is a risk of significant effect this assessment will 'screen out' those impacts already identified and addressed through the Core Strategy HRA. The screening stage of this HRA will also take a precautionary approach but will only seek to identify the impacts that are at risk of becoming significant as a result of the area specific detail identified in the AAP.

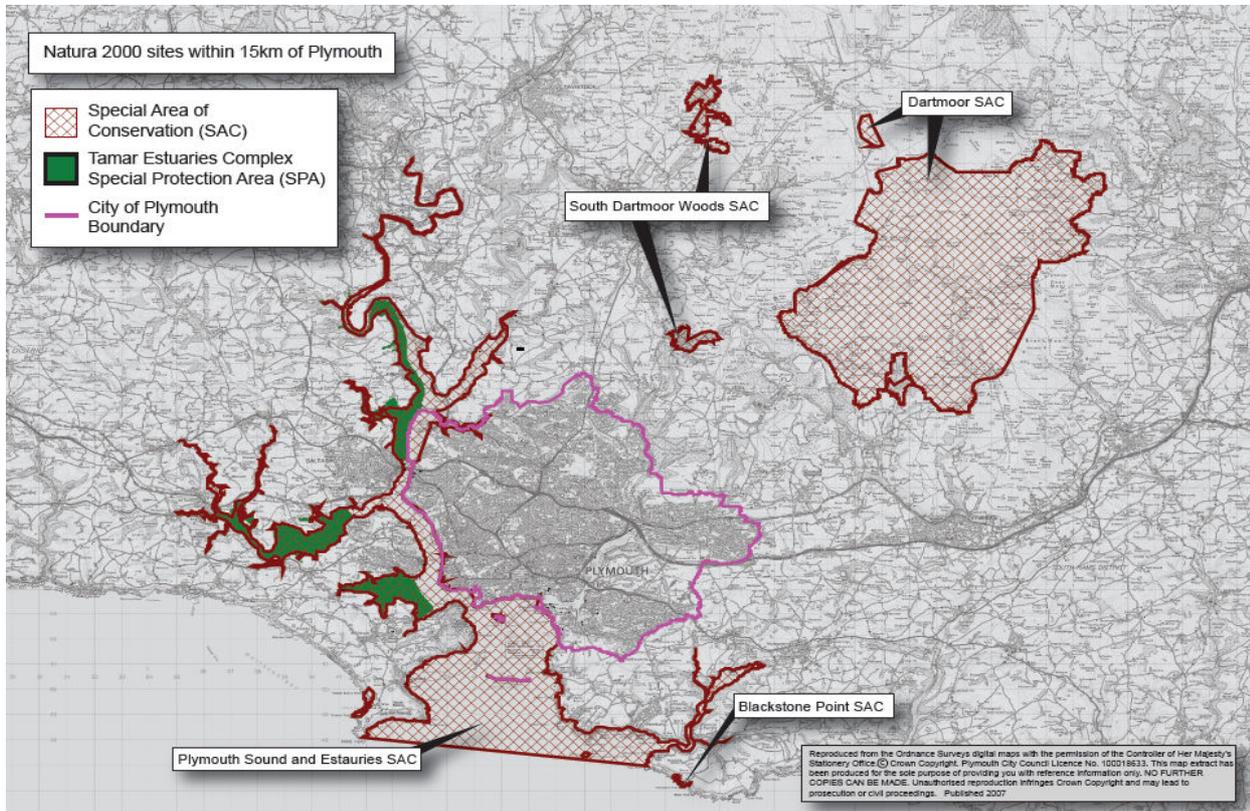
### 2.1 European Sites

Table 1 lists the European sites that are within 15 km of the boundary of City Centre & University AAP. Location of these sites is shown in maps 2 and 3.

