East Hampshire Local Plan

Habitats Regulations Assessment
Regulation 18

East Hampshire District Council

Project number: 60572250

January 2024

Delivering a better world

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
Dr Damiano Weitowitz Principal Ecologist Simon Gosling Ecologist	Dr James Riley Technical Director	Dr Max Wade Technical Director	Dr James Riley Technical Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
0	20/12/23	Draft	JR	James Riley	Technical Director
1	17/01/23	Revised for consultation	JR	James Riley	Technical Director

Distribution List

# Hard Copies	PDF Required	Association / Company Name

Prepared for:

East Hampshire District Council

Prepared by:

Dr Damiano Weitowitz
Principal Ecologist
E: damiano.weitowitz@aecom.com

AECOM Limited
Midpoint, Alencon Link
Basingstoke
Hampshire RG21 7PP
United Kingdom

T: +44(0)1256 310200
aecom.com

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Introduction

Background

1.1 AECOM has been appointed by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Regulation 18 Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the East Hampshire Local Plan, EHLP). The objective of an HRA is to identify any aspects of a Plan that may result in Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) and, where relevant, adverse effect on the integrity of Habitats (formally "European") sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites), either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of impact pathways is required, where a plan or project is likely to result in LSEs on a Habitats site, either individually or in combination.

1.2 The new EHLP will cover the years 2021 to 2040. It will exclude over half of the district, for which the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the relevant planning authority. In 2022 AECOM undertook an HRA screening (Likely Significant Effects) of an early version of the Local Plan which presented four broad Housing Options with key differences in the distribution of growth. This Regulation 18 Local Plan document builds on the previous work, and includes assessment of specific site allocations to deliver proposed increases in housing and employment floorspace during the plan period. The document identifies the key issues relevant to planning in the district, including the climate emergency, local housing needs, types of housing needs, environment and infrastructure requirements.

1.3 An initial assessment of the designated sites within and surrounding East Hampshire District, and the impact pathways linking to the proposed growth, highlights that several Habitats sites require consideration, including most notably the Wealden Heaths Phase II complex situated in the north-east of the district. This comprises the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC. However, some of the impact pathways associated with the EHLP extend beyond the authority boundary, most notably in relation to water quality and water quantity, level and flow in the River Itchen SAC and Solent Habitats sites.

Legislation

1.4 The UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 under the terms set out in the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 ("the Withdrawal Act"). While the UK is no longer a member of the EU, a requirement for Habitats Regulations Assessment will continue as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019[1].

1.5 The HRA process applies the 'Precautionary Principle'[2] to Habitats sites. Plans and projects can only be permitted having ascertained that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Habitats site(s) in question. To ascertain whether site integrity will be affected, an AA should be undertaken of the Plan or project in question. Figure 1 below sets out the legislative basis for AA.

1.6 Plans and projects that are associated with potential adverse impacts on Habitats sites may still be permitted if there are no reasonable alternatives and there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) as to why they should go ahead. In such cases, compensation is required to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

[1] These don't replace the 2017 Regulations but are just another set of amendments.
[2] The Precautionary Principle, which is referenced in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, has been defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2005) as: *"When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm* [to the environment] *that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. The judgement of plausibility should be grounded in scientific analysis."*

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Regulations state that:

"*A competent authority, before deciding to … give any consent for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site … shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that sites conservation objectives… The authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site*".

Figure 1: The legislative basis for Appropriate Assessment (AA)

1.7 Over time the phrase 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA) has come into wide currency to describe the overall process set out in the Regulations from screening through to IROPI. This has been coined to distinguish the process from the individual stage described in the law as an AA.

1.8 In spring 2018, the 'Sweetman' European Court of Justice ruling[3] clarified that 'mitigation' (i.e. measures that are specifically introduced to avoid or reduce a harmful effect on a European (Habitats) site that would otherwise arise) should **not** be taken into account when forming a view on LSEs. Mitigation should instead only be considered at the AA stage. This HRA has been cognisant of that ruling.

Scope of the Project

1.9 There is no pre-defined guidance that dictates the physical scope of an HRA of a Plan document. Current guidance suggests that the following Habitats sites should be included in the scope of an HRA assessment:

- All Habitats sites within the boundary of East Hampshire District; and,
- Other Habitats sites within 10km shown to be linked to development in the district through a known impact pathway (discussed below).

1.10 Generally, it is uncommon for development plans to be deemed to have significant impacts on Habitats sites situated more than 10km from areas of growth. For example, most core recreational catchments (except for some coastal sites) are under 10km in size and the average vehicle commuting distance of a UK resident is approx. 10.1km. It should be noted that the presence of a conceivable impact pathway linking a Plan to a Habitats site does not mean that LSEs will occur.

1.11 In some cases, development impacts can extend beyond 10km, particularly where hydrological pathways are involved, which is why the source-pathway-receptor concept is also used to help determine whether there are potential pathways connecting development to Habitats sites. This takes site-specific sensitivities into account, including issues such as nutrient neutrality or water quantity, level and flow.

1.12 Briefly defined, impact pathways are routes by which the implementation of a policy within a Plan document can lead to an effect upon a Habitats site. An example of this is new residential development resulting in a larger local population and thus increased recreational pressure, which could affect Habitats sites through, for example, disturbance to ground-nesting birds. Guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) states that the HRA should be '*proportionate to the geographical scope of the* [plan policy]' and that '*an AA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose*' (MHCLG, 2006, p.6).

1.13 This basic principle has also been reflected in court rulings. The Court of Appeal[4] has ruled that providing the Council (competent authority) was duly satisfied that proposed mitigation could be 'achieved in practice' to satisfy that the proposed development would have no adverse effect, then this would suffice. This ruling has since been applied to planning permissions (rather than a

[3] People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)
[4] No Adastral New Town Ltd (NANT) v Suffolk Coastal District Council Court of Appeal, 17th February 2015

Plan level document)[5]. In this case the High Court ruled that for '*a multistage process, so long as there is sufficient information at any particular stage to enable the authority to be satisfied that the proposed mitigation can be achieved in practice it is not necessary for all matters concerning mitigation to be fully resolved before a decision maker is able to conclude that a development will satisfy the requirements of Reg 61 of the Habitats Regulations'*.

1.14 Given an initial assessment of the relevant Habitats sites and the impact pathways present, and referring to the HRA work that was undertaken for the previous (now withdrawn) Reg.18 EHLP, this HRA will discuss the following Habitats sites (noting that overlapping Habitats sites below are grouped where they are considered as functional units in relation to the identified impact pathways):

- Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC (located in the north-east of East Hampshire District)
- East Hampshire Hangers SAC (stretching on a north-south axis through East Hampshire District)
- Butser Hill SAC (located in the southern part of East Hampshire District)
- Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC (located approx. 68m to the north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Waverley Borough)
- Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (located approx. 2.8km to the south of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Havant Borough)
- Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar (located 5.1km to the north-east of the East Hampshire District boundary in the adjoining authority of Waverley Borough)
- Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Cobham SAC (located 3.3 km to the north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Hart District).
- River Itchen SAC (3.8km to the west of the East Hampshire District boundary in the adjoining authority of Winchester City Council)
- Rook Clift SAC (located 3pprox.. 5.7km to the south-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Chichester District)
- Kingley Vale SAC (located approx. 5.8km to the south-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Chichester District)
- Thames Basin SPA (located approx. 3.2 km north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Hart District).

1.15 For the HRA, the views of the statutory nature conservation advisors, namely Natural England, will be sought as part of the consultation process on the scope of the Habitats sites assessed. The distribution of the above Habitats sites in relation to East Hampshire District is shown in Appendix A. An introduction to, the qualifying features (species and habitats), Conservation Objectives, and threats and pressures to the integrity of these Habitats sites are set out in Chapter 3.

1.16 In order to fully inform the screening for LSEs stage, several studies and online information databases have been consulted. These include:

- Future development proposed (and, where available, HRAs) for the adjoining authorities of Havant, Winchester, Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Waverley, South Downs National Park and Chichester;
- Visitor survey carried out in the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC by Footprint Ecology in 2018[6], comprising key information on access patterns and the core recreational catchment;

[5]High Court case of R (Devon Wildlife Trust) v Teignbridge District Council, 28 July 2015
[6] Panter C. (2018). Wealden Heaths and Shortheath Common 2018 Visitor Surveys, Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for East Hampshire District Council. 71pp.

- Road traffic statistics from the Department for Transport (https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk);
- Journey-to-work data from the Population Census 2011 (https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/WU03UK);
- Data on water quality and hydrological connections available on the Environment Agency Catchment Data Explorer[7];
- South East Water's[8] and Portsmouth Water's[9] Water Resources Management Plans (both 2019);
- The HRA produced by AECOM for the withdrawn Reg.18 EHLP;
- Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) and Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACO) for relevant Habitats sites published by Natural England;
- The UK Air Pollution Information System (www.apis.ac.uk); and
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and its links to SSSI citations and the JNCC website (www.magic.gov.uk).

Quality Assurance

1.17 This report was undertaken in line with AECOM's Integrated Management System (IMS). Our IMS places great emphasis on professionalism, technical excellence, quality, environmental and Health and Safety management. All staff members are committed to establishing and maintaining our certification to the international standards BS EN ISO 9001:2008 and 14001:2004 and BS OHSAS 18001:2007. In addition, our IMS requires careful selection and monitoring of the performance of all sub-consultants and contractors.

1.18 All AECOM Ecologists working on this project are members (at the appropriate level) of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and follow their code of professional conduct (CIEEM, 2019).

[7] Available at: https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ [Accessed on the 25/10/2022]
[8] South East Water. (2018). Water Resources Management Plan 2020 to 2080. 192pp. Available at: https://cdn.southeastwater.co.uk/Publications/Water+resources+management+plan+2019/south-east-water-final-wrmp-2020-2080.pdf [Accessed on the 25/10/2022]
[9] Portsmouth Water. (2019). Final Water Resources Management Plan 2019. 219pp. Available at: https://www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-Water-Resources-Management-Plan-2019.pdf [Accessed on the 25/10/2022]

2. Methodology

Introduction

2.1 The HRA has been carried out with reference to the EC guidance on HRA[10] and general guidance on HRA published by government in July 2019[11]. AECOM has also been mindful of the implications of European case law in 2018, notably the Holohan ruling and the People over Wind ruling, both discussed below.

2.2 Figure 2 below outlines the stages of HRA according to current EC guidance. The stages are essentially iterative, being revisited as necessary in response to more detailed information, recommendations and any relevant changes to the Plan until no significant adverse effects remain.

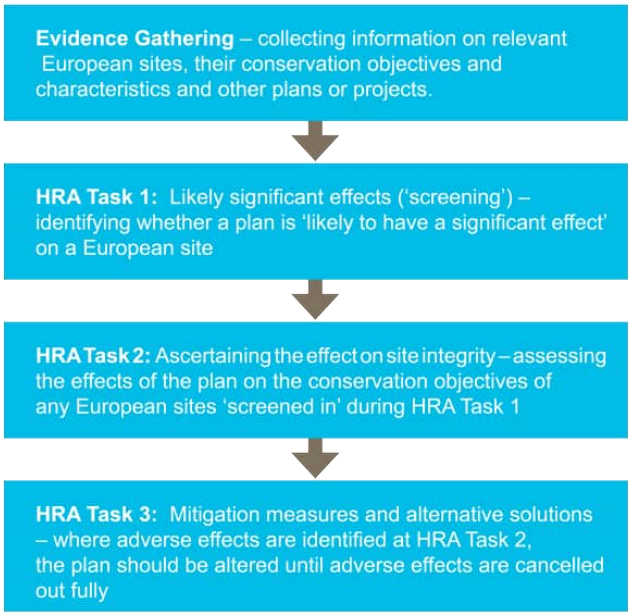


Figure 2: Four Stage Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment. Source EC, 2001[1].

Description of HRA Tasks

2.3 The full HRA process also involves HRA Task 2 (Appropriate Assessment; AA), HRA Task 3 (Avoidance and Mitigation) and, sometimes, HRA Task 4 (Derogation Tests). However, these stages are not presented here because this HRA only undertakes a screening assessment (HRA Task 1).

HRA Task 1 – Screening for Likely Significant Effects (LSEs)

2.4 Following evidence gathering, the first stage of any Habitats Regulations Assessment is the screening for LSEs, essentially a high-level assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as AA is required. The essential question is:

2.5 *"Is the project, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European ('Habitats') sites?"*

2.6 The objective is to filter out those Plans and projects that can, without any detailed appraisal, be concluded to be unlikely to result in any impacts upon Habitats sites, usually because there is no

[10] European Commission (2001): Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.
[11] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment

mechanism for a negative interaction. This stage is undertaken in Chapter 5 of this report and in Appendix B.

2.7 In 2018 the Holohan ruling[12] was handed down by the European Court of Justice. Among other provisions, paragraph 39 of the ruling states that '*As regards other habitat types or species, which are present on the site, but for which that site has not been listed, and with respect to habitat types and species located outside that site, … typical habitats or species must be included in the appropriate assessment, if they are necessary to the conservation of the habitat types and species listed for the protected area*' [emphasis added]. This has been considered in relation to the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar and the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, which all support mobile bird species.

