Darlington Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

Planning for the Protection of European Sites

Appropriate Assessment: Screening Report

Darlington Borough Council December 2009

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1.1 Background

1.1.1 Darlington Borough Council (DBC) is in the process of developing their Local Development Framework. As part of this, a Core Strategy Development Plan Document is being prepare, and Revised Preferred Options are due to be published in January 2010. In accordance with the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.)(Amendment) Regulations 2007 and European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, Darlington is required to undertake Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options.

1.2 Appropriate Assessment Process

1.2.1 Under the Habitats Regulations, Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project or plan – either a development plan document (DPD) or a supplementary planning document (SPD) – on one of more sites of international nature conservation importance. Projects and plans can only be permitted where the 'competent authority' (in this case Darlington Borough Council) is satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the relevant nature sites.

1.2.2 The approach is based on the EU document 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4)of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (Oxford Brookes University, for European Commission Environment DG. European Commission Environment DG, 2001), in particular the Annex 2 assessment forms.

1.2.3 Stage 1 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process is the screening of proposed plans or projects for significant effects. Assessment of the significance of effects is undertaken in relation to the designated interest features and conservation objectives of the European site. Any effect that would compromise the functioning and viability of a site and prevent it from sustaining those features in a favorable condition is judged to create a significant effect. Where no significant effects are identified, then no further steps need to be taken. Where significant effects seem likely, a more detailed Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary. If insufficient information is available to make a clear judgement, the precautionary principle should be adopted. This process will often establish mitigation measures or alternatives, which can offset all significant adverse effects and enable the plan or project to go forward. Where this is not the case, other more stringent measures need to be considered.

1.3 Natura 2000 Sites

1.3.1 Natura 2000 sites are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Community. Natura 2000 sites include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU 'Wild Birds' Directive,

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the EU 'Habitats Directive' and Offshore Marine Site (OMS).

1.3.2 Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' states that Ramsar sites should be taken to be part of the Natura 2000 network and treated accordingly (para 6, PPS9, ODPM, 2005). Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated under the International Wetlands Convention, which took place at Ramsar in Iran.

1.3.3 In this report, the term 'Natura 2000 sites' refers to Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites.

2. Description of the Plan

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section of the report, the Core Strategy Preferred Options is reviewed to identify any aspects of the strategy that might influence the key environmental conditions that need to be maintained or improved, in order to preserve the integrity of European sites. Indirect as well as direct impacts have been considered.

2.2 Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

2.2.1 The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options, once adopted in its final form, will be the principal document of the Darlington Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a set of documents that will eventually replace the adopted Darlington Local Plan. It considers how the Borough will develop over the next fifteen years or so, providing the spatial planning framework for the many plans and strategies prepared by the Council and its partners. In particular, it will help to deliver spatially the priorities that are set out in the sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', prepared by Darlington Partnership and agreed in 2008.

2.2.2 The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options set s out an overall vision for Darlington Borough and strategic objectives for the achievement of the vision. The document sets out a number of planning policies, arranged by themes, as follows:

1) Achieving a More Sustainable Community
CS1 Darlington's Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy
CS2 Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design
CS3 Promoting Renewable Energy
CS4 Developer Contributions

2) Prosperous Darlington
CS5 Supporting the Local Economy
CS6 Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer

3) A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services
CS7 The Town Centre
CS8 Additional Retail Provision
CS9 District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services

4) Quality housing for all
CS10 New Housing Development
CS11 Meeting Housing Needs
CS12 Existing Housing
CS13 Accommodating Travelling Groups

5) A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment
CS14 Local Character and Distinctiveness
CS15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety A healthy and safe Darlington

6) A Healthy and Safe Darlington
CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network
CS18 Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities

7) Efficient and Effective Transport Infrastructure
CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network

2.3 Potential Types of Impact

2.3.1 Following consideration of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options themes, a number of potential impacts have been identified that could affect Natura 2000 sites. These potential impacts include:

- Air quality: a change in the composition of air that disperses in the vicinity of a Natura 2000 site can damage vegetation and harm species living in these habitats.

- Water quality: a change in the composition of water that flows to Natura 2000 sites can damage vegetation and harm species living in these habitats.

- Hydrology: Changes in hydrology can result in drought or flooding of Natura sites that can damage vegetation and species living in these habitats.

- Habitat / species disturbance: Disturbance both to habitats and to species travelling to Natura 2000 sites can damage vegetation and species living in these habitats.

- Climate change: Climate change will have a direct impact on habitats and species. Core Strategy policies could impact on the ability of species to adapt to climate change. In particular, restrictions to movement will restrict the ability of species to adapt to climate change.

2.4 Screening Analysis of Darlington Borough Council Core Strategy, Revised Preferred Options

2.4.1 This section, which is set out in tabular form, considers each of the policies put forward in the Revised Preferred Options for the Core Strategy.

Table 1: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
Achieving a More Sustainable Community	CS1	**Sub-regional Role and Locational Strategy** Promotes development that contributes to the sub and wider region and identifies broad locations for development	Air Quality	Development of Durham Tees Valley Airport area for airport related uses may impact on air quality and adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downwind at Teesmouth as a result.
			Water Quality	Land use change can influence quality of surface run off. This could affect the water quality of watercourses and affect Natura 2000 sites downstream at Teesmouth.
			Hydrology	Land use change can influence quantity of surface run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream at Teesmouth.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	New development and operation of developments have the potential to increase disturbance.
			Climate Change	Development could support increased flights from DTV airport, which could increase greenhouse gas emissions and adversely affect Natura 2000 sites as a result.
Achieving a More Sustainable Community	CS2	**Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design** Promotes good quality, safe and sustainable design in all new developments	Air Quality	No specific impact – will reduce impacts to air by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use through Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards
			Water Quality	No specific impact – will reduce water use and pollution through Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM standards and sustainable construction methods
			Hydrology	No specific impact – will ensure incorporation of sustainable drainage and green space to reduce run off from new developments
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – will reduce the need for new developments through making efficient use of land and buildings first. If the policy did not exist, the impact of new developments on habitat/species disturbance would be greater.

Table 1 Continued: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
Achieving a More Sustainable Community	CS2	**Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design** Promotes good quality, safe and sustainable design in all new developments	Climate Change	No specific impact – Aims to reduce carbon emissions through sustainable design and construction techniques.
Achieving a More Sustainable Community	CS3	**Promoting Renewable Energy.** Sets out broad types, Level of contributions and broad locations of commercial scale schemes	Air Quality	No specific impact – Biomass schemes will be located in the Town Centre and Town Centre fringe, which is remote from Natura 2000 sites. Biomass schemes will be required to meet emission control standards through application of CS16.
			Water Quality	No specific impact – Commercial scale hydro power schemes are not feasible.
			Hydrology	As above.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	Turning blades on wind turbines could strike birds travelling to and from Natura 2000 sites.
			Climate Change	No specific impact - Will reduce carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels to generate energy.
Achieving a More Sustainable Community	CS4	**Developer Contributions** Provides the context within which developer contributions will be sought	Air Quality	No specific impact – the policy will not, in itself or in combination, lead to developments.
			Water Quality	As above.
			Hydrology	As above.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As above.
			Climate Change	As above.
Prosperous Darlington	CS5	**Supporting the Local Economy** Sets out quantity of employment land and uses in the Borough	Air Quality	Development of the Durham Tees Valley Airport area for airport related uses may impact on air quality and adversely affect Natura 2000 sites as a result. Increase in industrial activity and logistics businesses could also impact on air quality.
			Water Quality	Land use change can influence quality of surface runoff. This could affect the water quality of watercourses and affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be mitigated through application of CS2.
			Hydrology	Land use change can influence quantity of surface runoff to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be mitigated through application of CS2
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	New employment developments and their operation have the potential to increase disturbance