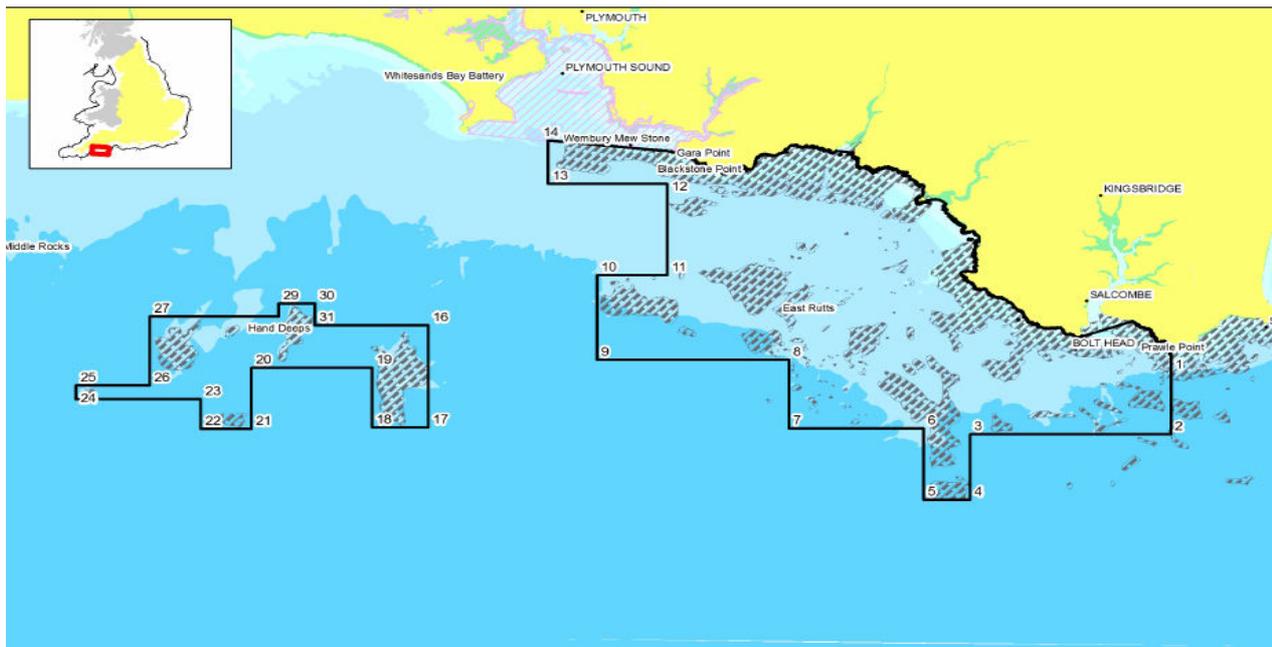
Name of Site	Reasons for Designation
Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time. Estuaries. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. Large shallow inlets and bays. Atlantic Salt Meadows Reefs. Shore dock. Allis shad.
Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA	Internationally important populations of Avocet & Little Egret
Dartmoor SAC	Northern Atlantic wet heath with <i>Erica tetralix</i> . European dry heath. Blanket bog. Old sessile oak woodlands <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles. Southern damselfly, <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i> Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>
South Dartmoor Woods SAC	Old sessile oak woodlands <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles European dry heath

Name of Site	Reasons for Designation
Blackstone Point SAC	Shore dock
Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound & Eddystone draft SAC (not formally a N2K site but under currently under consideration)	Inshore Upstanding Reefs Offshore Upstanding Reefs