[12] Case C-461/17

3. Habitats sites

Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA

Introduction

3.1 The Wealden Heaths Phase II lies on an arc of hilly country on the borders of Hampshire, Surrey and West Sussex. Its component parts constitute extensive areas of lowland heath similar in character to those in the Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SPA and Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The SPA is designated for three breeding bird species, including Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark. Dartford warbler are strongly associated with lowland heath and extensive patches of mature gorse that support abundant invertebrate prey species (e.g. spiders). However, the species also nests in patches of mature heather, clearings in forestry plantations and bracken. The main strongholds of this species are within Woolmer Forest and Ludshott Common.

3.2 While nightjar have undergone a significant decline in recent decades, current data suggest a trend towards increasing numbers, potentially due to better protection and management of breeding grounds. Nightjar utilise areas across all of the SPA for nesting and foraging, although favoured habitats are heath with high structural diversity (e.g. bare patches and short vegetation). The majority of nightjars are recorded in Woolmer Forest and Bramshott Common.

3.3 Woodlark suffered a significant population decline and range contraction until the end of the 20th century. Due to improved protection of lowland heath, this species in now recovering and colonising new areas. Woodlark also utilise rotationally managed conifer plantations, where they nest in recently felled areas and sections of young regrowth. The species uses scattered trees as song posts amidst short vegetation and / or bare ground. Abundances of woodlark fluctuate over time in synchrony with succession of heaths and plantations, with large numbers being present after heath fires or tree clearances.

Qualifying Features[13]

3.4 The site is designated as a SPA for the following qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive:

During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*
- Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
- Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Conservation Objectives[14]

3.5 With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.6 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,

[13] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5729030657540096 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[14] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5729030657540096 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[15]

3.7 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA are listed in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Change in land management
- Invasive species
- Hydrological changes
- Feature location / extent / condition unknown
- Public access / disturbance
- Military
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Wildfire / arson

Woolmer Forest SAC

Introduction

3.8 The Woolmer Forest SAC is a 670.15ha site comprising heath / scrub (62%), coniferous woodland (22%), dry grassland / steppes (10%), bogs / marshes (4%) and inland water bodies (2%). The SAC is a large expanse of lowland heathland, one of the largest in south-east England, with associated habitats such as valley mire, oligotrophic ponds, wet woodland, acid grassland, scrub and conifer plantations. The diverse array of habitats supports a large number of locally and nationally important wildlife, including all 12 British amphibians and reptiles. Furthermore, the SAC habitats also sustain the qualifying features of the partly overlapping Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA (Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark).

3.9 Cranmer Pond is a southern example of a dystrophic pond in an area of Northern Atlantic wet heaths and depressions on peat substrates. It is an 8ha pond with an average depth of 1m, which has resulted from past peat-cutting. The associated aquatic flora comprises bulbous rush *Juncus bulbosus* in the deeper sections and bog-mosses *Sphagnum* spp growing in the shallower areas.

3.10 Another notable feature within the SAC are the depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*. These are areas of seepage mires and waterlogged ground that are fed from both acidic and calcareous water sources. This feature includes a range of bog-mosses *Spaghnum* spp., cottongrasses *Eriophorum angustifolium* and *E. vaginatum*, bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and marsh clubmoss *Lycopodiella inundata*.

Qualifying Features[16]

3.11 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- European dry heaths
- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*

3.12 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

[15] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431913779036160 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[16] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030304 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- Transition mires and quaking bogs

Conservation Objectives[17]

3.13 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.14 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats, and,
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[18]

3.15 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Woolmer Forest SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Change in land management
- Invasive species
- Hydrological changes
- Unknown distributions
- Public access / disturbance
- Military
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Wildfire / arson

Shortheath Common SAC

Introduction

3.16 The Shortheath Common SAC is a 58.53ha large site encompassing heath / scrub (52%), bogs / marshes (27.5%), broad-leaved deciduous woodland (13%), dry grassland / steppes (5.5%) and inland water bodies (2%). It is set within a mixed rural landscape of farmland, woodland, heathland and small settlements, and lies just within the South Downs National Park. Upon cessation of traditional commons land management practices in the late 19th century, the site was colonised by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and oak *Quercus* / birch *Betula* woodland. Nonetheless large areas of open heathland remain, which complete successional stages to woodland.

3.17 The key features of nature conservation interest within the SAC include a substantial valley mire of high structural and ecological diversity, an area of 'schwingmoor' on fluid peat and sections of wet woodland (some of which occurs in stable combination with mire vegetation). The valley mire across the site comprises mesotrophic and eutrophic sections. The northern mesotrophic strip is dominated by grey willow *Salix cinerea*, sedges *Carex curta* and *C. rostrata*, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, marsh cinquefoil *Potentilla palustris* and bog-moss *Sphagnum recurvum*. In contrast, the southern oligotrophic part of the SAC is dominated by *S. recurvum*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and

[17] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4583742731452416 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[18] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431913779036160 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia*, as well as high cover of cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos*.

Qualifying Features[19]

3.18 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Transition mires and quaking bogs

3.19 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- European dry heaths
- Bog woodland (*Priority feature)

Conservation Objectives[20]

3.20 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.21 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of the qualifying natural habitats, and,
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying natural habitats rely

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[21]

3.22 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Shortheath Common SAC are identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Inappropriate scrub control
- Public access / disturbance
- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SPA

Introduction

3.23 The Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SPA forms an extensive complex of lowland heaths situated in Surrey. It is located in a largely rural setting with unspoilt character despite its close proximity to large urban centres such as Guildford and London. The underlying geology mostly comprises free-draining soils and, locally, less permeable deposits that support wetlands (e.g. mires, flushes and wet woodlands). Much of the SPA has open public access and is very popular for various recreational activities, including walking, birdwatching, horse riding, cycling and orienteering.

3.24 The SPA is designated for three breeding bird species, including Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark. Dartford warbler, which at this site occur close to its northern range limit, are strongly associated with extensive patches of mature gorse that support abundant foraging resources (e.g. spiders). Since this is a non-migratory species, winter survival and breeding success can

[19] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030275 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[20] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4851353352404992 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[21] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6257070747680768 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

be greatly impacted by cold temperatures and snow cover. Its strongholds within the SPA are at Hankley Common and Frensham Common.

3.25 Following a period of significant declines, nightjar populations have increased in recent years due to a better protection of their core breeding areas and improved management regimes in lowland heathland. Well camouflaged during daytime, nightjar are nocturnal birds that forage ('hawk') at dusk and dawn. Favoured areas for nesting are patches of heath with high structural diversity (including bare patches and short vegetation) and clearings in conifer plantations. The largest numbers of nightjar within the SPA are recorded on the Commons of Thursley, Hankley, Frensham and Elstead.

3.26 Populations of woodlark experienced serious declines until the late 20th century, but this species is now recovering due to better protection and consequent expansion of lowland heaths. Woodlark also benefit from rotational management of conifer plantations where they utilise recently felled areas and areas of young re-growth. This species utilises isolated trees in sparsely vegetated areas as favoured song-posts. The highest abundances of woodlark within the SPA are found on Thursley and Frensham Commons.

Qualifying Features[22]

3.27 The site is designated as a SPA for the following species of wild birds listed on Annex I of the European Wild Birds Directive:

- Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*
- Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
- Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

Conservation Objectives[23]

3.28 With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.29 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[24]

3.30 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SPA are identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Public access / disturbance
- Undergrazing
- Forestry and woodland management
- Hydrological changes

[22] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5735025425252352 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[23] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5735025425252352 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[24] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6249258780983296 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- Inappropriate scrub control
- Invasive species
- Wildfire / arson
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Unknown bird distributions
- Military
- Habitat fragmentation

Thursley and Ockley Bog Ramsar

Introduction

3.31 The Thursley and Ockley Bog Ramsar is a 265ha large site that comprises a valley mire complex in a matrix of heathland where drainage is impeded and a deep layer of peat has built up from decaying bog-moss *Sphagnum* spp. The Ramsar also encompasses several areas of open water, ranging from acidic boggy pools, ditches to large ponds. Its habitat diversity in turn supports a diverse assemblage of rare wetland invertebrates, six native reptile species and breeding populations of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and woodlark *Lullula arborea*. The site overlaps with the Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SPA, and the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC.

Qualifying Features[25]

3.32 The site is designated as a Ramsar for the following criteria:

Ramsar criterion 2

Supports a community of rare wetland invertebrate species including notable numbers of breeding dragonflies.

Ramsar criterion 3

It is one of few sites in Britain to support all six native reptile species. The site also supports nationally important breeding populations of European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and woodlark *Lullula arborea*.

Threats / Pressures to Site

3.33 Being designated as a Ramsar only, there is no Site Improvement Plan that specifically covers the Thursley and Ockley Bog Ramsar. However, the following threats / pressures to the site can be deduced from the ecological interest features present within the site and the Ramsar Information Sheet:

- Water quality
- Water quantity, level and flow
- Recreational pressure

[25] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11074.pdf [Accessed on the 26/08/2022]

Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC

Introduction

3.34 The Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC is a 5,154.5ha large composite site that encompasses heath / scrub (75%), bogs / marshes (10%), coniferous woodland (10%) and inland water bodies (10%). The SAC is an extensive complex of heath in the south-east of England that includes wet and dry heath, acid mire and bog pools. Underlying the site is a geology comprising free-draining sandstones and low permeability lenses of clay, the latter resulting in areas of surface wetness and seepages. The impeded drainage gives rise to the formation of mire systems that support very rich assemblages of wetland invertebrates, bryophytes and scarce plants.

3.35 The SAC represents lowland northern Atlantic wet heaths in south-east England of NVC type M16 *Erica tretralix – Sphagnum compactum*, associated with several rare plants including great sundew *Drosera anglica*, bog hair-grass *Deschampsia setacea*, bog orchid *Hammarbya paludosa* and brown beak-sedge *Rhynchospora fusca*. Included within the SAC boundary are also sections of European dry heaths of NVC type H2 *Calluna vulgaris – Ulex minor*, which support important assemblages of animal species including European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*, sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*.

Qualifying Features[26]

3.36 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*

Conservation Objectives[27]

3.37 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.38 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[28]

3.39 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Public access / disturbance
- Undergrazing
- Forestry and woodland management
- Hydrological changes

[26] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012793 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[27] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5141075941392384 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[28] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6249258780983296 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- Inappropriate scrub control
- Invasive species
- Wildfire / arson
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Unknown bird distributions
- Military
- Habitat fragmentation

East Hampshire Hangers SAC

Introduction

3.40 The East Hampshire Hangers SAC is a 561.69ha large site comprising broad-leaved deciduous woodland (79.3%), coniferous woodland (7%), mixed woodland (5%), humid / mesophile grassland (5%) and dry grassland / steppes (3.7%). The SAC predominantly supports beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodland that is extremely rich in vascular plants, including white helleborine *Cephalanthera damasonium*, violet helleborine *Epipactis purpurata*, green-flowered helleborine *E. phyllanthes* and Italian lords-and-ladies *Arum italicum*. Located within the SAC are also transitions to mixed woodland (e.g. small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*), stands of yew *Taxus baccata* and areas of rich bryophyte flora. The site supports high habitat diversity including areas of Chalk and calcareous grassland with early gentian *Gentianella anglica* and diverse orchid assemblages (e.g. musk orchid *Herminium monorchis*).

3.41 Another qualifying feature of the SAC are *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines, which comprise ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and large-leaved lime *T. platyphyllos*. Introduced sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* form part of the woodland community in many places. This qualifying habitat is associated with nutrient-rich soils on rocky slopes, where inaccessibility has reduced human impact. A varied ground flora is typically present in association with these tree species.

Qualifying Features[29]

3.42 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests
- *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines (*priority feature)

3.43 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites)
- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles (*priority feature)

3.44 Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

- Early gentian *Gentianella anglica*

Conservation Objectives[30]

3.45 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

[29] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012723 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[30] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6500658190483456 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

3.46 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[31]

3.47 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the East Hampshire Hangers SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Air pollution: Risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Invasive species
- Forestry and woodland management

Butser Hill SAC

Introduction

3.48 The Butser Hill SAC is a 237.36ha large site, encompassing dry grassland / steppes (70%), coniferous woodland (15%), mixed woodland (9.9%), broad-leaved deciduous woodland (5%), and heath / scrub (0.1%). The SAC is situated on the east Hampshire chalk and supports a rich grassland flora. The predominant botanical type is sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* – meadow oat-grass *Helictotrichon pratense* grassland. In addition to its grassland communities, Butser Hill exhibits transitions between semi-natural dry grassland, chalk heath, mixed scrub and yew *Taxus baccata* woods.

3.49 Butser Hill falls within the South Downs National Character Area (NCA), much of which in turn sits in the South Downs National Park. This is recognition of the site's natural beauty, and its importance for access and recreation. The NCA is an extremely diverse landscape that has been shaped by human activity, including agriculture and forestry.