Table 1 Continued: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
Prosperous Darlington	CS5	**Supporting the Local Economy** Sets out quantity of employment land and uses in the Borough	Climate Change	Development could support increased flights from DTV airport which could significantly increase greenhouse gas emissions and adversely affect Natura 2000 sites as a result.
Prosperous Darlington	CS6	**Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer** Sets out how tourism will be promoted.	Air Quality	Promoting a strategic tourism opportunity adjoining the A68/A1(M) interchange could increase transport on these roads which will lead to greater air pollution. Unlikely to be significant enough to impact on Natura 2000 sites.
			Water Quality	Land use change (hotel development) can influence quality of surface run off. This could affect the water quality of watercourses and affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be mitigated through application of CS2.
			Hydrology	Land use change can influence quantity of surface run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be mitigated through application of CS2.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Could reduce disturbance on Natura 2000 sites from recreational pressure through promotion of Darlington Borough's countryside and local nature reserves.
			Climate Change	Could increase greenhouse gases through increased travelling to the Borough which may impact on Natura 2000 sites. However, could result in less emissions if this replaces more distant leisure travel.
A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services	CS7	**The Town Centre** Relates to maintaining and Enhancing the vitality and Viability of the town centre	Air Quality	No specific impact – resists out of town retail development,so will reduce the need to travel which impacts upon air quality.
			Water Quality	No specific impact – could contribute to remediation of contaminated land, which will help to improve water quality.
			Hydrology	Land use change can influence quantity of surface run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be mitigated through application of CS2.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – Could reduce disturbance on Natura 2000 sites from recreational pressure through promotion of Darlington Town Centre as a visitor destination.

Table 1 Continued: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services	CS7	**The Town Centre** Relates to maintaining and Enhancing the vitality and Viability of the town centre	Climate Change	No specific impact - Will reduce the need to travel by resisting out of town retail development, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motor travel.
A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services	CS8	**Additional Retail Provision** Sets out how much additional retail floorspace will be needed and by when	Air Quality	As for CS7.
			Water Quality	As for CS7.
			Hydrology	As for CS7.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As for CS7.
			Climate Change	As for CS7.
A Vibrant Town Centre and Accessible Local Shops and Services	CS9	**District and Local Centres and Local Shops and Services** Sets out the hierarchy of centres	Air Quality	As for CS7.
			Water Quality	As for CS7.
			Hydrology	As for CS7.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As for CS7.
			Climate Change	As for CS7.
Quality Housing For All	CS10	**New housing Development** Sets out how much new housing is needed and where this will be located	Air Quality	Increased car trips arising from more population/dwellings will lead to air pollution (especially NOx). However, the effect will be minimised, as the policy prioritises housing in sustainable locations.
			Water Quality	Increased water use from new dwellings, and increased sewage output into rivers could adversely affect Natura 2000 sites downstream. Water usage will be mitigated through application of CS2.
			Hydrology	Land use change can influence quantity of surface run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence hydrology of Natura 2000 sites downstream. However this should be mitigated through application of CS2.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	Impact of additional population on local Wildlife sites that may be important to spe moving between higher level wildlife sites the region and sub region.
			Climate Change	Increased car trips from increased population/dwellings will lead to greenhouse gas emissions. However, the effect will be minimised as this policy prioritises housing in sustainable locations.
Quality Housing For All	CS11	**Meeting Housing Needs** Relates to the types of housing to be built	Air Quality	No specific impact – deals with types of housing only. New housing will be built to CSH standards as set out in CS2 .
			Water Quality	As above

Table 1 Continued: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
Quality Housing For All	CS11	**Meeting Housing Needs** Relates to the types of housing to be built	Hydrology	No specific impact – deals with types of housing only. New housing will be built to CSH standards as set out in CS2.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As above.
			Climate Change	As above.
Quality Housing For All	CS12	**Existing Housing** Sets out how existing housing will be improved	Air Quality	No specific impact – Policy should help to improve air quality by improving energy efficiency of the housing stock.
			Water Quality	No specific impact – Policy should help to improve water quality by improving water efficiency of the housing stock.
			Hydrology	No specific Impact – Will not lead to changes in hydrology.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – will not lead to increased disturbance as deals with existing stock only.
			Climate Change	No specific impact – policy should help to reduce greenhouse gases by improving the energy efficiency of existing housing.
Quality Housing For All	CS13	**Accommodating Travelling Groups** Provides a policy framework for considering the needs of Gypsies and Travellers	Air Quality	No specific impact – sites are remote from Natura 2000 sites and are in sustainable locations.
			Water Quality	As above.
			Hydrology	As above.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As above.
			Climate Change	As above.
A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	CS14	**Local Character and Distinctiveness** Sets out which features of the Borough will be protected and enhanced	Air Quality	No specific impact –landscape and heritage related only.
			Water Quality	No specific impact –landscape and heritage related only.
			Hydrology	No specific impact – will protect green corridors which help to act as water stores.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – relates to tourism so may help to relieve visitor pressure on Natura 2000 sites,
			Climate Change	No specific impact –landscape and heritage related only.

Table 1 Continued: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	CS15	**Biodiversity and Geodiversity** Sets out how the protection enhancement and extension of the Borough's habitat, species and geological network will be achieved	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will help to protect air quality by protecting and enhancing woodland.
			Water Quality	No specific impact – will protect and improve watercourses and wetland incorporating surface water management and flood water storage.
			Hydrology	As above.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact – will reduce disturbance to species that may be traveling to or from a Natura 2000 site by protecting and extending priority habitats.
			Climate Change	No specific impact – Will increase the ability of species to adapt to climate change through enabling sufficient movement through habitats.
A Distinctive, Greener, Cleaner Environment	CS16	**Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety** This policy seeks to protect the environment and people from inappropriate development.	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will ensure that air polluting developments comply with statutory environmental standards.
			Water Quality	No specific impact – Will ensure that developments comply with environmental standards in terms of their impact on water quality.
			Hydrology	No specific Impact – Will comply with standards in relation to flood risk.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	No specific impact –Development that will have a significant effect on biodiversity will be avoided.
			Climate Change	No specific impact – as for air quality.
A Healthy and Safe Darlington	CS17	**Delivering a Multifunctional Green Network** Sets out how green space will be protected and enhanced	Air Quality	As for CS15.
			Water Quality	As for CS15.
			Hydrology	As for CS15.
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As for CS15.
			Climate Change	As for CS15.
A Healthy and Safe Darlington	CS18	**Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation Facilities**	Air Quality	No specific impact – Will reduce the need to travel to sports and recreation facilities so should help to reduce air pollution motor travel related emissions.
			Water Quality	No specific impact – Does not require new sports complexes to meet need.
			Hydrology	As above
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	As above
			Climate Change	As for air quality

Table 1 Continued: Policy Analysis of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites

Theme	Policy	Policy Description	Impact Type	Rationale
Efficient and Effective Transport Infrastructure	CS19	**Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network**	Air Quality	Will in the main reduce the need to travel motorised forms. However proposes to upgrading the capacity of the A66(T) to the east and south of the main urban area, by junction improvements and part dualling. The option also proposes improving routes from the town to south-west Durham, Tees Valley and North Yorkshire for all road users. Pollution to air from increased use of roads may impact on Natura 2000 sites.
			Water Quality	Increased use of roads through improvements could increase road run off which can impact on water quality and downstream Natura 2000 sites
			Hydrology	No specific impact
			Habitats or Species Disturbance	Potential increased traffic on improved routes will increase disturbance to species traveling to and from Natura 2000 sites
			Climate Change	Will in the main reduce the need to travel and as a result greenhouse gas emissions. However, could increase road use of the A66 and through its dualling which could increase carbon emissions related to this project

2.4.2 Table 1 identifies that the Revised Preferred Options that will be investigated for potential significant effects on Natura 2000 sites are as follows:

- CS1 Darlington's Sub Regional Role and Locational Strategy
- CS3 Promoting Renewable Energy
- CS5 Supporting the Local Economy
- CS6 Vibrant Cultural and Tourism Offer
- CS10 New Housing Development
- CS19 Improving Transport Infrastructure and Creating a Sustainable Transport Network

3. Identification and Description of Natura 2000 Sites

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 When assessing the impact of a plan on Natura 2000 sites it is important to consider the impact on Natura 2000 sites not only within the area the plan is to be implemented, but also Natura 2000 sites outside of the plan boundary that still could be affected by the plan. There is no defined distance within which Natura 2000 sites could be affected by a plan, and potentially a plan could impact upon a site a significant distance away from the plan area. Consequently the catchment area within which Natura 2000 sites could be affected by the plan should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 A methodology has been developed to determine which Natura 2000 sites should be included for screening for Appropriate Assessment. It will assess the criteria listed below:

- Identify the likelihood for impacts to arise from the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options that could have an impact on a Natura 2000 site by analysing the contents of the plan. This is given in table 1 in the previous section of this report.
- Identify the likelihood for impacts of the plan to travel by air, including dust, emissions and noise, from impact sources to a Natura 2000 site.
- Identify the likelihood for impacts of the plan to travel from impact source by pathways such as roads and waterways to a Natura 2000 site.
- The likelihood for species to be impacted as members of the species travel across Darlington Borough to Natura sites as part of their migration or foraging patterns.
- The likelihood of impacts arising from increased disturbance and people pressure/urbanization.

3.2.2 All of the above will be considered to determine if development and activity in the Borough related to the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options could potentially affect Natura 2000 sites. Sites identified through this process will be considered in the screening assessment to determine if the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options requires full Appropriate Assessment.

3.3 Impact Type

3.3.1 Type of impacts, previously discussed, that could emerge from the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options are as follows:

- Air quality
- Water quality
- Hydrology
- Species / habitat disturbance
- Climate change

Further details are given in Table 1 earlier in this report.

3.4 Distance

3.4.1 Figure 1 shows the location of Natura 2000 sites within Darlington Borough and within 25km (at 5km intervals) of the Borough boundary. It shows there are no sites within the Borough, no sites within 5km and only one site within 10km of the Borough. Consequently, it is very unlikely that noise and dust pollution originating in the Borough as a consequence of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options would impact a Natura 2000 site. Despite the long distance between the Borough and the Natura 2000 sites, there is some potential for impacts for transmission of airborne emissions by the south-westerly prevailing wind. Consequently Natura 2000 sites to the north east of the Borough will be included in screening process. This includes Thrislington SAC, Castle Eden Dene SAC, Durham Coast SAC and Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar in Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland boroughs.

3.5 Rivers

3.5.1 Figure 2 shows the rivers that flow from Darlington Borough. It shows that a number of rivers flow through Natura 2000 sites or to another river that flows through Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites that are linked to the Borough by the River Skerne that flows into the River Tees include Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA / RAMSAR Tees Bay from Darlington Borough. Activities proposed by the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options within or on the banks of the River Tees and its tributaries through Darlington could impact upon these sites in terms of waterborne pollution and hydrology. The River Tees flows through part of the Pennine Moors, but as it is 20km or more upstream of Darlington, activities suggested in the Revised Core Strategy Preferred Options will not have an impact on this site. There are no other Natura 2000 sites that have rivers that flow through them from Darlington Borough.

3.6 Roads

3.6.1 Figure 3 shows the roads linking Darlington Borough to other areas of population. Research has shown that emissions from road traffic from motorways and major roads reach background levels beyond 200m; therefore emissions from motorways can be higher than background levels within 200m of a major road. English Nature's (now Natural England's) advice to Runnymede Borough Council on traffic-related air pollution, based on interim guidance from the Department for Transport (2005), was that NO2 emissions only needed to be considered if there is a road carrying a significant proportion of new traffic related to the plan within 200m of a European site. Therefore, Natura 2000 sites within 200m of a major road could be damaged as a consequence of higher than normal levels of pollutants from vehicle emissions. This assumption has also been applied to pollutants from other types of development in line with Natural England's advice.

3.6.2 As there are no Natura 2000 sites within Darlington Borough, if Natura 2000 sites are to be affected by increased traffic generation, it will occur as a result of traffic travelling to and from the Borough from locations outside the Borough. Figure 3. identifies the main centres of population outside of Darlington Borough and the main roads linking these centres to Darlington. The main centres of population are within the Tees Valley City Region including Hartlepool, Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland. Other potential centres are

those to the north in Tyne and Wear and centres in North Yorkshire, both accessed by the A1. The map shows that the main routes between these centres and Darlington do not pass within 200m of a Natura 2000 Site. Consequently it is unlikely increased traffic generation as a consequence of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options will impact a Natura 2000 site.

3.7 Air Traffic

3.7.1 In order to assess operational air quality impacts on sites, a study area needs to take account of where aircraft are likely to be flying below 100m on take off and approach, and where changes in traffic flow due to expansion are likely to have an impact upon air quality. As a result, the study area considered by the Environmental Impact Assessment associated with the most recent planning application for development at Durham Tees Valley Airport covered an 8km x 8km square from the airport and was located between Darlington and Stockton. This study area does not fall within the vicinity of a Natura 2000 site.

3.8 Species Movement

3.8.1 Figure 4 shows, the distance between the Borough and Natura 2000 sites. The distance between the Borough and Natura 2000 sites means it is unlikely that species movement to and from Natura 2000 sites will be affected by the Core Strategy Preferred Options. However, habitats in the Borough do provide a linking area between SACs to the west in Teesdale and Weardale and those of the Durham coast for migrating birds, particularly waders and waterfowl which use each habitat at different times of year.The presence of well managed and newly created wetland areas within the borough could act as a vital stopping point and therefore wildlife corridor for important populations of bird species. Existing areas such as Drinkfield Marsh LNR, the River Tees, etc will contribute to the continued success of SAC and SPA areas. Additions to the Darlington resource of water bodies would increase significance. Woodland creation and management within the borough also has similar benefits to those identified above, for species movement from large SAC's such as Castle Eden Dene and the River Tees Woodland corridor.