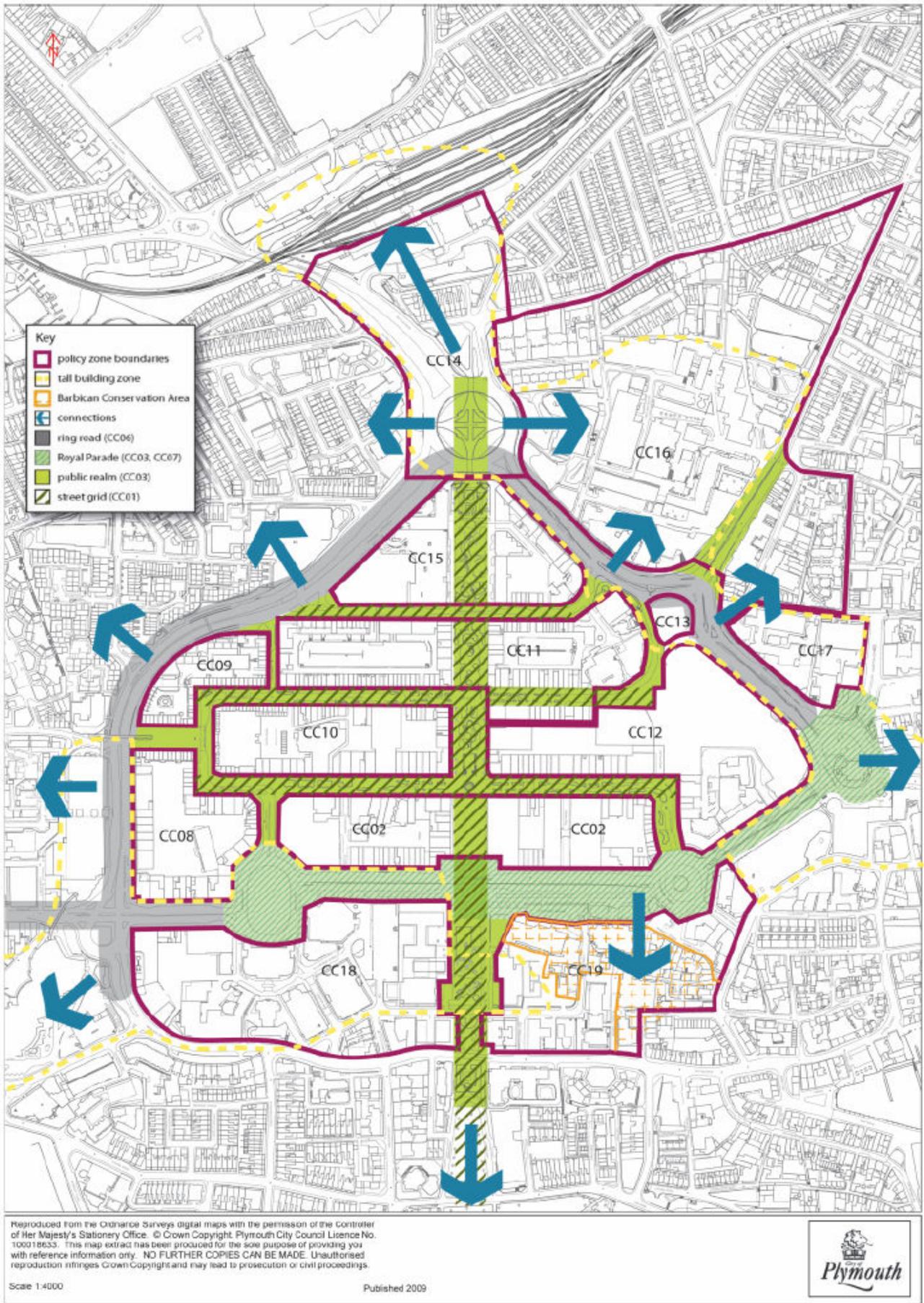
**Table 1: European sites that could possibly be adversely affected by the City Centre & University AAP**



**Map 1: Distribution of Nature 2000 sites within 15km of Plymouth city boundary**



**Map 2: Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound & Eddystone draft SAC**



Map 3: Area covered by City Centre Area Action Plan

## **2.2 Possible effects of the City Centre & University Area Action Plan**

The City Council's vision for the City Centre and University area is to deliver a regional commercial centre for the South West Peninsula. Through supporting lively and vibrant mixed use centre, which provides high quality shopping, together with a range of facilities for living, working and recreation – both by day and night.

The City Centre and University Area Action Plan will set out land use policies and proposals to create a real 'downtown' centre that offers residents and visitors a 24-hour lifestyle, with specialised shops, restaurants and pubs alongside a choice of entertainment and culture; as well as improving connections with adjacent areas.

