Large Site Options and Habitats Regulations in Dartford

Figure 3 An Overview of the Dartford HRA Approach

The ‘zone of influence’ in the Borough:

- Dartford’s ‘zone of influence’ for Habitats Regulation Purposes is up to 10km travel distance from the North Kent European Protected Sites.
- This applies in planning policy terms under policy DP25: 4 of the Dartford Development Policies Local Plan, with the applicable area illustrated in Figure 8 of the Plan.

Qualifying developments:

- Large residential proposals of 15 dwellings or more on sites within the Dartford ‘zone of influence’ will be required to provide a Habitats Regulation Screening Assessment as a minimum to accompany any planning application.
- Reserved Matter and Section73 planning applications may have to undertake a screening assessment depending on circumstances. Site by site requirements will be confirmed by the Local Planning Authority.

Screening Assessments must consider individual and cumulative development impact and reflect a precautionary approach to possible significant effect. Assessments may take into account avoidance and mitigation measures. Two mitigation approaches should be considered by large sites in Dartford:

- Mitigation Approach 1: Is available to sites over 100 units only. This is based on financial contribution to strategic mitigation measures, based on the number of new dwellings.
- Mitigation Approach 2: The Dartford Core Strategy sets stipulations for greenspace provision, including quantitative requirements on developments over 2 hectares. In addition to this, to meet the separate legislative obligations outlined in this guidance, greenspace/bluespace should also be brought forward that is of a quality and kind sufficient so that it will demonstrably be visited as an alternative to using the North Kent sites.

Where the planning authority considers that a Screening Assessment provides sufficient certainty that no significant effects will occur, through proposed development, at the European Sites; further Appropriate Assessment will not be required and Regulatory requirements should then be sufficiently met.