Qualifying Features[32]

3.50 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (*important orchid sites)
- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles (*priority feature)

Conservation Objectives[33]

3.51 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

[31] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5890345141272576 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[32] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030103 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[33] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5067404384141312 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

3.52 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[34]

3.53 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Butser Hill SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Inappropriate scrub control
- Undergrazing
- Air pollution: Risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Ebernoe Common SAC

Introduction

3.54 The Ebernoe Common SAC is a 234.93ha large site comprising broad-leaved deciduous woodland (95%) and mixed woodland (5%). The Common is an extensive complex of ancient woodland and former wood pasture in West Sussex, with the central core of the site being the Ebernoe Common National Nature Reserve. Across its component parts, the underlying soils support varied woodland communities and age structures. The presence of ancient woodland in turn sustains outstanding biodiversity, including barbastelle and Bechstein's bats, which rely on the availability of roosting and feeding habitats within the SAC. While Bechstein's bats feed primarily in woodland adjoining their roosts, barbastelles commute into the surrounding countryside using woodland corridors that branch out from the site. Old-growth trees within the site also support rich lichen and fungi communities, as well as breeding bird communities.

3.55 The woodland feature within the SAC predominantly encompasses Atlantic acidophilous beech *Fagus sylvatica* forests over dense holly *Ilex aquifolium* understorey. Its rich epiphytic lichen flora includes *Agonimia octospora* and *Catillaria atropurpurea*. The forests show transitions to other woodland types, open glades and pools.

Qualifying Features[35]

3.56 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenon*)

3.57 Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*

Conservation Objectives[36]

3.58 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

[34] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4842655599034368 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[35] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012715 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[36] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6255629165395968 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

3.59 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[37]

3.60 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Ebernoe Common SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Forestry and woodland management
- Offsite habitat availability / management
- Habitat fragmentation
- Change in land management
- Hydrological changes
- Air pollution: Risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Public access / disturbance

River Itchen SAC

Introduction

3.61 The River Itchen SAC encompasses an area of 303.98ha and a variety of habitats, including running water (the river itself, 40%), bogs / marshes (27%), humid / mesophile grassland (19%), broad-leaved deciduous woodland (10%), mixed woodland (2%), improved grassland (1%) and non-forest areas cultivated with woody plants (1%). The R. Itchen is a typical chalk river with relatively uniform physical characteristics from source to mouth. It supports high water quality in terms of alkalinity, clarity and dissolved oxygen concentration.

3.62 The river's aquatic flora is exceptionally species-rich, supporting high abundances of typical chalk stream plants. Notably, most species are present throughout the system with fewer downstream changes than in most comparable rivers. In terms of fauna, the SAC supports diverse assemblages of invertebrates and aquatic molluscs, and there are resident populations of Atlantic stream crayfish and otter. Throughout its entire length, the aquatic flora is dominated by *Ranunculus* spp. including pond water-crowfoot (in headwaters), stream water-crowfoot and river water-crowfoot (both further downstream).

3.63 Typical of lowland chalk rivers, the Itchen also supports important populations of fish, including anadromous species. For example, the are large populations of bullhead *Cottus gobio*, brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri* and Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*. These populations are maintained through good water quality, extensive beds of submerged plants acting as shelter and coarse sediments that are vital for spawning success.

[37] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6364242571689984 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

Qualifying Features[38]

3.64 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation

3.65 Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*
- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*

3.66 Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

- White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*
- Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Otter *Lutra lutra*

Conservation Objectives[39]

3.67 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.68 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[40]

3.69 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the River Itchen SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Water pollution
- Physical modification
- Siltation
- Overgrazing
- Water abstraction
- Inappropriate weed control

[38] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012599 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[39] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5130124110331904 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[40] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5404054607888384 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate water levels
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate cutting / mowing
- Invasive species
- Undergrazing
- Inappropriate ditch management
- Inappropriate scrub control
- Forestry and woodland management

Rook Clift SAC

Introduction

3.70 The Rook Clift SAC is a small site of 10.62ha comprising entirely broad-leaved deciduous woodland (100%). It sits on the scarp slope of the South Downs within the South Downs National Character Area. The SAC is classified as ancient woodland that remains in semi-natural condition, with large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllus* (dominating in the canopy), ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. Soils in the SAC are deeper and rocks are less exposed because the chalk is subject to greater rates of weathering than the limestones of many other sites. Other common plant species in the SAC include hart's-tongue *Phyllitis scolopendrium* and shield-fern *Polystichum* spp.

Qualifying Features[41]

3.71 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines (* priority feature)

Conservation Objectives[42]

3.72 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.73 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats , and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[43]

3.74 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Rook Clift SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Deer

[41] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030058 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[42] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6335772969926656 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[43] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6352739575529472 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- Forestry and woodland management
- Feature location / extent / condition unknown

Kingley Vale SAC

Introduction

3.75 The Kingley Vale SAC is a 200.94ha large site comprising coniferous woodland (30%), dry grassland / steppes (30%), heath / scrub (25%) and mixed woodland (15%). The site lies both within the South Downs National Character Area and the South Downs National Park. Key feature of nature conservation concern within the SAC are the yew *Taxus baccata* woods, which are considered to be among the largest and best in Europe. A grove of ancient yews contains individuals which are over 500 years old. The high quality of the site is in part due to the presence of different successional stages from scrub grassland to mature woodland, which provide variation in woodland structure and function.

3.76 The SAC also harbours three nationally uncommon habitats, including chalk grassland, juniper scrub and yew scrub. The chalk grassland component is rich in flowering plants, such as sheep's fescue *Festuca ovina*, meadow oat *Avenula pratensis*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, autumn gentian *Gentianella amarella*, roundheaded rampion *Phyteuma tenerum*, bee orchid *Ophrys apifera*, autumn lady's tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* and fly orchid *Ophrys insectifera*. Although not notified for fauna, the SAC supports many breeding birds and invertebrates, including red kite *Milvus milvus*, forester moth *Adscita statices* and the nationally rare fly *Doros sonopseus*.

Qualifying Features[44]

3.77 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles (* priority feature)

3.78 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites)

Conservation Objectives[45]

3.79 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.80 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[46]

3.81 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Kingley Vale SAC have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Deer

[44] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012767 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[45] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5727834794360832 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[46] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6393220716036096 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

- Undergrazing
- Agriculture
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar

Introduction

3.82 The Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA lies on the south coast of England in Hampshire and West Sussex. It comprises large, sheltered estuarine basins with extensive sandflats and mudflats that are exposed at low tide. The two harbours are joined by a stretch of water that separates Hayling Island from the mainland. Mudflats within the SPA are rich in invertebrates (used as foraging resources by many qualifying waders) and also support extensive beds of algae, including eelgrasses (*Zostera* spp.) and *Enteromorpha* spp (used for foraging by dark-bellied brent goose). The site is designated as a SPA for its range of waders and waterfowl.

SPA Qualifying Features

3.83 Species referred to in Article 4 of the Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC:

Breeding

- Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*
- Common tern *Sterna hirundo*
- Little tern *Sterna albifrons*
- Dark-bellied brent goose

Overwintering

- Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*
- Common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
- Eurasian wigeon *Anas penelope*
- Eurasian teal *Anas crecca*
- Northern pintail *Anas acuta*
- Northern shoveler *Anas clypeata*
- Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*
- Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
- Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
- Sanderling *Calidris alba*
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*
- Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*
- Eurasian curlew *Numenius arquata*
- Common redshank *Tringa totanus*
- Ruddy turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Furthermore, the site supports an important assemblage of waterbirds referred to in Article 4.2 (79/409/EEC)

3.84 Over winter the area regularly supports 93,230 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/92-1995/96), including *Branta bernicla bernicla, Tadorna tadorna, Anas penelope, Anas crecca, Anas acuta, Anas clypeata, Mergus serrator, Charadrius hiaticula, Pluvialis squatarola, Calidris alba, Calidris alpina alpina, Limosa lapponica, Numenius arquata, Tringa totanus* and *Arenaria interpres*.

Ramsar Qualifying Features[47]

3.85 The site is designated as a Ramsar for the following criteria:

Ramsar criterion 1

Two large estuarine basins linked by the channel which divides Hayling Island from the main Hampshire coastline. The site includes intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, sand and shingle spits and sand dunes.

Ramsar criterion 5

Assemblages of international importance

Species with peak counts in winter – 76,480 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)

Ramsar criterion 6

Species / populations occurring at levels of international importance (identified at the time of designation)

Species with peak counts in spring / autumn:

- Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, 853 individuals representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)
- Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, 906 individuals representing an average of 2.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)
- Common redshank *Tringa totanus*, 2,577 individuals representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)

Species with peak counts in winter:

- Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 12,987 individuals representing an average of 6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)
- Common shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, 1,468 individuals representing an average of 1.8% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)
- Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, 3,043 individuals representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, 33,436 individuals representing an average of 2.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)

Species / populations identified subsequent to designation for possible future consideration under criterion 6

Species regularly supported during the breeding season:

- Little tern *Sterna albifrons albifrons*, 130 apparently occupied nests representing an average of 1.1% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census)

[47] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11013.pdf [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]

SPA Conservation Objectives[48]

3.86 With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.87 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Threats / Pressures to the Integrity of the SPA[49]

3.88 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Public access / disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Direct land take from development
- Biological resource use
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate pest control
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Hydrological changes
- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Extraction: Non-living resources
- Insufficient boundaries to cover qualifying features

Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

Introduction

3.89 The Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar is part of the Solent complex and comprises approx. 77ha of seagrass beds concentrated mainly in the north-west of the harbour. These beds support

[48] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5789102905491456 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]
[49] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752 [Accessed on the 18/10/2022]''

extensive assemblages of Zostera marina on the low shore and Zostera noltii on the upper to middle shore. The seagrass beds are the primary food source for dark-bellied brent goose. Areas of saltmarsh are predominantly comprised of cordgrass *Spartina* swards and provide feeding and roosting habitat for a variety of overwintering birds. The SPA / Ramsar has been designated for its internationally important numbers of dark-bellied brent goose, red-breasted merganser, dunlin and black-tailed godwit.

Qualifying Features[50]

3.90 Species referred to in Article 4 of the Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC:

Overwintering

- Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*
- Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*
- Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*

Ramsar Qualifying Features[51]

The site is designated as a Ramsar for the following criteria:

Ramsar criterion 3

3.91 The intertidal mudflat areas possess extensive beds of eelgrass *Zostera angustifolia* and *Zostera noltei* which support the grazing dark-bellied brent geese populations. The mud-snail *Hydrobia ulvae* is found at extremely high densities, which helps to support the wading bird interest of the site. Common cord-grass *Spartina anglica* dominates large areas of the saltmarsh and there are also extensive areas of green algae *Enteromorpha* spp. and sea lettuce *Ulva lactuca*. More locally the saltmarsh is dominated by sea purslane *Halimione portulacoides* which gradates to more varied communities at the higher shore levels. The site also includes a number of saline lagoons hosting nationally important species.

Ramsar criterion 6

3.92 Species / populations occurring at levels of international importance (identified at the time of designation)

Species with peak counts in winter:

- Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 2,105 individuals representing an average of 2.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)

Conservation Objectives[52]

3.93 With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.94 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely

[50] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9011051.pdf [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]
[51] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11055.pdf [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]
[52] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4857883850178560 [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]

- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Threats / Pressures to the Integrity of the SPA[53]

3.95 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Portsmouth Harbour SPA have been identified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan:

- Public access / disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Direct land take from development
- Biological resource use
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate pest control
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Hydrological changes
- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Extraction: Non-living resources
- Insufficient boundaries to cover qualifying features

Solent Maritime SAC

Introduction

3.96 The Solent Maritime SAC is a 11,243.12ha large site encompassing a wide variety of aquatic habitats, including tidal rivers / estuaries / mudflats / sandflats (59%), saltmarshes (23%), marine areas / sea inlets (14%), shingle / sea cliffs (3%), coastal sand dunes / beaches (0.5%) and broad-leaved deciduous woodland (0.5%). The Solent represents a major estuarine system on the south coast of England with four coastal plain estuaries and four bar-built estuaries. It is unique in its hydrographic regime that exhibits four tides per day and habitat complexity. Sediment habitats include extensive flats with frequent intertidal areas that support eelgrass *Zostera* spp. and green algae. Its mudflats are characterised by varying degrees of salinity (from low salinity in the upper reaches of the estuaries to fully marine muds in the Chichester and Langstone Harbours.

3.97 Other notable habitats include Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*) and Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*). The Solent Maritime SAC is the only site for smooth cordgrass *Spartina alterniflora* in the UK and one of only two sites where significant amounts of small cordgrass *S. maritima* are found. The site supports the second largest aggregation of Atlantic salt meadows in southern England, which is representative of the ungrazed type with sea

[53] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752 [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]''

purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*, common sea lavender *Limonium vulgare* and thrift *Armeria maritima*.