It specifically provides for:

- 830 – 1100 new residential units
- 107,000 sq m of employment space
- 97,000 sq m of retail use
- A modern efficient transport system with high quality car parks and public transport
- Low carbon energy network
- Conservation of key areas of built heritage
- Improvements to public realm
- Major redevelopments at Colin Campbell Court, Cornwall Street and at North Cross (see CC08, CC11 & CC14 on Map 3)

As such, the possible impacts of the AAP on the Natura 2000 sites are identified as arising from:

- General intensification of uses in the City Centre: more development, more activity, more noise, light etc.
- Increased visits to the European sites, possibly with associated disturbance of fauna and impacts on the habitats (e.g. through trampling on the moors, increases in water borne recreation)
- Increased volumes of traffic, leading to increased water pollution, from road run off, which could affect habitats / species sensitive to water quality
- Increased volumes of traffic, leading to increased air pollution, which could affect habitats / species sensitive to air quality
- Increased water use, which could, depending on where the water comes from (or goes to) affect water levels or water quality within the European sites.

## **2.3 Existing Trends and Possible Future Development**

The South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Sustainability Appraisal report identifies a range of 'likely negative effects' of the draft RSS. These are that could have an 'in combination' effect with the impacts of Plymouth's Core Strategy:

- Increased carbon dioxide emissions due to increases in air travel within the region
- Increased car travel within the region, with associated growth in associated emissions
- A gradual increase in light & noise pollution

These will be considered as having the potential to act in combination with the City Centre AAP.

Table 2 below summarise developments in other areas of Plymouth, or nearby districts that could also lead to 'in combination' impacts with the City Centre AAP.

Area	Development Plans or Proposals
Plymouth City Council	Plymouth's LDF Core Strategy sets out a visions to deliver 24,500 dwellings between 2006 – 2026, 130ha of employment land between 2006 – 2026, and to achieving the city's potential as ' <i>economic hub of the far South-West</i> '. Impacts identified for City Centre & University AAP may work in combination with other impacts generated through the Core Strategy or other submitted Local Development Documents. e.g. Waste DPD Millbay & Stonehouse AAP Devonport AAP North Plymstock AAP
Devon County Council	Devon Waste Plan
Caradon DC	1000 Residential dwellings (allocation from Draft RSS for South West 2006 - 2026)
South Hams DC	Sherford Area Action Plan - 4,000 dwellings by 2016 with potential expansion to 5500 dwellings Plymouth Urban Fringe AAP 500 dwellings, New power station at Lantage

**Table 2: Plans or projects with potential 'In combination' impacts**

## 2.4 Screening – Site qualifying features and potential impacts

Table 3 documents the screening process for the SPA's/SAC's potentially affected by the City Centre & University Area Action Plan, and considers the significance of a range of possible impacts in relation to the individual sites qualifying features. A significant effect is considered to be one that is not trivial or inconsequential, but an effect that is potentially relevant to the sites conservation objectives.

**Table 3: Significant effects matrix for Plymouth City Council City Centre & University Area Action Plan**

Site	Qualifying Features	Possible impacts arising from the City Centre & University Area Action Plan	Is there a risk of significant effect?	Possible impacts from other trends, plans etc	Is there a significant risk of In combination effects?
Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time. Estuaries. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. Large shallow inlets and bays. Atlantic Salt Meadows Reefs. Shore dock. Allis shad.	Toxic or non toxic contamination – changes in water quality due to increased pressure on existing water treatment works.	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Impacts on water quality upon the SAC due to high levels of growth within sub region	No
		Toxic or non toxic contamination – changes in run-off regimes and pressure on surface water drainage systems	Yes – Risk of increased levels of contamination within road run-off due to traffic generated by AAP policy, plus lack of capacity in existing surface water drainage systems.	Impacts on water quality upon the SAC due to high levels of growth within sub region	Yes - Risk of increased levels of contamination within road run-off due to traffic generated by AAP policy, plus lack of capacity in existing surface water drainage systems.
		Toxic or non toxic contamination due to increased water borne recreation.	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	No (see Core Strategy HRA)
		Physical Damage – increased threats to seagrass beds by / recreational pressures of anchoring & mooring.	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	No (see Core Strategy HRA)
		Biological disturbance – Impacts of increased demand for recreational angling	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	No (see Core Strategy HRA)
Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA	Little Egret 9% passage population in the UK & 8.4% wintering population; Avocet 15.8% of the wintering population in the UK.	Non-physical disturbance - increased noise & visual presence associated with recreational disturbance	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	No (see Core Strategy HRA)
		Biological disturbance - (e.g. impacts of bait digging / shore crab fishery	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region is likely increase bait digging	No (see Core Strategy HRA)