4. Natura 2000 Sites To Be Assessed

4.1 Sites

4.1.1 Based on the assessment in the previous section of the report, the Natura 2000 sites listed below are to be included in the screening assessment. These sites include:

- Castle Eden Dene SAC, Easington
- Thrislington SAC, Sedgefield
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR, Hartlepool
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland
- Durham Coast SAC, Easington

4.1.2 To understand the potential impacts of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options on the Natura 2000 sites, it is important to understand the following key factors about each site:

- Description of each site in terms of species and habitats it contains.
- Conservation objectives of each site
- Aspects of the site that is vulnerable and could be particularly sensitive to change in the environment.

4.1.3 Tables 2 to 6 provide this information for each of the identified Natura 2000 sites. A number of data sources were used to compile this data. The data sources used are listed below:

- English Nature, Appropriate Assessment development plans – North East England, provision of site information.
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee www.jncc.gov.uk
- Government Office for the North East, Appropriate Assessment of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Secretary of State's Proposed Changes for the North East
- Government Office for the North East, AA of the RSS addendums one and two.
- Natural England GIS Digital Boundary Datasets http://www.gis.naturalengland.org.uk/pubs/gis/GIS_register.asp
- Natural England Nature on the Map http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk/map.aspx?m=int_sites

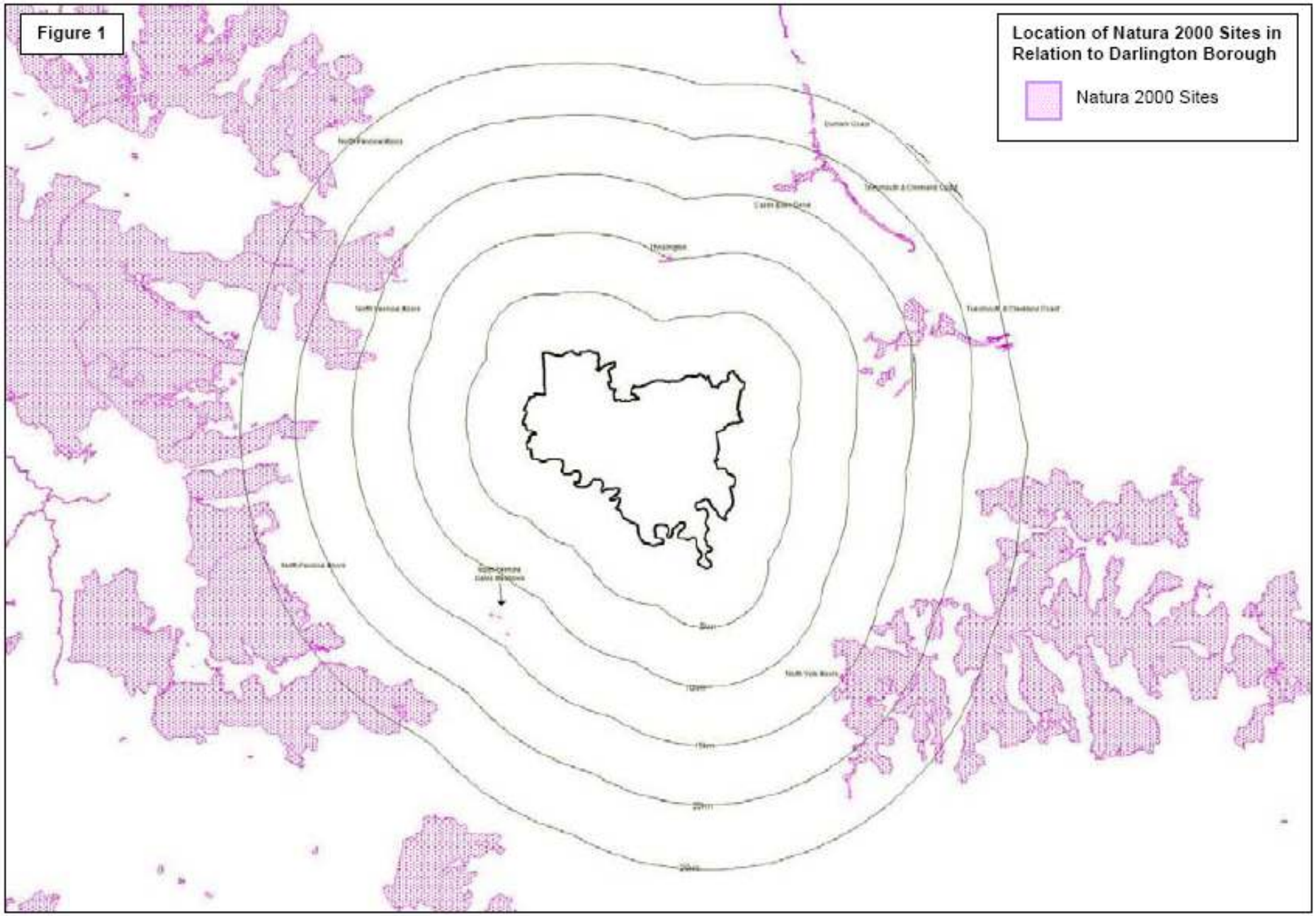
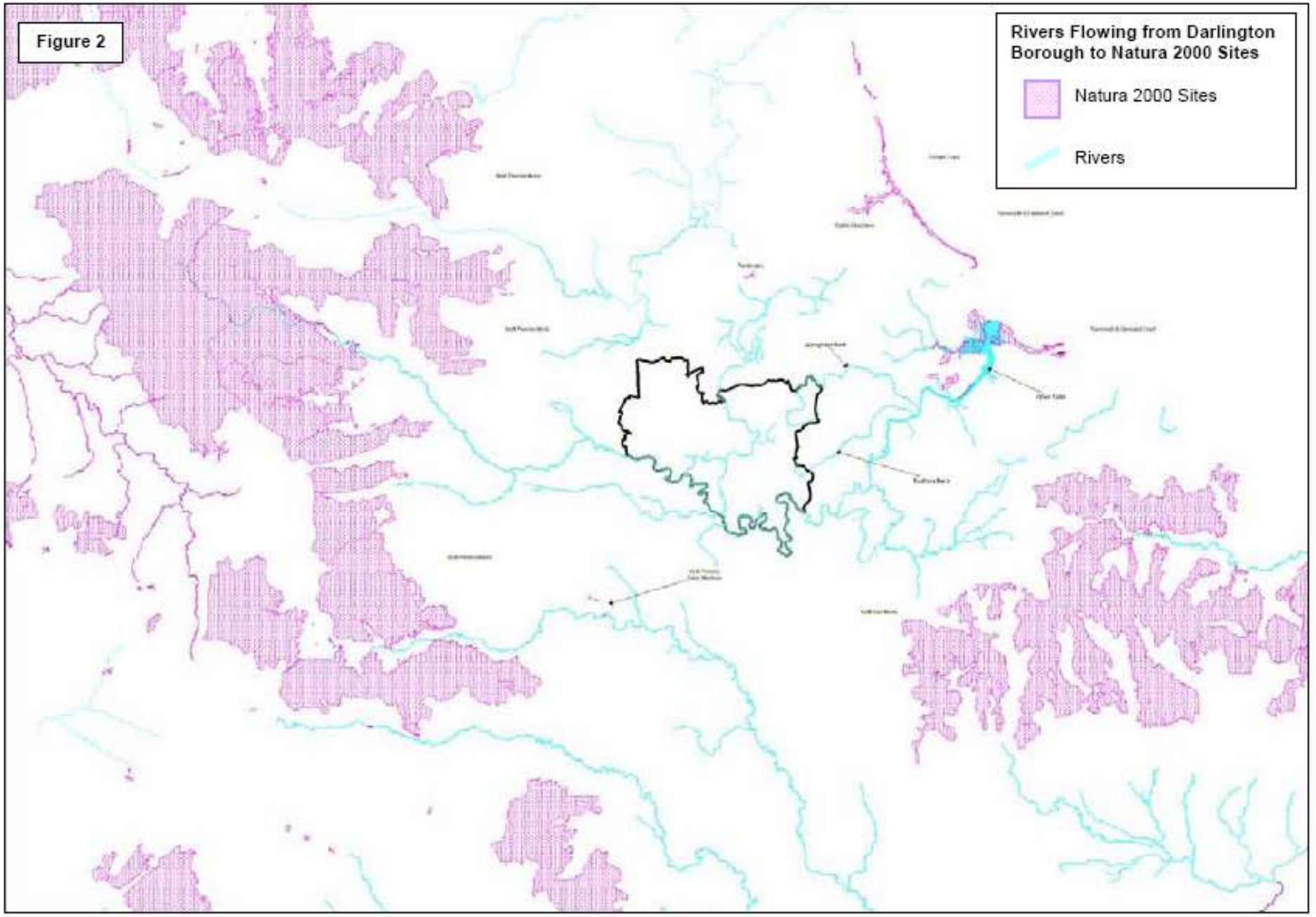