Qualifying Features[54]

3.98 Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Estuaries
- Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*)
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

3.99 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- Coastal lagoons (* priority feature)
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks
- *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (“white dunes”)

3.100 Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection:

- Desmoulin’s whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*

Conservation Objectives[55]

3.101 With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the ‘Qualifying Features’ listed below), and subject to natural change;

3.102 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[56]

3.103 The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Solent Maritime SAC have been identified in Natural England’s Site Improvement Plan:

- Public access / disturbance

[54] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030059 [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]
[55] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5762436174970880 [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]
[56] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752 [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]’’

- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Direct land take from development
- Biological resource use
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate pest control
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Hydrological changes
- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Extraction: Non-living resources
- Insufficient boundaries to cover qualifying features

Solent and Dorset Coast SPA

Introduction

3.104 The Solent and Dorset Coast SPA encompasses an area of the shallow marine environment specifically designated to protect important foraging areas of three species of tern (common tern, sandwich tern and little tern), which are qualifying features of nearby SPAs / Ramsars. It lies on the south coast within the English Channel and covers approx. 255.2km^2 between the Isle of Purbeck in the west to Bognor Regis in the east. The area of the SPA was established as a result of extensive visual tracking studies and augmented by statistical modelling of foraging behaviour.

Qualifying Features[57]

3.105 Species referred to in Article 4 of the Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC:

Breeding

- Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*
- Common tern *Sterna hirundo*
- Little tern *Sternula albifrons*

Conservation Objectives[58]

3.106 With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

[57] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/SPA-N2K/UK9020330.pdf [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]
[58] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5294923917033472 [Accessed on the 19/10/2022]

3.107 Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity

3.108 No Site Improvement Plan has been published by England for the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA. However, the threats and pressures are likely to be similar to the ones identified for other Habitats sites in the Solent, including:

- Public access / disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Direct land take from development
- Biological resource use
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate pest control
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Hydrological changes
- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Extraction: Non-living resources
- Insufficient boundaries to cover qualifying features

4. Background to Impact Pathways

Recreational Pressure

4.1 There is concern over the cumulative impacts of recreation on key nature conservation sites in the UK, as most sites must fulfill conservation objectives while also providing recreational opportunity. Increasing access levels have been strongly linked with surrounding housing development. For example, a recent study demonstrated that more housing in proximity to Habitats sites is associated with significantly higher visitor numbers at parking locations and foot access points across a range of different habitats[59]. Furthermore, urban development has also been directly linked with ecological impacts in Habitats sites[60] [61]. These patterns may apply to any Habitats site, but recreational pressure associated with housing growth is particularly significant for Habitats sites designated for birds. The precise pathways of impact differ between Habitats sites and depend on their qualifying features. HRAs of planning documents tend to focus on recreational sources of disturbance due to new residents[62].

Bird Disturbance

4.2 Human activity can affect birds either directly (e.g. by eliciting vigilance behaviour and / or flight responses) or indirectly (e.g. by damaging supporting habitats or inducing physiological stress responses). Some of the most obvious direct impacts include mortality through predation by free-roaming dogs and trampling of eggs in nests, both of which are important pressures on ground-nesting birds. But human disturbance also leads to much subtler behavioural changes (e.g. reduced foraging / chick provisioning, avoidance of highly disturbed areas and use of sub-optimal foraging areas) and physiological responses (e.g. an increase in heart rate). While such changes may be less noticeable, they can result in major population-level changes if impacts are sufficiently pervasive[63].

4.3 The primary concerns regarding disturbance effects in birds relate to energy expenditure and foraging / provisioning[64]. Disturbance increases energetic expenditure while reducing calorific intake, which can negatively affect the 'condition' and ultimately survival of breeding and overwintering birds. For example, chicks in disturbed nests may not receive sufficient nutrients and can exhibit reduced fledgling survival rates. Moreover, the more time a breeding bird adult spends away from its nest, the more likely it is that eggs will cool and eggs or chicks are taken by predators. Overwintering birds that do not sufficiently stock up their energy reserves may not successfully complete their long migrations. Additionally, displacement of birds from one feeding site to another can increase the pressure on the resources available within alternative foraging sites, which must sustain a greater number of birds[65]. Recreational effects on ground-nesting birds are particularly severe, with many studies concluding that urban sites support lower densities of key species, such as stone curlew and nightjar[66] [67].

[59] Weitowitz D.C., Panter C., Hoskin R. & Liley D. (2019). The effect of urban development on visitor numbers to nearby protected nature conservation sites. *Journal of Urban Ecology* **5**. https://doi.org/10.1093/jue/juz019
[60] Liley D., Clarke R.T., Mallord J.W., Bullock J.M. (2006a). The effect of urban development and human disturbance on the distribution and abundance of nightjars on the Thames Basin and Dorset Heaths. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for Natural England.
[61] Liley D., Clarke R.T., Underhill-Day J., Tyldesley D.T. (2006b). Evidence to support the Appropriate Assessment of development plans and projects in south-east Dorset. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for Dorset County Council.
[62] The RTPI report 'Planning for an Ageing Population' (2004) which states that 'From being a marginalised group in society, the elderly are now a force to be reckoned with and increasingly seen as a market to be wooed by the leisure and tourist industries. There are more of them and generally they have more time and more money.' It also states that 'Participation in most physical activities shows a significant decline after the age of 50. The exceptions to this are walking, golf, bowls and sailing, where participation rates hold up well into the 70s'.
[63] Riley, J. (2003). Review of recreational disturbance research on selected wildlife in Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage.
[64] Riddington, R. (1996). The impact of disturbance on the behaviour and energy budgets of Brent geese. *Bird Study* **43**:269-279.
[65] Gill, J.A., Sutherland, W.J. & Norris, K. (1998). The consequences of human disturbance for estuarine birds. *RSPB Conservation Review* **12**: 67-72.
[66] Clarke R.T., Liley D., Sharp J.M. & Green R.E. (2013). Building development and roads: Implications for the distribution of stone curlews across the Brecks. *PLOS ONE*. https://doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0072984.
[67] Liley D. & Clarke R.T. (2003). The impact of urban development and human disturbance on the numbers of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* on heathlands in Dorset, England. Biological Conservation **114**: 219-230.

4.4 Several factors (e.g. seasonality, type of recreational activity) may have pronounced impacts on the magnitude of bird disturbance. Disturbance in winter may be more impactful because food shortages make birds more vulnerable at this time of year. However, this increased impact may be counterbalanced by fewer recreational users in the winter months and lower overall sensitivity of birds outside the breeding season. Evidence in the literature suggests that the magnitude of disturbance clearly differs between different types of recreational activities. For example, dog walking leads to a significantly higher reduction in bird diversity and abundance compared to hiking[68]. Scientific evidence also suggests that key disturbance parameters, such as areas of influence and flush distance, are significantly greater for dog walkers than hikers[69]. Furthermore, differences in on-site route lengths and usage patterns likely imply that key spatial and temporal parameters (such as the area of a site potentially impacted and the frequency of disturbance) will also differ between recreational activities. This suggests that activity type is a factor that should be taken into account in HRAs.

Trampling Damage and Nutrient Enrichment

4.5 Most terrestrial habitats (especially heathland and woodland) can be affected by trampling and other mechanical damage, which dislodges individual plants, leads to soil compaction and erosion. The following studies have assessed trampling impact of different recreational activities in various habitats:

- Wilson & Seney)[70] examined the degree of track erosion caused by hikers, motorcyclists, horse riders and cyclists in 108 plots along tracks in the Gallatin National Forest, Montana. Although the results proved difficult to interpret, it was concluded that horses and hikers disturbed more sediment on wet tracks, and therefore caused more erosion, than motorcycles and bicycles.

- Cole et al[71] conducted experimental off-track trampling in 18 closed forest, dwarf scrub and meadow & grassland communities (each trampled between 0 – 500 times) over five mountain regions in the US. Vegetation cover was assessed two weeks and one year after trampling, and an inverse relationship with trampling intensity was discovered, although this relationship was weaker after one year than two weeks indicating some recovery of the vegetation. Differences in plant morphology was found to explain more variation in response than soil and topographic factors. Low-growing, mat-forming grasses regained their cover best after two weeks and were considered most resistant to trampling, while tall forbs (non-woody vascular plants other than grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns) were considered least resistant. The cover of hemicryptophytes and geophytes (plants with buds below the soil surface) was heavily reduced after two weeks but had recovered well after one year and as such these were considered most resilient to trampling. Chamaephytes (plants with buds above the soil surface) were least resilient to trampling. It was concluded that these would be the least tolerant of a regular cycle of disturbance.

- Cole [72] conducted a follow-up study (across four vegetation types) in which shoe type (trainers or walking boots) and trampling weight were varied. Although immediate damage was greater with walking boots, there was no significant difference after one year. Heavier tramplers caused a greater reduction in vegetation height than lighter tramplers, but there was no differential impact on vegetation cover.

- Cole & Spildie[73] experimentally compared the effects of off-track trampling by hikers and horse riders (at two intensities – 25 and 150 passes) in two woodland vegetation types (one with an

[68] Banks P.B. & Bryant J.Y. (2007). Four-legged friend or foe? Dog walking displaces native birds from natural areas. *Biology Letters* **3**: 14pp.
[69] Miller S.G., Knight R.L. & Miller C.K. (2001). Wildlife responses to pedestrians and dogs. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* **29**: 124-132.
[70] Wilson, J.P. & J.P. Seney. (1994). Erosional impact of hikers, horses, motorcycles and off-road bicycles on mountain trails in Montana. *Mountain Research and Development* **14**:77-88
[71] Cole, D.N. (1995a). Experimental trampling of vegetation. I. Relationship between trampling intensity and vegetation response. *Journal of Applied Ecology* **32**: 203-214
Cole, D.N. (1995b). Experimental trampling of vegetation. II. Predictors of resistance and resilience. *Journal of Applied Ecology* **32**: 215-224
[72] Cole, D.N. (1995c). Recreational trampling experiments: effects of trampler weight and shoe type. Research Note INT-RN-425. U.S. Forest Service, Intermountain Research Station, Utah.
[73] Cole, D.N. & Spildie, D.R. (1998). Hiker, horse and llama trampling effects on native vegetation in Montana, USA. *Journal of Environmental Management* **53**: 61-71

erect forb understorey and one with a low shrub understorey). Horse trampling was found to cause the largest reduction in vegetation cover. The forb-dominated vegetation suffered greatest disturbance but recovered rapidly. Generally, it was shown that higher trampling intensities caused more disturbance.

- In heathland sites, trampling damage can affect the value of a site to wildlife. For example, heavy use of sandy tracks loosens and continuously disturbs sand particles, reducing the habitat's suitability for invertebrates[74]. Species that burrow into flat surfaces such as the centres of paths, are likely to be particularly vulnerable, as the loose sediment can no longer maintain their burrow. In some instances, nature conservation bodies and local authorities resort to hardening paths to prevent further erosion. However, this is concomitant with the loss of habitat used by wildlife, such as sand lizards and burrowing invertebrates.

4.6 A major concern for nutrient-poor terrestrial habitats, such as heathland, is nutrient enrichment associated with dog fouling (addressed in various reviews, e.g.[75]). It is estimated that dogs will defecate within 10 minutes of starting a walk and therefore most nutrient enrichment arising from dog faeces will occur within 400m of a site entrance. In contrast, dogs will urinate at frequent intervals during a walk, resulting in a more spread-out distribution of nutrients from urine. For example, in Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve it is estimated that 30,000 litres of urine and 60 tonnes of dog faeces are deposited annually[76]. While there is limited information on the chemical constituents of dog faeces, nitrogen is one of the main components[77]. Nutrient availability is the major determinant of plant community composition and the effect of dog defecation in sensitive habitats may be comparable to a high-level application of fertiliser, potentially resulting in a shift towards plant communities that are more typical of improved grasslands.

Summary

4.7 Several Habitats sites in East Hampshire District and adjoining authorities are designated for habitats and species that are sensitive to recreational pressure, such as the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA (designated for ground-nesting birds), Woolmer Forest SAC, Shortheath Common SAC, East Hampshire Hangers SAC and Butser Hill SAC. The increase in residential development as a result of the proposed allocations in the Reg.18 Local Plan would lead to an increase in the local population and additional demand for access to outdoor spaces. The HRA process needs to adequately appraise potential recreational pressure effects of the Plan on sensitive Habitats sites.

4.8 Overall, the following Habitats sites within 10km of the East Hampshire District boundary are potentially sensitive to increased recreational access due to the allocation of residential development in the Local Plan (the sites in **bold** are taken forward into the following HRA chapters):

- **Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC (located in the north-east of East Hampshire District)**
- **East Hampshire Hangers SAC (stretching on a north-south axis through East Hampshire District)**
- **Butser Hill SAC (located in the southern part of East Hampshire District)**
- **Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC (located approx. 68m to the north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Waverley)**
- **Thames Basin Heaths SPA (located approx. 3.3km north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Hart)**

[74] Taylor K., Anderson P., Liley D. & Underhill-Day J.C. (2006). Promoting positive access management to sites of nature conservation value: A guide to good practice. English Nature / Countryside Agency, Peterborough and Cheltenham.
[75] Taylor K., Anderson P., Taylor R.P., Longden K. & Fisher P. (2005). Dogs, access and nature conservation. English Nature Research Report, Peterborough.
[76] Barnard A. (2003). Getting the facts – Dog walking and visitor number surveys at Burnham Beeches and their implications for the management process. *Countryside Recreation* **11**:16-19.
[77] Taylor K., Anderson P., Liley D. & Underhill-Day J.C. (2006). Promoting positive access management to sites of nature conservation value: A guide to good practice. English Nature / Countryside Agency, Peterborough and Cheltenham.