Site	Qualifying Features	Possible impacts arising from the City Centre & University Area Action Plan	Is there a risk of significant effect?	Possible impacts from other trends, plans etc	Is there a significant risk of In combination effects?
		<p>Toxic or non toxic contamination – changes in water quality due to increased pressure on existing water treatment works.</p> <p>Toxic or non toxic contamination – changes in water quality due to changes in run-off regimes and pressure on surface water drainage systems</p>	<p>No (see Core Strategy HRA)</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>activity within the Tamar catchments</p> <p>Impacts on water quality upon the SPA due to high levels of growth within sub region</p> <p>Impacts on water quality upon the SPA due to high levels of growth within sub region</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Yes - Risk of increased levels of contamination within road run-off due to traffic generated by AAP policy, plus lack of capacity in existing surface water drainage systems.</p>
Dartmoor SAC	<p>Northern Atlantic wet heath with <i>Erica tetralix</i>. European dry heath. Blanket bog. Old sessile oak woodlands <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles. Southern damselfly, <i>Coenagrion mercuriale</i> Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i></p>	<p>Physical damage - Increased recreational pressure causing damage due to trampling / fire</p> <p>Increased water extraction</p> <p>Air Pollution - changes in air quality may have detrimental effect on blanket bog, Old sessile oak woods, wet heaths and dry heath features</p> <p>Hydrological changes linked to water abstraction – impacts on breeding &amp; migratory salmon populations &amp; otter</p>	<p>No (see Core Strategy HRA)</p>	<p>Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region</p> <p>Levels of growth within the sub region will also increase water demand within the sites catchments</p> <p>Langage Power Station General reduction in air quality due to increased car travel within the region</p> <p>Levels of growth within the sub region will also increase water use within the sites catchments</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
South Dartmoor Woods SAC	<p>Old sessile oak woodlands <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles European dry heath</p>	<p>Physical damage - Increased recreational pressure at woodlands at Damage due to trampling / fire.</p> <p>Air pollution</p>	<p>No (see Core Strategy HRA)</p> <p>No (see Core Strategy HRA)</p>	<p>Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region</p> <p>Langage Power Station General reduction in air quality due to increased car travel within the region</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p>
Blackstone	Shore dock	Physical damage - Increased	No - shore dock is confined	Increased recreational	No

Site	Qualifying Features	Possible impacts arising from the City Centre & University Area Action Plan	Is there a risk of significant effect?	Possible impacts from other trends, plans etc	Is there a significant risk of In combination effects?
Point SAC		recreational pressure	to areas not normally associated with high visitor pressure.	pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	
Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound & Eddystone draft SAC	Inshore Upstanding Reefs Offshore Upstanding Reefs	Toxic or non toxic contamination – changes in water quality due to increased pressure on existing water treatment works.	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Impacts on water quality upon the SAC due to high levels of growth within sub region	No
		Toxic or non toxic contamination – changes in water quality due to changes in run-off regimes and pressure on surface water drainage systems	Yes – Risk of increased levels of contamination within road run-off due to traffic generated by AAP policy, plus lack of capacity in existing surface water drainage systems.	Impacts on water quality upon the SAC due to high levels of growth within sub region	Yes - Risk of increased levels of contamination within road run-off due to traffic generated by AAP policy, plus lack of capacity in existing surface water drainage systems.
		Toxic or non toxic contamination due to increased water borne recreation.	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	No (see Core Strategy HRA)
		Biological disturbance – Impacts of increased demand for recreational angling	No (see Core Strategy HRA)	Increased recreational pressures due to high levels of growth within the sub region	No (see Core Strategy HRA)