Figure 1
Location of Natura 2000 Sites in Relation to Darlington Borough
Natura 2000 Sites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Rivers Flowing from Darlington Borough to Natura 2000 Sites
Natura 2000 Sites
Rivers

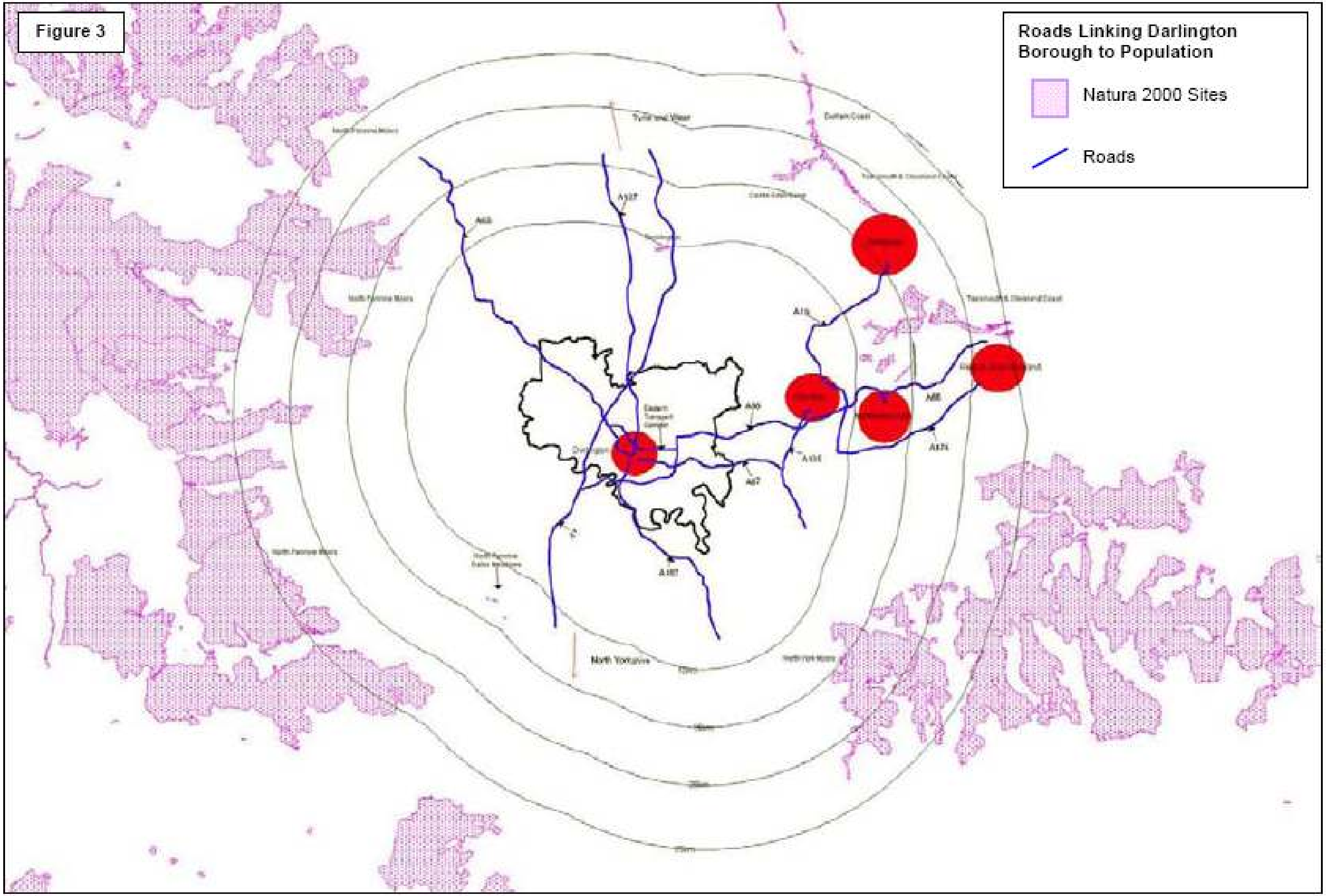
Figure 3
Roads Linking Darlington Borough to Population
Natura 2000 Sites
Roads
North Yorkshire