- **Rook Clift SAC (located approx. 5.7km to the south-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Chichester)**
- **Kingley Vale SAC (located approx. 5.8km to the south-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Chichester)**
- **Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (located approx. 2.8km to the south of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Havant)**

Water Quality

4.9 Water quality is an important determinant of the nature and condition of qualifying habitats and species in Habitats sites. Declining water quality can have a range of environmental impacts:

- At high levels, toxic chemicals and metals can result in immediate death of aquatic life and have additional detrimental effects (even at lower levels), such as increased vulnerability to disease and changes in wildlife behaviour.
- Eutrophication, the enrichment of plant nutrients in water, increases plant growth and consequently results in oxygen depletion. Algal blooms, which commonly result from eutrophication, increase turbidity and decrease light penetration. The decomposition of organic wastes that often accompanies eutrophication, deoxygenates water further, exacerbating the ongoing oxygen depletion. In the marine environment, nitrogen is the main growth-limiting plant nutrient and so eutrophication is primarily associated with discharges containing bioavailable nitrogen.
- Some pesticides, industrial chemicals, and components of sewage effluent are suspected to interfere with the functioning of the endocrine system, possibly having negative effects on the reproduction and development of aquatic life.

4.10 The main pathway of impact associated with the Reg.18 East Hampshire Local Plan is an increase in the discharge of treated sewage effluent from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) serving East Hampshire District. Treated sewage effluent contains a high loading of nutrients (both phosphorus and nitrogen) and increases nutrient concentrations in Habitats sites that are hydrologically connected to waterbodies receiving discharge from WwTWs. The role of nutrients differs between ecosystems, with phosphorus being the growth-limiting element in freshwater ecosystems and nitrogen being more important in the marine environment. There are sensitive freshwater and marine Habitats sites within a potential zone of impact for the district, meaning that both types of nutrients are relevant to Local Plan development.

4.11 Typically, nutrient effects on Habitats sites are considered through the Environment Agency Review of Consents process, which assigns permissible discharge limits to WwTWs to allow development coming forward, while also protecting the integrity of Habitats sites. The Local Plan assessed in this HRA provides for development in a geographic area that is served by Southern Water and Thames Water. However, Natural England highlighted a number of Habitats sites that are in 'Unfavourable' condition and where future additional discharge of treated sewage effluent would result in adverse effects on site integrity. The standing advice is that new development in the hydrological catchment of these sites should achieve nutrient neutrality[78] or, where this is unfeasible, must provide adequate mitigation measures.

4.12 Overall, the following Habitats sites within 10km of the East Hampshire District boundary are sensitive to negative changes in water quality, primarily due to increased discharge volumes of treated sewage effluent from WwTWs (**sites in bold are taken forward to Chapter 5 of the HRA**):

- **River Itchen SAC (3.8km to the west of the East Hampshire District boundary in the adjoining authority of Winchester). For this site it is specifically development in East Hampshire served by package treatment plants that has been identified as being a concern by Natural England.**

[78] https://www.push.gov.uk/natural-england-nutrient-calculator-and-guidance/, including Solent budget calculator dated April 2023

- **Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (located approx. 2.8km to the south of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Havant Borough)**
- **Woolmer Forest SAC (located in the north-east of East Hampshire District)**
- **Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar (located 5.1km to the north-east of the East Hampshire District boundary in the adjoining authority of Waverley Borough)**

Water Quantity, Level and Flow

4.13 The water level, its flow rates and the mixing conditions are important determinants of the condition of Habitats sites and their qualifying features. Hydrological processes are critical in influencing habitat characteristics in rivers, wetlands and coastal waters, including current velocity, water depth, dissolved oxygen levels, salinity gradients and water temperature. In turn these abiotic parameters determine the short- and long-term viability of plant and animal species, as well as overall ecosystem composition. Changes to the water flow rate within an estuary can be associated with a multitude of further impact pathways, including substratum loss, smothering of plants and changes in wave exposure, often interacting with coastal squeeze.

4.14 The unique nature of wetlands combines shallow water and conditions that are ideal for the growth of organisms at the basal level of food webs, which feed many species of birds, mammals, fish and amphibians. Overwintering, migrating and breeding wetland bird species are particularly reliant on these food sources, as they need to build up enough nutritional reserves to sustain their long migration routes or feed their hatched chicks.

4.15 Coastal habitats rely on hydrological connections with other surface waters, such as rivers, streams and lakes. A constant supply of freshwater is fundamental to maintaining the ecological integrity of coastal marine areas. While the natural fluctuation of water levels within narrow limits is desirable, excess or too little water supply might cause the water level to be outside of the required range of qualifying birds, invertebrate or plant species. In extreme cases, this might lead to the loss of the structure and functioning of marine ecosystems.

4.16 There are two mechanisms through which urban development might negatively affect freshwater supply to Habitats Sites:

- The supply of new housing with potable water may require increased abstraction from surface water and groundwater bodies. Depending on the level of water stress in the geographic region, this may decrease freshwater input to Habitats sites sharing the same catchment.
- The proliferation of impermeable surfaces in urban areas increases the volume and speed of surface water runoff. As traditional drainage systems often cannot cope with the volume of stormwater, sewer overflows are designed to discharge excess water directly into watercourses. This can contribute to so-called flash floods and increased water flow into Habitats sites. Some of the knock-on impacts of surface water runoff include increases in sedimentation, turbidity and anthropogenic pollutants.

4.17 Additional water abstraction to meet public water demand is of particular concern in areas with little rainfall (and limited recharge potential) or where water resources are already depleted. In 2013 the Environment Agency published a map of water-stressed areas, highlighting that the south-east of England is generally identified as an area of elevated water stress (see Figure 3 below). This is due to its large population, high water demand and the lower annual rainfall in this area of England.

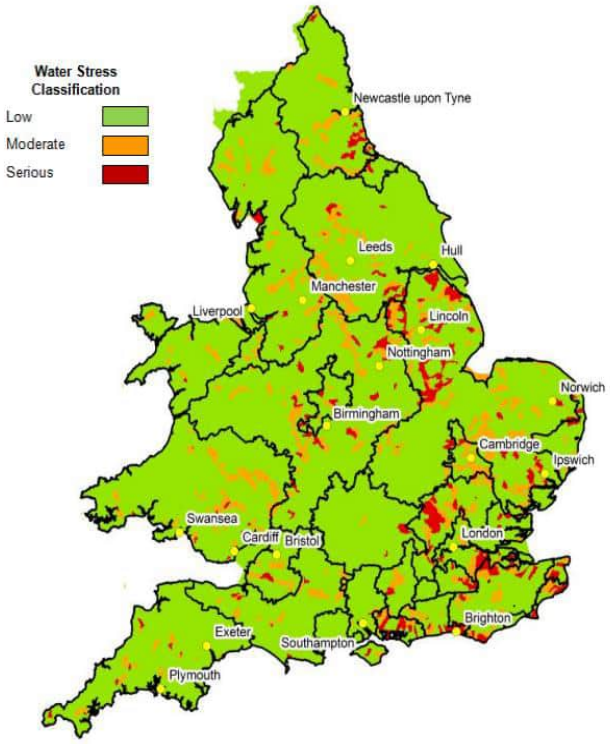


Figure 3: Areas of water stress within England.

4.18 The water supply in East Hampshire District is provided by South East Water and Portsmouth Water. Both companies have published Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs) that identify the future strategy to meet water demand, while safeguarding important environmental assets including Habitats sites. WRMPs are key resources for undertaking HRAs because they identify potential deficits in baseline supply-demand balances and options proposed to meet potential shortfalls (including increases to abstraction licenses). They are also subject to their own statutory consenting process including HRA, which takes account of hydrological dependencies of Habitats sites.

4.19 Overall, the following Habitats sites in East Hampshire District and within 10km of its boundary are sensitive to changes in their water quantity, level and flow as a result of urban development (**the sites in bold are taken forward into Chapter 5 of the HRA**):

- **River Itchen SAC (3.8km to the west of the East Hampshire District boundary in the adjoining authority of Winchester)**
- **Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (located approx. 2.8km to the south of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Havant)**
- **Woolmer Forest SAC (located in the north-east of East Hampshire District)**

Atmospheric Pollution

4.20 The main pollutants of concern for Habitats sites are oxides of nitrogen (NOx), ammonia (NH_3) and sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and are summarised in Table 1. NH_3 can have directly toxic effects upon vegetation, particularly at close distances to the source such as near road verges[79]. NOx can also be toxic at very high concentrations (far above the annual average Critical Level). High levels of NOx and NH_3 are likely to increase the total nitrogen (N) deposition to soils, potentially leading to deleterious knock-on effects in resident ecosystems. Increases in N deposition from the atmosphere can, if sufficiently great, enhance soil fertility and lead to eutrophication. This

[79] http://www.apis.ac.uk/overview/pollutants/overview_NOx.htm.

often has adverse effects on the community composition and quality of semi-natural, nitrogen-limited terrestrial and aquatic habitats[80] [81].

Table 1: Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species[82]

Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2)	The main sources of SO_2 are electricity generation, and industrial and domestic fuel combustion. However, total SO_2 emissions in the UK have decreased substantially since the 1980's. Another origin of sulphur dioxide is the shipping industry and high atmospheric concentrations of SO_2 have been documented in busy ports. In future years shipping is likely to become one of the most important contributors to SO_2 emissions in the UK.	Wet and dry deposition of SO_2 acidifies soils and freshwater, and may alter the composition of plant and animal communities. The magnitude of effects depends on levels of deposition, the buffering capacity of soils and the sensitivity of impacted species. However, SO_2 background levels have fallen considerably since the 1970's and are now not regarded a threat to plant communities. For example, decreases in Sulphur dioxide concentrations have been linked to returning lichen species and improved tree health in London.
Acid deposition	Leads to acidification of soils and freshwater via atmospheric deposition of SO_2, NOx, ammonia and hydrochloric acid. Acid deposition from rain has declined by 85% in the last 20 years, which most of this contributed by lower sulphate levels. Although future trends in S emissions and subsequent deposition to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems will continue to decline, increased N emissions may cancel out any gains produced by reduced S levels.	Gaseous precursors (e.g. SO_2) can cause direct damage to sensitive vegetation, such as lichen, upon deposition. Can affect habitats and species through both wet (acid rain) and dry deposition. The effects of acidification include lowering of soil pH, leaf chlorosis, reduced decomposition rates, and compromised reproduction in birds / plants. Not all sites are equally susceptible to acidification. This varies depending on soil type, bed rock geology, weathering rate and buffering capacity. For example, sites with an underlying geology of granite, gneiss and quartz rich rocks tend to be more susceptible.
Ammonia (NH_3)	Ammonia is a reactive, soluble alkaline gas that is released following decomposition and volatilisation of animal wastes. It is a naturally occurring trace gas, but ammonia concentrations are directly related to the distribution of livestock. Ammonia reacts with acid pollutants such as the products of SO_2 and NO_X emissions to produce fine ammonium (NH_4+) - containing aerosol. Due to its significantly longer lifetime, NH_4+ may be transferred much longer distances (and can therefore be a significant trans-boundary issue). While ammonia deposition may be estimated from its atmospheric concentration, the deposition rates are strongly influenced by meteorology and ecosystem type.	The negative effect of NH_4+ may occur via direct toxicity, when uptake exceeds detoxification capacity and via N accumulation. Its main adverse effect is eutrophication, leading to species assemblages that are dominated by fast-growing and tall species. For example, a shift in dominance from heath species (lichens, mosses) to grasses is often seen. As emissions mostly occur at ground level in the rural environment and NH_3 is rapidly deposited, some of the most acute problems of NH_3 deposition are for small relict nature reserves located in intensive agricultural landscapes.

[80] Wolseley P. A.; James P. W.; Theobald M. R. & Sutton, M. A. (2006). Detecting changes in epiphytic lichen communities at sites affected by atmospheric ammonia from agricultural sources. *Lichenologist* **38**: 161-176.
[81] Dijk N. (2011). Dry deposition of ammonia gas drives species change faster than wet deposition of ammonium ions: evidence from a long-term field manipulation. *Global Change Biology* **17**: 3589-3607.
[82] Information summarised from the Air Pollution Information System (http://www.apis.ac.uk/).

Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)	Nitrogen oxides are mostly produced in combustion processes. Half of NO_X emissions in the UK derive from motor vehicles, one quarter from power stations and the rest from other industrial and domestic combustion processes. In contrast to the steep decline in Sulphur dioxide emissions, nitrogen oxides are falling slowly due to control strategies being offset by increasing numbers of vehicles.	Direct toxicity effects of gaseous nitrates are likely to be important in areas close to the source (e.g. roadside verges). A critical level of NOx for all vegetation types has been set to 30 ug/m3. Deposition of nitrogen compounds (nitrates (NO_3), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and nitric acid (HNO_3)) contributes to the total nitrogen deposition and may lead to both soil and freshwater acidification. In addition, NO_x contributes to the eutrophication of soils and water, altering the species composition of plant communities at the expense of sensitive species.
Nitrogen deposition	The pollutants that contribute to the total nitrogen deposition derive mainly from oxidized (e.g. NO_X) or reduced (e.g. NH_3) nitrogen emissions (described separately above). While oxidized nitrogen mainly originates from major conurbations or highways, reduced nitrogen mostly derives from farming practices. The N pollutants together are a large contributor to acidification (see above).	All plants require nitrogen compounds to grow, but too much overall N is regarded as the major driver of biodiversity change globally. Species-rich plant communities with high proportions of slow-growing perennial species and bryophytes are most at risk from N eutrophication. This is because many semi-natural plants cannot assimilate the surplus N as well as many graminoid (grass) species. N deposition can also increase the risk of damage from abiotic factors, e.g. drought and frost.
Ozone (O_3)	A secondary pollutant generated by photochemical reactions involving NOx, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and sunlight. These precursors are mainly released by the combustion of fossil fuels (as discussed above). Increasing anthropogenic emissions of ozone precursors in the UK have led to an increased number of days when ozone levels rise above 40ppb ('episodes' or 'smog'). Reducing ozone pollution is believed to require action at international level to reduce levels of the precursors that form ozone.	Concentrations of O_3 above 40 ppb can be toxic to both humans and wildlife, and can affect buildings. High O_3 concentrations are widely documented to cause damage to vegetation, including visible leaf damage, reduction in floral biomass, reduction in crop yield (e.g. cereal grains, tomato, potato), reduction in the number of flowers, decrease in forest production and altered species composition in semi-natural plant communities.

4.21 SO_2 emissions overwhelmingly derive from power stations and industrial processes that require the combustion of coal and oil, as well as (particularly on a local scale) shipping[83]. NH_3 emissions originate mainly from agricultural practices[84], with some chemical processes and certain vehicles also making notable contributions. As such, it is unlikely that material increases in SO_2 emissions will be associated with the Reg.18 East Hampshire Local Plan Site Allocations. NOx emissions are dominated by the output of vehicle exhausts (more than half of all emissions). A 'typical' housing development will contribute by far the largest portion of its overall NOx footprint (92%) through associated road traffic. Other sources, although relevant, are of minor importance (8%) in comparison[85]. Therefore, emissions of NOx and NH_3 can reasonably be expected to increase

[83] http://www.apis.ac.uk/overview/pollutants/overview_SO2.htm.
[84] Pain, B.F.; Weerden, T.J.; Chambers, B.J.; Phillips, V.R.; Jarvis, S.C. (1998). A new inventory for ammonia emissions from U.K. agriculture. *Atmospheric Environment* **32**: 309-313.
[85] Proportions calculated based upon data presented in Dore CJ et al. 2005. UK Emissions of Air Pollutants 1970 – 2003. UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory. http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php [Accessed on the 21/10/2021]

as a result of the Plan, primarily due to an increase in the volume of commuter traffic associated with housing growth.

4.22 The World Health Organisation identifies the following critical thresholds for plant communities: The critical NOx concentration (or Critical Level) for the protection of vegetation is 30 μgm^{-3} and the threshold for SO_2 is 20 μgm^{-3}. Additionally, ecological studies have determined Critical Loads[86] of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (that is, NOx combined with ammonia NH_3).

4.23 According to the Department of Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance, beyond 200m, the contribution of vehicle emissions from the roads to local pollution levels is insignificant (Figure 4 and reference [87]). This distance is typically used in HRAs to determine whether Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) on sensitive Habitats sites may arise due to development allocated in strategic plans.

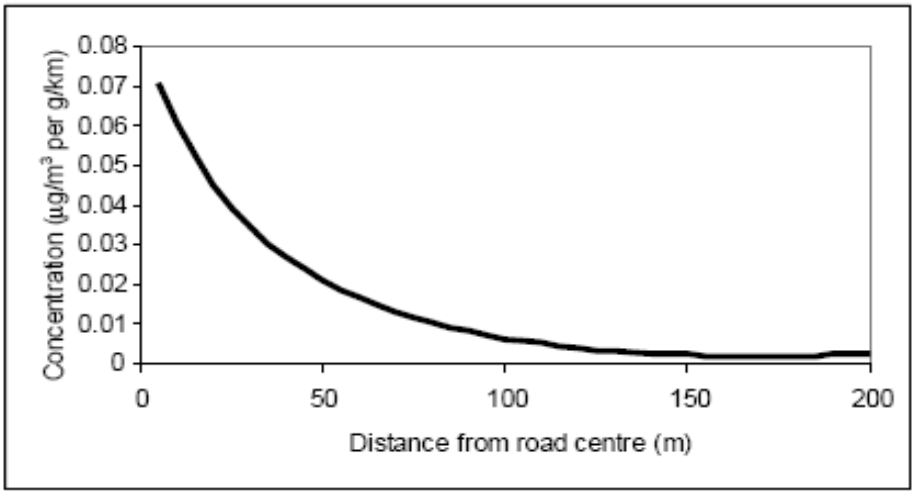


Figure 4: Traffic contribution to concentrations of pollutants at different distances from a road (Source: DfT[88]).

4.24 Overall, the following Habitats sites in East Hampshire District and within 10km of its administrative boundary are sensitive to atmospheric nitrogen deposition, primarily due to the presence of nutrient-limited habitats and / or species that rely on air-quality sensitive habitats (the sites in **bold** are taken forward into Chapter 5 of the HRA):

- **Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC (located in the north-east of East Hampshire District)**
- **East Hampshire Hangers SAC (stretching on a north-south axis through East Hampshire District)**
- **Butser Hill SAC (located in the southern part of East Hampshire District)**
- **Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC (located approx. 68m to the north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Waverley)**
- **Thames Basin Heaths SPA (located approx. 3.5km to the north of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Waverley)**

Loss of Functionally Linked Habitat

4.25 While most Habitats sites have been geographically defined to encompass the key features that are necessary for coherence of their structure and function, and the support of their qualifying

[86] A Critical Load is the rate of deposition beyond which research indicates that adverse effects can reasonably be expected to occur.
[87] Available at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/documents/expert/unit3.3.3.php#013 [Accessed on the 21/10/2021]
[88] Available at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmrb/vol11/section3/ha20707.pdf [Accessed on the 21/10/2021]

features, this is not necessarily the case. A diverse array of qualifying species including birds, bats and amphibians are not always confined to the boundary of designated sites.

4.26 For example, the highly mobile nature of both wader and waterfowl species implies that areas of habitat of crucial importance to the integrity of their populations lie outside the physical limits of Habitats sites. Despite not being part of the formal designation, these habitats are integral to the maintenance of the structure and function of the designated site, for example by encompassing important foraging grounds. Therefore, land use plans that may affect such functionally linked habitat require further assessment.

4.27 There is now an abundance of authoritative examples of HRA cases on plans affecting bird populations, where Natural England recognised the potential importance of functionally linked habitats[89]. For example, bird surveys in relation to a previous HRA established that approximately 25% of the golden plover population in the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA could be impacted by development on functionally linked habitat, and this required the inclusion of mitigation measures in the relevant plan policy wording. Another important case study originates from the Mersey Estuary SPA / Ramsar, where a nearby functionally linked habitat parcel had a peak survey count of 108% of the SPA's / Ramsar's 5 year mean peak population of golden plover. This finding led to considerable amendments in the planning proposal to ensure that the site integrity of the SPA / Ramsar was not adversely affected.

4.28 Generally, the identification of an area as functionally linked habitat is not always a straightforward process. The importance of non-designated land parcels may not be apparent and thus might require the analysis of existing data sources (e.g. Bird Atlases or data from records centres) to be firmly established. In some instances, data may not be available at all, requiring further survey work.

4.29 While all qualifying bird species are mobile to some extent (e.g. ground-nesting birds in the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA), some species of overwintering waders and waterfowl form stronger associations with habitats outside designated site boundaries. The Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS)[90], a conservation partnership project focusing particularly on brent geese and wading birds in the Solent, undertook surveys over three winters between 2016 and 2019. The strategy is an attempt to identify the functionally linked sites these birds rely on outside the boundaries of the formally designated sites. This network of functionally linked feeding and roosting sites has been mapped, identifying Core Areas, Primary Support Areas, Secondary Support Areas, Low Use areas and Candidate sites.

4.30 Overall, the following Habitats sites in East Hampshire District and within 10km of its administrative boundary are sensitive to the loss of functionally linked habitats due to the presence of mobile bird species (**the sites in bold are taken forward into Chapter 5 of the HRA**):

- **Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA (located in the north-east of East Hampshire District)**
- **Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (located approx. 2.8km to the south of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Havant Borough)**

[89] Chapman C & Tyldesley D. 2016. Functional linkage: How areas that are functionally linked to European ('*Habitats*')sites have been considered when they may be affected by plans and projects – A review of authoritative decisions. *Natural England Commissioned Reports* **207**. 73pp

[90] Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy Steering Group. November 2010. Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy. 37pp. Available at: https://solentwbgs.wordpress.com/page-2/ [Accessed on the 25/10/2022]

5. Screening for Likely Significant Effects (LSEs)

Recreational Pressure

Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC

5.1 The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA is designated for two ground-nesting (or low nesting in the case of Dartford warbler) bird species: Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark. All birds are sensitive to disturbance, particularly during the breeding season when recreational activities may result in reduced egg incubation and chick provisioning. Due to the fact that all three species nest on the ground, they are particularly sensitive to off-track walking and dog walking. Visitors hiking away from established trails may inadvertently crush eggs, while free-roaming dogs may predate on eggs and chicks. Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP) specifies public access and disturbance as a threat to the SPA, highlighting that '*visitor access provision is not currently coordinated between sites or managed so as to reduce impacts on ground-nesting birds.*' An access strategy for the SPA is to be developed and implemented as a basis for the effective management of recreational use.

5.2 Commissioned by AECOM on behalf of EHDC, Footprint Ecology undertook a visitor survey in the SPA (and nearby Shortheath Common SAC) in summer 2018. In addition to establishing baseline evidence regarding visitor numbers, access patterns and recreational activities undertaken, the survey also collected interviewee postcode data to establish a core recreational catchment for the site. Postcode data analysis established that the majority of visitors (85%) originated from East Hampshire District, with certain parishes contributing significantly to the overall recreational footfall (e.g. Headley, Whitehill & Bordon and Bramshott and Liphook). The survey also identified that the distance travelled by interviewees differed considerably between survey points, SSSI component part, recreational activity undertaken, mode of transport used and frequency of visit. For example, 75% of interviewees travelled 6.9km to visit Kingsley Common, whereas 75% of visitors to Woolmer Forest came from within 3.19km. When considering the type of activity, 75% of dog walkers originated from within 3.4km, while interviewees on outings with the family tended to travel much further (26km). Since completion of the survey, Natural England have confirmed that a 5km catchment for the SPA and SACs will be adopted going forward, within which LSEs regarding recreational pressure cannot be excluded.

5.3 Natural England have stated that they will not support residential development within 400m of the Wealden Heaths Phase I or Phase II SPA. Part of one proposed site allocation is for travelling showpeople falls within this buffer however the proposal is for 6 plots which will be located outside the 400 m buffer. This is stipulated in Policy NBE4 (Wealden Heaths European SPA and SAC sites).

5.4 Twelve allocations for residential development have been identified (Table 4) as being within the 5 km catchment for the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA. **In conclusion, LSEs of the Reg.18 Local Plan housing allocations on the Wealden Heaths Phase II complex regarding disturbance cannot be exclude. A more detailed assessment of this impact pathway in an Appropriate Assessment is required.**

5.5 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Thames Basin Heaths SPA

5.6 Recreational pressure has been a long-standing issue in the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, designated for ground-nesting nightjar and woodlark, and low-nesting Dartford warbler. Evidence of disturbance impacts led to a mitigation strategy being established for the SPA, including a 400m development exclusion zone and a 400m – 5km mitigation zone. Within the mitigation zone, developments must provide a financial contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), as well as providing alternative greenspace solutions. The latter may comprise financial contributions towards strategic council-owned Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) or delivering bespoke SANGs / other acceptable mitigation solutions.

5.7 The closest proposed site allocation is BIN-005 “Land North of Fullers Road” which is 5.15km from the Thames Basin Heaths SPA at its closest point. The development is below the 50+ dwelling limit for developments within 7 km of the SPA to provide mitigation. Policy NBE5 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) sets out the strategy for protecting this specific Habitats site, including the 400m buffer zone in which no net new residential development will be permitted, and the 5km catchment around the SPA within which mitigation will be required.