## 2.5 Screening - Policy Review

### 2.5.1. Review Criteria

To refine the assessment a detailed review of objectives, policies & proposals within the AAP has been undertaken. To build upon the work completed in Table 3 this review focuses on the role these may have in generating effects on water quality within Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC and Tamar Estuaries European Marine Site. It sets out to identify those that:

- a) could have no effect on the Natura 2000 sites
- b) could possibly have an effect on the Natura 2000 sites
- c) would be likely to have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 sites

This screening of the potential effects of the document used the criteria set out in Table 4. These criteria are based on the approach proposed in 'The Assessment of Regional Spatial Strategies and Sub-regional strategies under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations' Draft Guidance English Nature August 2006.

Effect of LDF Objective, Vision or Policy on Nature 2000 sites	Criteria Number	Rationale
No significant adverse effect on the Natura 2000 sites (Shown <b>green</b> on Table 5)	1	The policy will not itself lead to development (e.g. it relates to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or it is not a land use planning policy)
	2	No development could occur through this policy alone, because it is implemented through sub-ordinate policies or DPDs, which are more detailed and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Site, and associated sensitive areas.
	3	The policy steers a quantum or type of development that can have no foreseeable, direct or indirect effect upon the Natura 2000 sites
	4	The policy is intended to conserve or enhance the historic or natural environment, including biodiversity, and enhancement measures will not be likely to have any effect on a European Site.
Possible adverse effect on the Natura 2000 sites (shown <b>yellow</b> on Table 5)	5	The policy steers a quantum or type of development towards, or encourages development in, an area that includes a European Site or an area where development could possibly indirectly affect a European Site.
Likely to have a significant adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites (shown <b>Red</b> on Table 5)	6	The policy makes provision for a quantum, or type of development that in the location(s) proposed would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. The proposal must be subject to appropriate assessment to establish, in light of the site's conservation objectives, whether it can be ascertained that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

**Table 4: Habitat Regulations assessment - Screening criteria for City Centre & University AAP Policies & Proposals.**

### 2.5.2. Policy Review Results

Table 5 overleaf displays the results of applying the criteria shown above to the individual objectives, policies and proposals contained within the AAP.

		Site name:	Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA	Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC
Objective, Policy or Proposal Area	Review Criteria			
		Water Quality Impacts	Water Quality Impacts	
Strategic Objective 1	2			
Strategic Objective 2	2			
Policy CC01 Historic Environment	4			
Policy CC02 – Royal Parade	4			
Policy CC03 Public Realm	3			
Policy CC04 – Sus Neighbourhood	2			
Proposal CC05 – Low Carbon Development	3			
Strategic Objective 3	2			
Policy CC06 Strategic Road Network	5			
Policy CC07: Royal Parade	3			
Strategic Objective4	2			
Proposal CC08: Colin Campbell Court	5			
Policy CC09 Morley Court / Harwell Court	3			
Policy CC10 Market and Independents District	3			
Strategic Objective 5	2			
Policy CC11: Cornwall Street.	5			
Policy CC12: Drakes Circus New George Street	3			
Proposal CC13: Land outside Drakes Circus	3			
Strategic Objective 6	2			
Proposal CC14: North Cross & Railway Station	3			
Policy CC15: The Northern Triangle	3			
Strategic Objective 7	2			
Policy CC16: University of Plymouth Campus	3			
Policy CC17: Plymouth College of Art	3			
Strategic Objective 8	2			
Policy CC18: S of Derry's Cross	3			
Policy CC18 Civic Centre	3			
Policy CC19 S of Royal Parade, E of Armada Way	3			