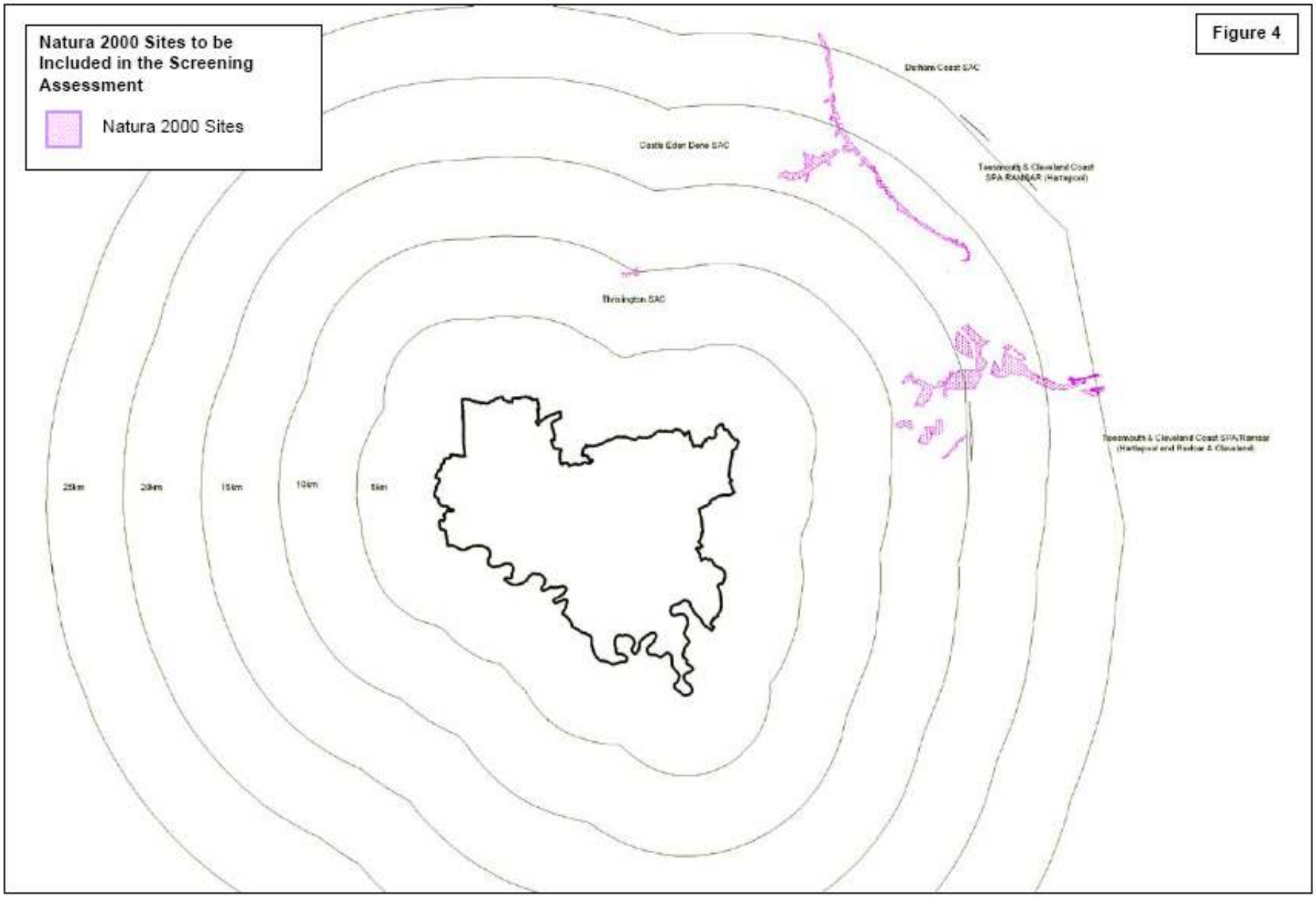
Natura 2000 Sites to be Included in the Screening Assessment
Natura 2000 Sites
Figure 4
Durham Coast SAC
Castle Eden Dene SAC
Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast SPA RAMSAR (Hartlepool)
Teesmouth & Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar
(Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland)
25km
20km
15km
10km
5km

Table 2: Thrislington SAC Information

Thrislington SAC		
Site Code: UK0012838	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 22.58 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
The whole of Thrislington SAC is located within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates** *(Festuco-Brometalia)* Thrislington is a relatively small site but contains the largest of the few surviving stands of CG8 Sesleria albicans - Scabiosa columbaria grassland *(Source: JNCC, Natura 2000 Data form for Thrislington SAC as submitted to Europe, via JNCC website)*	To maintain, in favourable Condition: the unimproved calcareous grassland, with particular reference to semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (CG8 grasslands) *(Source: English Nature's, SAC: Thrislington Component SSSI: Thrislington Plantation Draft Conservation objectives for the European interest on the SSSI, 2006)*	The conditions of these grasslands are dependent upon continuous management by seasonally-adjusted grazing and no fertiliser input. The site is now a National Nature Reserve and management on these traditional lines has been reintroduced at the site. The site is fairly stable and therefore there are little vulnerabilities. Strategies increasing the population, the amount of traffic and development are likely to exacerbate air quality impacts. The vegetation composition and structure is also at risk of being affected by increased nutrient inputs.

Table 3: Durham Coast SAC

Durham Coast SAC		
Site Code: UK0030140	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 393.63 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located partially within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts**. The only example of vegetated sea cliffs on Magnesian limestone exposures in the UK. These cliffs extend along the North Sea coast for over 20km from South Shields southwards to Blackhall Rocks. Within these habitats rare species of contrasting phytogeographic distributions often grow together forming unusual and species-rich communities of high conservation interest. The communities present on the sea cliffs are largely maintained by natural processes including exposure to sea spray, erosion and slippage of the soft Magnesian limestone bedrock and overlying glacial drifts, as well as localised flushing by calcareous water. Parts of the site are managed as a National Nature Reserve, and plans provide for the non-interventionist management of the vegetated cliffs. The majority of the site is in public ownership and an agreed management plan is being developed to protect nature conservation interests. *(Source, JNCC Natural 2000 data form Durham Coast SAC, via JNCC website)*	Subject to natural change, to maintain, in favourable condition, the: vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts This can be done by; maintaining the overall length and/or area of habitat with no increase in linear extent maintaining a range of physical conditions on the site, continued range of maritime grasslands and community transitions no further increase in species not normally associated with this community in the UK *(Source, English Nature, SPA: Northumbria Coast, SPA: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast, SAC: Durham Coast Component SSSI: Durham Coast Draft Conservation objectives for the European interest on the SSSI, 2006)*	Vegetated sea cliffs range from vertical cliffs in the north with scattered vegetated ledges, to the Magnesian Limestone grassland slopes of the south. The site is currently affected by, or at risk from increasing physical constraints which would reduce the mobility of the cliffs and reduce the range of communities. Any changes in the composition of cliff vegetation communities will damage site integrity.

Table 4: Castle Eden Dene SAC

Castle Eden Dene SAC		
Site Code: UK0012768	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 194.4 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Taxus baccata woodland** Castle Eden Dene in north-east England represents the most extensive northerly native occurrence of yew *Taxus baccata* woods in the UK. Extensive yew groves are found in association with ash-elm *Fraxinus-Ulmus* woodland and it is the only site selected for yew woodland on Magnesian limestone in north-east England. *(Source, JNCC Natural 2000 data form for Castle Eden Dene SAC, via JNCC website)*	To maintain, in favourable condition, the Taxus baccata woodland. This can be done by; Ensuring no loss of ancient semi natural stands Site management Limiting air pollution Limiting grazing by ungulates where it leads to undesirable shifts in the composition/structure of the land. *(Source, English Nature, cSAC: Castle Eden Dene Component SSSI: Castle Eden Dene Conservation objectives for the European interests on the SSSI, 2006)*	Yew woodlands are distributed throughout the site in a matrix of other woodland types. The site is managed as a National Nature Reserve and the Management Plan provides for regeneration of this special woodland type. Site management is essential to maintain the current level and structural diversity. It is currently affected and at risk from pollution, including eutrophication from adjacent farmland; whilst excessive browsing/grazing may lead to undesirable changes in composition and structure. Increased air pollution is likely to damage site integrity through disease of trees and an associated increase in the rate of Taxus baccatamortality in the long term