5.8 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 Local Plan residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the Thames Basin Heath SPA with regard to recreational pressure. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright &Chobham SAC

5.9 The Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA (otherwise referred to as the Wealden Heaths Phase I SPA) is also designated for Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark. As highlighted in the previous sections, these birds have high sensitivity to recreational disturbance. It is covered in Natural England’s SIP on the Thames Basin, which identifies public access as the primary pressure / threat to the site complex. Many component parts of the Thames Basin are subject to high levels of recreational use, with dog walking making up a large proportion of the visitor pool[91]. The current unsustainable recreational use of the complex is likely to affect the overall abundance, distribution and breeding success of Annex I qualifying species.

5.10 Natural England have identified a core recreational catchment for the SPA of 5km, including a 400m development exclusion zone and a 400m – 5km mitigation zone. No allocations are within 400m of the SPA. Two proposed development sites are within the 5 km catchment for the SPA and SAC (which overlap):

- HEA-011 – Land at Middle Common, Headley Down is allocated for 6 travelling showpeople plots,
- BIN-005 – Land north of Fullers Road is allocated for 19 residential units.

5.11 **In conclusion, LSEs of the Reg.18 Local Plan Housing Allocations on the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC regarding disturbance cannot be excluded. A more detailed assessment of this impact pathway in an Appropriate Assessment is required.**

5.12 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

East Hampshire Hangers SAC

5.13 The East Hampshire Hangers SAC is a composite site comprising woodlands that are distributed along a north-south axis throughout the district. All qualifying features of the SAC (semi-natural dry grasslands on calcareous substrates, beech forests, mixed woodland and yew woodland) are potentially sensitive to recreational impacts such as trampling damage, which is particularly

[91] As established through repeat visitor surveys undertaken by Footprint Ecology in 2012 and 2018.

concerning where orchid assemblages or ancient / veteran trees are present. While Natural England's SIP does not specify public access as a threat or pressure to the site, the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACO) refer to a target of maintaining the soil structure around mature and ancient trees in an un-compacted condition. In compacted soils, which may result to varying extents from different recreational activities, there is little space for air and water, both of which are essential substances for root and tree growth.

5.14 A core catchment zone of the SAC of approx. 5-7km (based on data from other terrestrial and woodland Habitats sites) is considered, however given that there are few formal car parks that serve as official access points to the SAC, it is likely that residents walking to the site from nearby housing represent the typical profile of a recreationist within the SAC. Therefore, any residential allocation within a typical walking distance of between 1-2km is likely to increase the recreational footfall within the site. There are sites which fall within this smaller catchment area, most notably elements of the large (1000 dwelling) site BIN-011 Land at Neatham Manor Farm (approximately 20%).

5.15 However, there are several factors that support a conclusion of 'no LSEs' regarding the SAC. It is noted that the SAC is permeated by an extensive network of Public Right of Ways (PRoWs). Generally, some recreational impacts are 'naturally' managed through existing access networks in nature conservation sites. For example, unless paths show significant erosion and expose underlying roots, impacts of any recreational activity that is kept on-track will be somewhat buffered. An additional buffer against off-track activities is imposed by the steep slopes and challenging overall topography of the site, which is likely to encourage visitors to stick to the formal path network. Furthermore, as was relevant in relation to the Thames Basin, the emerging mitigation approach for the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA will ensure a net increase in alternative recreational greenspaces (in the form of SANGs or more flexible infrastructure projects) in close proximity to new housing developments. This will help ensure that a portion of recreational activities is undertaken closer to home and reduce footfall in more sensitive Habitats sites, including the East Hampshire Hangers SAC.

5.16 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 Local Plan residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the East Hampshire Hangers SAC regarding recreational pressure. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Butser Hill SAC

5.17 The Butser Hill SAC, designated for semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies and yew-dominated woodland, is potentially sensitive to recreational impacts such as trampling damage and nutrient enrichment. The site partly overlaps with the Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QECP). Mapping on Outdooractive indicates that the SAC is permeated by a well-established network of PRoWs, including at least one long-distance hiking trail. Furthermore, there are at least two formal car parks and one visitor centre (this is in the adjoining QECP, but visitors parking here could easily access the SAC on the other side of the A3) serving as formal entry points to the site, potentially drawing visitors from further afield. The primary pathway of impact would arise from visitors venturing off-track and causing direct physical damage to the ecological interest features of the site.

5.18 However, it should be noted that recreational access is not highlighted as a prevalent issue in Natural England's SIP[92] or the SACO for the Butser Hill SAC[93]. This is supported by a SSSI condition assessment undertaken in 2020, which identifies the majority of the site to be in 'Favourable' condition. Only one component (003 – Whitelands Copse) is classified as 'Unfavourable Recovering', but this is due to existing woodland management practices[94]. Overall, recreational impacts are not identified as impacting the vegetation in any of the assessed units. It is also noted that the relatively steep slopes within the SAC are likely to discourage visitors from leaving the footpaths, reducing the potential for direct trampling damage to qualifying features.

5.19 Overall, while allocated residential sites in the emerging Local Plan have the potential to lead to an increase in footfall within the SAC (particularly within its core recreational catchment in nearby

[92] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4842655599034368 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[93] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5067404384141312 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[94] Available at: https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/UnitDetail.aspx?UnitId=1007935 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]

settlements such as Clanfield), it is very unlikely that these would result in LSEs within the site. It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 Local Plan residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the Buster Hill SAC regarding recreational pressure. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Rook Clift SAC

5.20 The Rook Clift SAC is designated for *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines, which in this instance are dominated by large-leaved lime. As is typical for woodland SACs, the primary concern are visitors that leave the established path network (causing soil compaction around and direct physical damage to tree roots) and, to a lesser extent, nutrient enrichment from free-roaming dogs (causing changes in vegetation community composition). Notably, recreational pressure is not mentioned in Natural England's SIP[95] or the SACO[96], indicating that there are no historic concerns regarding public access. According to the latest SSSI condition assessment, the site is in 'Favourable' condition, supporting good woodland cover and an impressive array of ground flora.

5.21 There are no site allocations in the emerging EHLP within 10km of the SAC.

5.22 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 Local Plan residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the Rook Cliff SAC regarding recreational pressure. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Kingley Vale SAC

5.23 The Kingley Vale SAC is designated for *Taxus baccata* woods and semi-natural dry grasslands / scrubland facies with potential sensitivity to recreational impacts, such as trampling damage and nutrient enrichment. It is situated in a rural area of the adjoining authority of Chichester, approx. 5.8km to the south-east of East Hampshire District. The SAC is permeated by an extensive network of PRoWs, criss-crossing woodland and more open parcels within the site boundary. There is one formal car park providing access to the SAC at Lambdown Hill, but most visitors are likely to originate from the few smaller settlements and villages surrounding the site. The fact that the site lies in an undeveloped part of Chichester District and does not support the infrastructure to draw visitors from further afield, may indicate that overall visitor numbers are relatively low. Recreational pressure is not specified as a concern in the SIP[97] or SACO[98] for the SAC.

5.24 There are no site allocations in the emerging EHLP within 10km of the SAC.

5.25 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 Local Plan residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the Kingley Vale SAC regarding recreational pressure. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

5.26 The Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar are designated for a range of breeding and overwintering bird species, all of which are sensitive to recreational disturbance to varying degrees. For example, the breeding success of sandwich tern, common tern and little tern may be impacted as a result of direct damage to eggs (e.g. through trampling and predation by dogs) and indirect effects, such as reduced egg incubation, lower chick provisioning and nest abandonment. The build-up of nutritional reserves of overwintering waterfowl and waders may be impeded by disturbance as a result of reduced foraging, heightened alertness and energy lost due to flight responses. Some habitats in the Solent Maritime SAC (e.g. annual vegetation of drift lines, vegetation of stony banks) are also sensitive to recreational impacts, principally as a result of direct access to the foreshore.

[95] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6352739575529472 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[96] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6335772969926656 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[97] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6393220716036096 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[98] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5727834794360832 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]

5.27 Over concerns of recreational disturbance impacts in the Solent, extensive research as part of the three phases of the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project was undertaken between 2009 and 2013. The main aims of the project were to document existing access patterns in the Solent, bird responses to disturbance events and predicting the number of future additional recreational visits as a result of forecast housing development. The data showed that current recreational use already impacted bird behaviour (dogs that are off-lead elicit 47% of all major flight responses) and that a 13% increase in visitor numbers was predicted due to future housing growth. Trends in visitor postcode data indicated that 75% of visitors to the Solent coastline live within 5.6km of the site complex. Therefore, the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (SRMS) adopted this 5.6km zone as the core recreational catchment for the Solent, within which developer contributions to Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures are required. It was also subsequently identified that Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) provision would provide a useful additional mitigation tool if they are closely linked to management at the coast, sited in the right locations and accompanied by active promotion.

5.28 Four allocations for residential development have been identified (Table 4) as being within the 5.6 km catchment for the Solent Habitats Sites. **In conclusion, LSEs of the Reg.18 Local Plan Housing Allocations on the Solent Habitats Sites regarding recreational disturbance cannot be excluded. A more detailed assessment of this impact pathway in an Appropriate Assessment is required.**

5.29 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Water Quality

River Itchen SAC

5.30 The River Itchen SAC is designated for its water course of plain to montane levels with *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation. Furthermore, the site is also notified for a range of Annex II species, including Atlantic salmon, brook lamprey, bullhead, southern damselfly, white-clawed crayfish and otter. The qualifying vegetation and animal species all fully or partially depend on aquatic habitats with good water quality. Treated sewage effluent from existing and new development is a major cause of nutrient enrichment and associated decline in water quality. Typically, excessive levels of nutrients can cause the rapid growth of algae through eutrophication, causing knock-on impacts such as low dissolved oxygen concentrations, increased turbidity and overall biodiversity loss. While the water quality in Habitats sites is typically safeguarded through the implementation of discharge limits at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs), this is no longer deemed sufficient for sites in 'Unfavourable' condition.

5.31 Natural England's SIP for the River Itchen SAC[99] species water pollution as the primary threat to qualifying features of the site. It states that '*the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan identifies numerous issues with water quality, in addition to point sources from Waste Water Treatment Works… Pollution causes excessive algal growth, smothering macrophytes, and increased BOD, decreasing oxygen availability for spawning gravels used by salmon and trout.*' Due to these existing impacts, Natural England have established a requirement for nutrient neutrality for developments with hydrological connectivity to the SAC[100]. While the River Itchen SAC encompasses a freshwater environment (in which phosphorus is the primary growth-limiting nutrient), nutrient neutrality requirements have been extended to also include nitrogen (presumably because the SAC is part of the wider Solent marine catchment). A bespoke nutrient budget calculator[101] and accompanying guidance document[102] have been published for the River

[99] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5404054607888384 [Accessed on the 13/12/2023]
[100] Advice in a letter to relevant Local Planning Authorities. Natural England. (March 2022). Advice for development proposals with the potential to affect water quality resulting in adverse nutrient impacts on habitats sites. 25pp.
[101] Available on the East Hampshire District Council website at: https://www.easthants.gov.uk/nutrient-neutrality-what-developers-need-know [Accessed on the 13/12/2023]
[102] Ricardo Energy and Environment. (2022). Nutrient Budget Calculator Guidance Document for the River Itchen SAC. 14pp. Available at: https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Nutrient-Budget-Calculator-Guidance-Document_River-Itchen_Issue1.pdf [Accessed on the 13/12/2023]

Itchen SAC, which is to be used to quantify potential nutrient inputs arising from development plans.

5.32 Site allocations have been reviewed against the Nutrient Neutrality map for the River Itchen[103] and the results are documented in Table 5.

5.33 Of the proposed sites, only one site, FM-013 Land south of Winchester Road, is partially within the River Itchen Catchment. As less than 5% of the allocated land falls within the catchment area, and there is sufficient space to build the allocated residential units in the remaining area, it is assumed that no development on this site will impact the River Itchen catchment.

5.34 Water treatment for housing allocations in the EHLP which are close to the River Itchen Catchment process waste water through PTP arrangements. As such waste water is not transferred to WwTW within the catchment area.

5.35 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the River Itchen SAC regarding water quality. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

5.36 The Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (which collectively form part of the Solent complex) are all sensitive to changes in water quality. Suboptimal water quality has the potential to affect qualifying birds in SPAs / Ramsars indirectly via impacts on foraging resources. For example, excessive algal growth and concomitant changes in water quality parameters may lead to changes in ecosystem composition, reducing the availability for foraging resources (e.g. eelgrass, invertebrates and fish) to qualifying waterfowl and waders. Eutrophication can also lead to increased turbidity, which reduces the ability of visual hunters (e.g. terns) to locate their prey. Furthermore, where elevated nutrients reach SAC habitats, these have the potential to directly affect their structure and function. Given the Solent sites all encompass marine habitats, nitrogen is the main nutrient of concern as it is growth-limiting in these ecosystems.