**Table 5: Results of City Centre AAP Habitat Regulations Policy Impact Review**

## 2.6 Conclusions – Habitat Regulations Assessment - Screening Stage

The potentially significant adverse impacts of the City Centre & University AAP identified through Section 2.4 are:

- Water quality impacts at Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC
- Water quality impacts at Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA

Section 2.5.2 identifies the specific policies / proposals from the City Centre & University Area Action Plan which could '*possibly cause adverse effect on the Natura 2000 sites*' (shown yellow on Table 5) because they could increase the risk of toxic, or non toxic contaminants in surface water run off entering these Natura 2000 sites. These policies / proposals are:

- CC06 Strategic Road Network
- CC08 Colin Campbell Court
- CC11 Cornwall Street

Guidance outlined in 'The Assessment of Regional Spatial Strategies and sub-regional strategies under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations' (English Nature August 2006 Draft Guidance) indicates that policies which could '*possibly cause adverse effect on the Natura 2000 sites*' should require the inclusion within the policy, or the explanatory text, wording that makes it clear any development directed or encouraged by this policy, would not be in accordance with the plan.

In the absence of any specific national guidance in relation to the assessment of LDF's it is proposed that this approach is modified to:

1. Reflect the greater level of detail being brought forward within the Area Action Plans,
2. Reflect the fact that higher level policies within the Core Strategy that have already been modified in line with this guidance as a result of the Core Strategy HRA
3. Deliver the most locally appropriate way for the plan to avoid / mitigate the impacts identified

The root cause of the potential water quality impacts is the capacity of existing surface water drainage systems to protect the SAC & SPA from the increase in contaminants within road run caused by the growth in traffic and rising intensity of storm events. As these are offsite/ indirect impacts associated with infrastructure required to support the City Centres growth it is more appropriate for any amendments to the AAP to be focused specifically on those sections dealing with infrastructure, rather than specifically targeting the proposals that are key drivers in growth in traffic (ie CC08 and CC11).

The City Centre & University AAP Sustainability Appraisal also identifies (para 3.18 – 3.19) the need to address flooding issues associated with insufficient capacity within the existing drainage infrastructure. This HRA identifies the need for the required drainage system improvements to be also driven by a need to protect water quality. To tie these two issues together, and to ensure that the City Centre AAP avoids a significant adverse impact on the integrity of Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC, & Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA it is recommended that the plan be amended in the following areas:

- Add a 5<sup>th</sup> criteria to Policy CC06 (page 32) stating '*Deliver improvements to Surface Water Drainage systems reduce Flood Risk protect Plymouth Sound & Estuaries European Marine Site from water pollution*'
- Add 11<sup>th</sup> criteria to Policy CC03 City Centre Public Realm (page 24) stating '*Deliver improvements to Surface Water Drainage systems reduce Flood Risk protect Plymouth Sound & Estuaries European Marine Site from water pollution*'
- Under Key Infrastructure Requirements (page 17) add a line for Improvements to Surface Water Drainage Systems 2012 – 2020

- Additional line in Chapter 13 Table 2 - Community Benefits : (Requirement : Improvements to Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure; Justification: To manage increasing risks of surface water flooding and ensure run off does not adversely effect the Plymouth Sound & Estuaries European Marine site)

**Subject to the above amendments to the policy / proposals within the City Centre & University AAP being made, this screening stage Habitat Regulations Assessment can conclude that there will be no significant adverse impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites.**

## Appendix 1: Summary of conclusions from Core Strategy Habitat Regulation Assessment

The results of Plymouth LDF Core Strategy Habitat Regulation Assessment are summarised as:

Screening the potential impacts of Plymouth's LDF Core Strategy against the local Natura 2000 sites qualifying features identified the following potentially significant adverse impacts:

- Water quality impacts at Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC, Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA & Dartmoor SAC
- Recreational disturbance impacts at South Dartmoor Woods SAC, Dartmoor SAC, Plymouth Sound & Estuaries & Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA
- Biological Disturbance impacts from shore crab fishery & bait digging at Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA
- Impacts linked to water abstraction at Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC, Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA, Dartmoor SAC & South Dartmoor Woods SAC,
- Impacts linked to air quality changes at South Dartmoor Woods SAC & Dartmoor SAC
- Cumulative impacts of habitat loss associated with numerous small scale land claim events within Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC & Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA

Screening the LDF Core Strategy's objectives & policies against the above sites and potential impacts (identified the following statements that may cause 'Possible *adverse effect on the Natura 2000 sites*':

- SO1 Delivering Plymouth's Strategic Role
- AV2 Millbay & Stonehouse
- CS12 Culture & Leisure Considerations
- CS25 Provision for Waste Management
- SO14 Delivering Sustainable Transport
- CS27 Supporting Strategic Infrastructure Proposals

All of the above will now include within the policy, or the explanatory text, wording that makes it clear any development directed or encouraged by this policy, which is determined to have an adverse affect on the Natura 2000 sites, would not be in accordance with the LDF.

The Core Strategy HRA policy review matrix also identified the following objectives & policies of Plymouth's LDF Core Strategy that are 'Likely to have a significant adverse effect on *Natura 2000*'

- SO10 Delivering Adequate Housing
- CS16 Spatial Distribution of Housing Sites
- SO6 Delivering the Economic Strategy
- CS04 Employment Provision

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) scrutinised the role of these policies in driving the full range of impacts noted above. **The AA concluded that subject to the avoidance measures identified below the Plymouths LDF Core Strategy will not cause an adverse impact on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites.** In addition to the avoidance measures each of these policies also should be accompanied by explanatory text that makes it clear any development directed or encouraged by this policy, which is determined to have an adverse affect on the Natura 2000 sites, would not be in accordance with the LDF.

**To avoid a significant adverse impact on the integrity of Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC, & Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA, arising from future recreational pressure Plymouth City Council will commit to the following:**

1. *Partnership funding & support for the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum.*
2. *Project funding & support: Provide funding and relevant officer time to support recreation linked actions / projects as identified in Tamar Estuaries Management Plan Chapter 1 and 10. This should include a review and update of Port of Plymouth Area Recreation Study as a priority.*
3. *Preparation of a Planning Obligations SPD - Plymouth's forthcoming Planning Obligations SPD will include appropriate provisions for negotiating individual contributions towards managing recreational impact within Plymouth Sound & Estuaries European Marine site.*
4. *Coastal Planning SPD - Inclusion of relevant guidance in relation to shore side development in respect to managing recreational use of surrounding waters.*

**To avoid significant adverse impact on the integrity of Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC, arising from numerous small land claim events Plymouth City Council will commit to the following:**

1. *Additional explanatory text associated with Policy CS19 that makes clear that the policy relates to the development in inter tidal or sub tidal areas, as well as terrestrial habitats*
2. *Preparation of a Coastal Planning SPD - Inclusion of relevant guidance in relation to inter tidal & sub tidal development*

The Appropriate Assessment process identified a number of impacts that are not significant but that should be addressed as part of raft of measures to improve sustainability of future DPDs, SPDs and site master plans. These are:

1. *The importance of promoting water efficient design to minimise demand and moderate the requirement for waste water treatment. This could be pursued through requiring all new and refurbished buildings achieve the requirements of BREEAM and Eco Homes very good standard, or at least level 3 above minimum building standards in the emerging Code for Sustainable Homes. More detailed guidance in relation to requirements for water efficient design should be included in Plymouth's proposed Design SPD.*
2. *The importance of ensuring that policies such as Plymouth's Core Strategy LDF CS19, CS 20 Resource Use, South West Regional Spatial Strategy Policy G Sustainable Construction, & Policy RE 1 are robustly applied.*
3. *The need to continue the work identified in 'Charter for Countryside & Seas in and around Plymouth' (2005) to work with Natural England/ neighbouring authorities to plan / manage sustainable recreation at key sites within SE Dartmoor.*