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 2ha. 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.