

Date: 17 November 2010
Our ref: N/WoE/B&NES/LDF/CS/CS HRA response
Your ref:

NATURAL
ENGLAND

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By email and special delivery

Dear Richard

**Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Bath & North East Somerset Draft Core Strategy
Publication Document (November 2010): Fit for purpose**

1. Thank you for forwarding the record of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the B&NES Core Strategy Publications Document. It was received by this office on 16 November 2010.
2. We are pleased to confirm that Natural England considers that the Habitats Regulations Assessment is "fit for purpose" and sets out conclusions on the likelihood of significant impacts upon European sites with which we agree.
3. We believe that the authority has followed best practice in its approach to the Assessment and are pleased to see that it has formed an integral part of the plan making process. We have had some useful dialogue in the late stages of the process and we appreciate the degree to which our comments have been taken into account.
4. The various changes that have been made to the Core Strategy as a result of the process are welcome and, in our view, have improved the environmental soundness of the document.
5. We would particularly highlight the safeguards that have been introduced to policies B1 and CP5 (which will become CP6) in respect of European Sites as both necessary and welcome. In addition, we note the role which the forthcoming Place Making DPD will play in the protection of European Sites. We are pleased to note that the text of the supporting document to the HRA refers to the guidance on European Sites which the Place Making DPD will include. We should make clear at this stage that Natural England looks forward to working closely with the authority on the development of this important DPD.
6. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance at this stage.

Yours sincerely



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