Table 5: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA

Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA		
Site Code: UK9006061	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 1247.31 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located partially within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast includes a range of coastal habitats – sand- and mud-flats, rocky shore, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh and sand dunes – on and around an estuary which has been considerably modified by human activities. This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons,* during breeding season, 37 pairs representing at least 1.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (4 year mean1993-1996). **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*, on passage, 2,190 individuals representing at least 5.2% of the population in Great Britain (5 year mean 1991-1995) Supporting criterion for; **Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*, on passage, 634 individuals representing at least 1.3% of the Europe/Northern Africa – wintering population (5 yr mean spring 91-95) (On Passage) **Knot** *Calidris canutus*, Over winter, 4,190 individuals representing at least 1.2% of the wintering Northeastern Canada/Greenland/Iceland/Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) **Redshank** *Tringa totanus*, over winter, 1,648 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic - wintering population (5 year peak mean 87-91) Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.	The Conservation Objectives are to maintain, in favourable condition; the habitats for populations of Annex 1[Wild Birds Directive] (Little Tern) speciesof European importance, with particular reference to : - Intertidal sand and mudflats - sand dunes - coastal waters the habitats for the populations of migratory bird species (Redshank andKnot) of European importance, with particular reference to: - Rocky shores - intertidal sand and mudflats - saltmarsh - freshwater marsh the habitats for the populations of waterfowl that contribute to the wintering waterfowl assemblage of European importance, with particular reference to: - Rocky shores - intertidal sand andmudflats - saltmarsh - freshwater marsh - standing water This can be done by; maintaining food availability suitable areas for breeding terns lack of disturbance maintenance of hydrology and flow, suitable water depth *(Source, English Nature, SPA: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast (Extended Area) Component SSSI: Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and*	Disturbance caused by offshore/marine activity is a key issue for designated species – this may take the form of recreational use of surrounding waters. This site is influenced by chemical discharges from industrial use along the Tees and from nutrient enrichment from agricultural use of the Tees Valley. Increased nitrogen deposition is likely to have a negative affect on the site. It is likely to alter the vegetation structure and composition, and reduce the area of un-vegetated beach suitable for nesting Little Tern. Increased recreational use of waters surrounding the site is likely to affect Tern breeding success. Reduced water quality may affect the invertebrate populations supporting wintering and breeding birds.

The area qualifies under **Article 4.2** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl Over winter, the area regularly supports 21,406individual **waterfowl** (5 year peak mean 1991/2 -1995/6) including: Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*,Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Knot *Calidris canutus*. *(Source, JNCC Natural 2000 data form for Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA, via JNCC website)*	*Wetlands Draft Conservation objectives for the European interest on the SSSI, 2006)*	

Table 6: Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar

Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Ramsar		
Site Code: UK11068	**Unitary Authority: Durham**	**Area: 1247.31 ha**
Brief Description	**Conservation Objectives**	**Vulnerability**
This site is located partially within 20km of the Borough of Darlington. Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast includes a range of coastal habitats – sand- and mud-flats, rocky shore, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh and sand dunes – on and around an estuary which has been considerably modified by human activities.This site is designated under **Article 4.1** of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it supports populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: **Waterfowl**, internationally important numbers of passage /winter water birds at designation: 9258 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99 –2002/2003). **Common redshank**, (Tringa totanus totanus):883 individuals, representing an average of 0.7 % of the UK population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) **Red knot** (Calidris canutus islandica).(migrating from West and Southern Africa)	Whilst no information is available on the conservation objectives they are likely to be similar to Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA The Conservation Objectives are to maintain, in favourable condition; the habitats for populations of Annex 1 [Wild Birds Directive] (Little Tern) speciesof European importance, with particular reference to : - Intertidal sand and mudflats - Sand dunes - Coastal waters the habitats for the populations of migratory bird species (Redshank) of European importance, with particular reference to: - Rocky shores - intertidal sand and mudflats - saltmarsh - freshwater marsh	The site is currently affected by nitrogen enrichment from sewage discharges, encroachment of scrub into dune habitats, disturbance from recreational use of the site and incursion of coarse marine sediment into estuary – however, the latter is a natural process. Disturbance caused by offshore/marine activity is a key issue for designated species. This may take the form of recreational use of surrounding waters which is likely to affect Tern breeding success. Reduced water quality may affect the invertebrate populations supporting wintering and breeding birds.

(wintering): 2579 individuals, representing an average of 0.9 % of the UK population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) Supporting criteria for designation: **Little Tern** *(Sternula albifrons albifrons)*nationally important numbers of breeding (40 pairs, circa 2% of the national population) Passage species of importance (at designation): **Northern shoveler** *(Anas clypeata)* (migrating between NW and C Europe): 7 individuals representing an average of 0% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3); **Common greenshank** *(Tringa nebularia),*(migrating between Europe and West Africa): 7 individuals representing an average of 1.1% of theGB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3). Nationally important invertebrates (British Red Data Book species): Pherbellia grisecens Thereva valida Longitarsus nigerrimus Dryops nitidulus Macroplea mutica Philonthus dimidiatipennis Trichohydnobius suturalis Nationally scarce higher plants: Festuca arenaria Puccinellia rupestris Ranunculus baudotii *(Source: JNCC, Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) via JNCC website)*		

5. Assessment of Likely Significance

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 As part of the screening process described in the EU Guidance for Appropriate Assessment (Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC), it is a requirement to complete the assessment forms in Annex 2 of the guidance. The assessment forms to be completed include:

- Screening Matrix;
- Finding of no significant effects report matrix.

5.1.2 This section of the report addresses the questions set out in the assessment forms. The evidence that informs the answers given to the assessment form responses is contained in previous sections of this report, together with supporting information in tables 2 to 6.

5.2 Assessment Table

5.2.1 In Tables 7 to 11, the potential impacts of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options, as identified previously in this report, are assessed in terms of how these could affect the Natura 2000 sites identified. Tables 7 to 11 set out any potential impacts the content of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options could have upon the Natura 2000 sites.

5.3 Assessment with Other Plans

5.3.1 Even where a plan on its own may not have a significant impact on a European site, it may have a significant 'in combination' impact with other trends, plans and projects. However, it is important to note that if the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options does not generate any impacts, it is not necessary to consider in combination impacts.

5.3.2 On pp. 24 of Appropriate Assessment of Plans (2006) by Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants et al. , it is advised that 'if the plan plus existing trends alone are unlikely to significantly affect a site, then the effects of other plans and projects do not need to be considered'.

Table 7: Potential Impacts on Air Quality of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

CSPO	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Mitigation	Conclusion
CS1, CS3, CS5, CS6, CS10, CS19	Air Quality	Thrislington SAC Durham Coast SAC Castle Eden Dene SAC Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR Tees Bay Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR Hartlepool	Increase in flights and traffic to and from Durham Tees Valley Airport	Increased air pollution related emissions could cause damage to Natura 2000 vegetation and species	No	None	The Environmental Impact Assessment of the expansion of Durham Tees Valley Airport concluded that changes in traffic flows and airport related emissions will lead to an increase in nitrogen dioxide and PM_{10}. However concentrations will only be influenced at receptors close to ground-level airport operations and these concentrations would remain below statutory air quality objectives and EU limit values. **As a result, the impact of DTVA on air quality which could adversely impact Natura 2000 sites can be screened out.**
			Emissions from biomass schemes and new industrial developments	As above	No	Biomass schemes will be subject to air quality control measures	As biomass schemes and new industrial development will be subject to air quality control measures and are remote from Natura 2000 sites, **this factor ca be screened out.**

			Increased car/hgv trips from increased population/ dwellings and Logistics	As above	No	None	As there are no Natura 2000 sites within Darlington Borough, if Natura 2000 sites are to be affected by increased traffic generation, it will occur as a result of traffic traveling to and from the Borough from locations outside Darlington. Figure 3 shows that the main routes that pass between main centres of population/business and Darlington do not pass within 200m of a Natura 200 sites. **Consequently this factor can be screened out.**
			Increased car trips to strategic tourism opportunity adjoining the A68/A1(M)	As above	No	None	**As above**
			Upgrading capacity of A66(T), improving existing routes from the town to South West Durham, Tees Valley and North Yorkshire for all road users	As above	No	None	**As above**

