

*Impact upon the River Usk cSAC and SSSI: **Appropriate Assessment***

Due to the possibility of the proposals having a significant effect on features of the River Usk cSAC, it is necessary to carry out an Appropriate Assessment to determine the impact on the integrity of the European site. The river has been designated because the following specials are special interest features to the River Usk:

- (I) Allis Shad
- (II) Twaite Shad
- (III) Bullhead
- (IV) River Lamprey
- (V) Brook Lamprey

The river also supports the following species listed in annex iv of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (The Habitat Directive).

- Otter
- Atlantic Salmon

Conservation objectives for the cSAC include:

- to maintain the availability and condition of current shad spawning sites and lamprey nurseries;
- to maintain suitable flows, water quality and sediment loads to sustain the population of shad, lamprey and nurseries;
- to maintain riparian habitats to ensure optimum conditions for shad, lamprey and bullhead.

The Usk is considered one of the best examples of a near natural river system in England and Wales. The range of plants and animals reflects a transition from nutrient poor to naturally rich. It was notified to protect a wide range of habitats and features. It also acts as an important wildlife corridor, an essential migration route and a key breeding area for nationally and internationally important species, including the otter.

There are no mid-channel works or development proposed to the river bank. This will therefore be undisturbed. A buffer zone is also provided between the main development and the rivers edge and this will be secured by planning condition.

The development works are likely to affect the cSAC during construction of the project and during operation. This relates primarily to the contamination remediation required, transportation of material for flood prevention works, land raising and riverside boulevard formation.

The construction phase will involve substantial earth moving works which could lead to the release of suspended solids and contaminants into the river as run-off or via ground water disturbance.

It is intended to control this by conditions requiring that contamination remediation and a programme of construction works be agreed. These details will need to include measures to control any run-off release or discharge of foul or turbid water into the river.

The method by which oils and other chemicals will be stored, the nature of imported material and timing of works will be controlled by conditions on any approval to ensure that only clean inert material is deposited, chemicals safely stored and fish migration periods are undisturbed.

During the operation of the development, the only impacts will be drainage. Details of both foul and surface water drainage serving the site will be required by planning condition and will need to detail end receptors in order to ensure that there is not pollution of the water environment.

Other conditions which will be attached to any planning consent will include:

- no stockpile of material near the rivers edge;
- limiting hours of construction;
- provision of a buffer zone;
- recording of contamination and submission of remediation programme;
- method statement to be submitted describing details of any necessary pollution prevention measures during the construction phase;
- control of works along the river bank.

With the imposition of these conditions and good working practice and management, it is considered

that the proposals would not have a significant adverse effect on the CSAC.