Table 8: Potential Impacts on Water Quality of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

CSPO	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Mitigation	Conclusion
CS1, CS5, CS6, CS10, CS19	Water Quality	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR Tees Bay (pathways include Billingham Beck, Lustrum Beck and the River Tees)	Increased surface run off from new development	Water borne pollution from River Tees due to new development	No	This impact will be mitigated by application of CS2, CS15 and CS17 which will be applied to all new developments.	As this impact will be for this factor can be screened out
			Increased sewage output	Water borne pollution from River Tees due to new housing development	No	Northumbrian Water are currently carrying out major investment in Darlington's Sewage Treatment Works that will address quality and growth issues. Further detailed growth assessments are being undertaken to include all factors such as migration and household size so that the appropriate level of improvement of STW's can be undertake Applications of CS4 and CS16 will ensure that developments will not proceed without the necessary infrastructure and controls in place.	As this impact will be mitigated for this factor can be out
			Increased run off from roads	Water borne pollution from watercourses due to increased traffic causing run off from roads	No	This impact will be mitigate application of CS16.	As this impact will be mitigated for this factor can be screened out

Table 9: Potential Impacts on Hydrology of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

CSPO	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Mitigation	Conclusion
CS1, CS5, CS10	Hydrology	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR Tees Bay	Upstream Development emerging from the Core Strategy	Land Use change can influence the quantity of surface water run off to watercourses and groundwater. This could influence the hydrology of the Natura 2000 site	No	Surface water run off will be minimised through the application of CS2, CS15 and CS17 to all new development	As this impact will be mitigated for this factor can be screened out

Table 10: Potential Impacts of Direct Disturbance of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

CSPO	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Mitigation	Conclusion
CS1, CS3, CS5, CS10, CS19	Habitat or Species Disturbance	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/ RAMSAR Tees Bay Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/ RAMSAR Tees Bay Hartlepool	Increase in flights from Durham Tees Valley airport	Increased frequency of aircraft noise following increases in the number of aircraft movements	No	The airport has a safeguarding zone of 8 nautical miles and operates a bird management policy	The Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken for the expansion of DTVA did not identify disturbance of bird species associated with the Natura 2000 sites .

			Construction and operation of new developments	Could contribute to wildlife displacement and disturbance	No	None	The bird species associated with the N2K sites are coastal and would not pass through the Borough. This factor can be screened out as a result.
			Turning blades on wind turbines	Can strike birds and cause fatalities	No	None	As above
			Increased traffic on improved routes	Could contribute to wildlife displacement and disturbance	No	None	The routes that pass between the main centres of population and Darlington do not pass within 200m of the N2K sites so disturbance is likely to be minimal, particularly to bird species whose movement is not restricted by roads. This factor can be screened out as a result.

Table 11: Potential Impacts on Climate Change of the Core Strategy Preferred Options

CSPO	Possible Impacts	Sites Potentially Affected	Impact Source	Significance	In combination with neighbouring plans/policies?	Mitigation	Conclusion
CS1, CS5, CS6 CS10, CS19	Climate Change	Thrislington SAC Durham Coast SAC Castle Eden Dene SAC Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR Tees Bay Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR Hartlepool	Increased flights from DTV airport	Will contribute to change which some species and habitats may able to adapt to	No	None	As per Air Quality; emissions of nitrogen dioxide will remain within air quality objectives and EU limits As a result this factor can be screened out
			Increased travelling to and around the Borough	As above	No	Developments will be prioritised in sustainable locations to reduce the need to travel.	As this impact will be mitigated for and the impact reduced as a result this factor can be screened out.

6. Screening Matrix

6.1 Possible Impacts

6.1.1 Tables 12 and 13 describe the possible impacts resulting from any policies or proposals in the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options on the Natura 2000 sites. The assessment in Table 12 has been used to complete the Screening Matrix.

Table 12: Screening Matrix

Brief Description of the Plan or Project
The document, once adopted in its final form, will be the principal document of the Darlington Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a set of documents, which will eventually replace the adopted Darlington Local Plan. It considers how the Borough will develop over the next fifteen years or so, providing the spatial planning framework for the many plans and strategies prepared by the Council and its partners. In particular, it will help to deliver spatially the priorities that are set out in the sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', prepared by Darlington Partnership.
Brief Description of Natura Sites
The following sites have been included in the Screening Matrix for the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options: • Castle Eden Dene SAC, Easington • Thrislington SAC, Sedgefield • Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR, Hartlepool • Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland • Durham Coast SAC, Easington
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on a Natura 2000 site
The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites
The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: **• reduction of habitat area:** **• disturbance to key species;** **• habitat or species fragmentation;** **• reduction in species density;** **• changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);** **• climate change**
The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of: **• interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;** **• interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.**
The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms: **• loss;** **• fragmentation;** **• disruption;** **• disturbance;** **• change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.).**
The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known
The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.

7. Findings of No Significant Effects Report Matrix

7.1 Report Matrix

7.1.1 For all themes and policies in the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options, no significant effects have been identified. As such, a matrix that reports the finding of no significant effects (Table 13) has been completed

Table 13: No Significant Effects Report Matrix

Criteria	Assessment
Name of project or plan	Darlington Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Options
Name and location of Natura 2000 sites	Castle Eden Dene SAC, Durham Thrislington SAC, Durham Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR, Hartlepool Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/RAMSAR, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Durham Coast SAC, Durham
Description of the project or plan	The document, once adopted in its final form, will be the principal document of the Darlington Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a set of documents which will eventually replace the adopted Darlington Local Plan. It considers how the Borough will develop over the next fifteen years or so, providing the spatial planning framework for the many plans and strategies prepared by the Council and its partners. In particular, it will help to deliver spatially the priorities that are set out in the sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed', prepared by Darlington Partnership and agreed in 2008.
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	No
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	No

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 This report finds no significant detrimental effects of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options. The Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options is not likely to give rise to any negative impacts on any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the adoption of the document in the Borough of Darlington. Appropriate Assessment of this report can therefore be screened out.

8.2 Although there are no significant detrimental effects resulting from the Core Strategy on Natura 2000 sites, potential impacts should be investigated on subsequent individual planning applications with specific regard to the following:

- Impact of economic growth (and consequential development) on air quality, water quality, hydrology on Natura 2000 sites.
- Impact of employment growth (and consequential development) on air quality, water quality and hydrology on Natura 2000 sites.
- Impact of housing development on air quality, water quality and hydrology on Natura 2000 sites
- Impact on traffic growth on air quality, water quality and hydrology on Natura 2000 sites

8.3 Potential impacts of significant planning applications will be considered through assessing the evidence submitted with each application. Accompanying documents including environmental assessments, reports and statements that are required as part of a planning application will form the basis of the assessment.

8.4 Any potential cumulative effects resulting from smaller developments will be identified through continual monitoring. Annual monitoring of individual smaller planning permissions granted that have a negative impact will provide the trigger for seeking further information from developers on application. These developments will be monitored and reported on in the LDF Annual Monitoring Report.

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