5.37 Water pollution is identified as a threat to the Solent in Natural England's SIP[104], which states that '*water pollution affects a range of habitats and bird species at the site through eutrophication and toxicity. Sources include both point source discharges (including flood alleviation / storm discharges) and diffuse water pollution from agriculture / road runoff, as well as historic contamination of marine sediments, primarily from copper and Tributyltin (TBT).*' While treated sewage effluent is not specifically referred to in the SIP, data from the Environment Agency Catchment Data Explorer indicate that dissolved inorganic nitrogen from sewage discharge is contributing to Chichester Harbour not attaining good overall ecological status[105].

5.38 Natural England's 2022 advice on Habitats sites that are in unfavourable condition due to negative water quality impacts includes the wider Solent area. This means that LSEs of future development resulting in a net increase in nitrogen and phosphorus input to the Solent catchment cannot be excluded. It is advised that all development resulting in a net increase in population (i.e., overnight accommodation such as new homes, student and tourist accommodation) must demonstrate nutrient neutrality in order to be granted planning consent. According to available mapping[106], the Solent has a large hydrological catchment that includes the southern and north-western parts of East Hampshire District.

[103] DEFRA (2021). European protected sites requiring nutrient neutrality strategic solutions. Component SSSIs of River Itchen. Available at: https://www.easthants.gov.uk/media/6923/download?inline [Accessed on the 13/12/2023]
[104] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[105] Information on the ecological status of Chichester Harbour can be obtained on the Environment Agency Catchment Data Explorer. Available at: https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB580705210000?cycle=3 [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]
[106] The nutrient neutrality map for the Solent is available at: https://cdn.easthants.gov.uk/public/documents/Nutrient%20Neutrality%20map%20Solent.pdf [Accessed on the 20/10/2022]

5.39 Site allocations have been reviewed against the Nutrient Neutrality map for the Solent Catchment Itchen[107] and the results are documented in Table 5.

5.40 Overall, 465 residential units are proposed which fall within the catchment for surface run-off and which are connected to the Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works which discharges in the Solent catchment.

5.41 **Therefore, LSEs on the water quality in the Solent cannot be excluded for the residential site allocations included in the Reg.18 EHLP. A more detailed assessment of this impact pathway is required in an Appropriate Assessment.**

5.42 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Woolmer Forest SAC

5.43 The Woolmer Forest SAC is partly designated for habitats that rely on the maintenance of good water quality, including natural dystrophic ponds and transition mires / quaking bogs. Generally, dystrophic waterbodies contain high amounts of humic substances and dissolved organic carbon. Notwithstanding this, they are regarded as nutrient-poor because nutrients are trapped in organic matter and, therefore, unavailable to primary producers. An increase in bioavailable nutrients, primarily phosphorus, in treated sewage effluent may affect the plant communities present in the Cranmer and Woolmer Ponds.

5.44 Review of the SIP for the Woolmer Forest SAC indicates that water pollution has not been identified as a threat to or pressure on the site. Indeed, the EA Catchment Data Explorer indicates that the Hollywater and Deadwater Water Body (at Bordon), the surface waterbody draining the wider area around the two ponds, has 'Good Ecological Status', with dissolved oxygen concentrations classified as 'Good' and phosphorus concentrations identified as 'High' quality. According to available catchment mapping, there are no upstream waterbodies that could feed into the dystrophic ponds of the SAC. Furthermore, no WwTWs with potential hydrological connectivity to the ponds have been identified.

5.45 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the Woolmer Forest SAC regarding water quality. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar

5.46 The Thursley and Ockley Bogs Ramsar is partly designated as a Ramsar site because it supports a community of rare wetland invertebrate species, including notable numbers of breeding dragonflies. The Ramsar also has an oligotrophic nutrient status, implying that its faunal species and the aquatic flora they depend on have adapted to a low-nutrient environment. It is to be noted that most bogs primarily depend on recharge through precipitation and typically only limited connectivity with surface waterbodies exists. However, the Ramsar is considered further as a precautionary measure.

5.47 Partly draining the site are two surface waterbodies, the Royal Brook and Truxford Brook Water Bodies. The Royal Brook is identified as having 'bad ecological status' on the EA Catchment Data Explorer (CDE)[108]. However, this is unlikely to be due to physico-chemical parameters (dissolved oxygen and phosphorus are both classified as having 'High status'), but rather bad condition in relation to fish. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Information Sheet[109] highlights that there are no past, present or future factors adversely affecting the site's character

[107] DEFRA (2021). European protected sites requiring nutrient neutrality strategic solutions. Component SSSIs of Solent. Available at: https://www.easthants.gov.uk/media/6920/download?inline [Accessed on the 13/12/2023]
[108] Available at: https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB106039017760 [Accessed on the 21/10/2022]
[109] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11074.pdf [Accessed on the 21/10/2022]

5.48 Like the Ramsar site, the north-east part of East Hampshire District (including the main conurbations of Alton and Whitehill & Bordon) lie in the Wey Operational Catchment. However, mapping on the CDE indicates that any WwTWs serving this part of the district would discharge to waterbodies that lie downstream of the Royal and Truxford Brooks. Therefore, there is now hydrological connection between treated sewage effluent arising in East Hampshire and the Thursley and Ockley Bogs Ramsar.

5.49 It is concluded that the emerging Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar regarding water quality. This site is screened out from Appropriate Assessment in relation to this impact pathway.

Water Quantity, Level and Flow

River Itchen SAC

5.50 The River Itchen SAC is designated for a habitat (watercourse from plain to montane levels with associated characteristic vegetation) and various Annex II species (including anadromous fish and otter). Flow regimes in rivers determine a wide range of parameters, including current velocities, water depth, wetted area, temperature range and dissolved oxygen concentrations. All qualifying features either directly or indirectly depend on adequate hydrological regimes. For example, anadromous fish (e.g. Atlantic salmon) directly depend on sufficient longitudinal hydrological connectivity to reach their upstream spawning grounds. Otter forage on fish and crustaceans, the abundance and distribution of which will be shaped by the prevailing flow regime.

5.51 NE's SACO for the River Itchen SAC targets the restoration of the natural flow regime of the river which would be expected in the absence of abstractions and discharges. The SIP for the SAC specifies water abstraction as a main pressure to the site. It states that '*abstraction modifies the natural flow regime on which the Annex I river habitat depends for its proper functioning… All parts of the flow regime may be affected but low-to-intermediate flows are most likely to be significantly impacted… Natural England does not endorse any particular solution at this time.*' Specifically, water flow issues are to be targeted through an amendment to the abstraction license for Southern Water (as part of the EA Review of Consents process), which will identify alternatives to the large abstraction on the R. Itchen.

5.52 The water supply in the northern part of East Hampshire District (north of Petersfield) is provided by South East Water (SEW). Overall, the company supplies clean drinking water to a population of around 2.2 million customers. The potable water comes from a mix of sources, including 73% from groundwater (more than 250 boreholes and wells), 19% from surface water (six river intakes and three reservoirs) and 8% from trading with other water companies (e.g. Affinity Water and Southern Water). This part of the district is located in Water Resource Zone (WRZ) 5 (Farnham) in which 100% of the water supply is met through the exploitation of 12 groundwater sources.

5.53 Considering the supply-demand balance between the years 2020 and 2080, the period covered by the company's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), is key in determining whether additional water resources may be needed to meet future demand. For WRZ 5, a negative average supply-demand balance of 1.3 Ml/d is forecast by 2059/60 and of 0.5 Ml/d much earlier (by 2039/40) in the summer period. This implies that interventions will be needed to meet the forecast demand, either though demand management measures or the development of additional water resources. However, SEW's preferred plan for WRZ 5 indicates that the options taken forward include leakage reductions and water efficiency measures, focussing entirely on demand management. Overall, SEW's future approach to water resource management in WRZ 5 will have no impact on the hydrology in the River Itchen SAC.

5.54 Water supply in the southern part of East Hampshire District (including the main settlements of Clanfield, Rowlands Castle and Horndean) is provided by Portsmouth Water. Potable water supply to meet the additional water demand due to any of the site allocations could affect the water flow in the River Itchen SAC, if it involved additional abstractions from any water sources in hydrological continuity with the site. A broad-level review of Portsmouth Water's WRMP indicates that a baseline supply-demand deficit is forecast for the entire WRMP period, ranging from -27.9 Ml/d in 2019/20 to -80 Ml/d in 2044/45. Therefore, several options were considered to

bring the supply-demand balance into surplus, including demand and resource management interventions. However, as detailed in the WRMP, the deficit will be largely addressed by addressing demand management (e.g., leakage reduction and smart metering). While the final WRMP does involve maximising the Deployable Output from existing groundwater sources, all schemes are projected to remain within existing abstraction licenses. Therefore, the potential environmental impact of the relevant maximum consented abstraction volumes would have already been considered under the statutory Review of Consents process.

5.55 In summary, there will be no additional water abstractions beyond existing abstraction consents to meet the water demand arising from the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations and impacts on the flow volume in the River Itchen SAC can, therefore, be excluded. An AA of this impact pathway will not be required.

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

5.56 The Solent Habitats sites that are relevant to East Hampshire District (the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar) all depend on an adequate balance of freshwater and saltwater input. The qualifying birds of the SPAs / Ramsars may be indirectly impacted by reduced freshwater input through effects on their foraging sources. Natural England's SACO specify a target of maintaining the availability of freshwater on mudflats used by SPA / Ramsar birds for feeding and resting. The SACO state that '*changes in source, depth, duration, frequency, magnitude and timing of water supply or flow can have important implications for this feature. Such changes may affect the quality and suitability of habitats used by birds for drinking, preening, feeding or roosting.*' Similarly, as highlighted in its SACO, changes in freshwater supply to the Solent Maritime SAC may alter a range of abiotic conditions (e.g. sediment input, dissolved oxygen concentration, salinity gradient, temperature regime) that in turn can lead to changes in the characteristic vegetation and invertebrate communities that are present. For example, an increase in salinity in saltmarshes may result in the disappearance or geographic shifts of less salt-tolerant species and associated invertebrates.

5.57 Potable water in East Hampshire District is supplied by SEW (northern part of the district north of Petersfield) and Portsmouth Water (southern part of the district including the main settlements of Clanfield and Horndean). However, the WRMP for SEW indicates that the baseline supply-demand deficit in WRZ 5, the zone in which this part of the district lies, will be addressed entirely through demand management options. While Portsmouth Water's WRMP does specify that options will include maximising the Deployable Outputs from existing groundwater sources, these schemes will remain within the existing consented abstraction licenses. Neither of the water companies propose to increase water abstraction (beyond existing consents) from sources in hydrological continuity with the Solent Habitats sites.

5.58 Overall, Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations will not result in LSEs on the water quantity, level and flow in the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar. An AA of this impact pathway in relation to the Solent will not be required.

Woolmer Forest SAC

5.59 The Woolmer Forest SAC encompasses two natural dystrophic ponds (Cranmer Pond and Woolmer Pond) that depend on sufficient freshwater input to maintain adequate ecosystem conditions. Dystrophic systems often occur on bogs in plains and valley bottoms, where incomplete decomposition of organic matter leads to water-logging and the formation of seasonal / permanent waterbodies. Both Cranmer Pond and Woolmer Pond are predominantly groundwater-fed, which enable relatively stable water levels to be maintained throughout the year. The water supply to the ponds determines water flushing rates and residence times, which in turn are important for dilution, removal of nutrients and phytoplankton, and reduced sedimentation. For example, reduced water supply in summer is thought to promote bloom conditions.

5.60 The dystrophic ponds are situated in a wider area of transition mires and quaking bogs. Bogs are effectively mires that, due to their location relative to the surrounding landscape, obtain most of their water from rainfall (i.e. they are ombrotrophic). However, all bogs may also be groundwater and / or surface water fed to varying degrees. In summary, depending on the water strategy for the wider area, there is a potential pathway for the East Hampshire Local Plan to affect hydrological conditions in the SAC.

5.61 However, as highlighted in the preceding sections, SEW's and Portsmouth Water's strategy for potable water supply in East Hampshire District does not involve an increase in surface water or groundwater abstractions beyond existing consents.

5.62 It follows that LSEs of the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the hydrology in the Woolmer Forest SAC can be excluded and are screened out from AA.

Atmospheric Pollution

Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC

5.63 The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA is designated for three ground-nesting bird species (nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler), which depend on a matrix of bare ground and dwarf shrub heath (e.g. heather and gorse) for successful nesting and foraging. Heathland ecosystems are adapted to low-nutrient conditions and are sensitive to additional atmospheric nitrogen deposition. The Air Pollution Information System (APIS) identifies all three species to be sensitive to nitrogen deposition on dwarf shrub heath (with a nitrogen Critical Load (CL) of 10-20 kg N/ha/yr). Exceedance impacts encompass a wide range of ecosystem changes, including transition from heather to grass dominance, declines in lichens, changes in plant biochemistry and increased sensitivity to abiotic stress. Natural England's SIP also identifies air pollution as a key pressure to the site, stating that '*nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection.*'

5.64 The Woolmer Forest SAC is designated for a range of habitats, including natural dystrophic lakes and ponds, transition mires and quaking bogs, and dry / wet heathland components. As highlighted on APIS, these features have varying sensitivity to nitrogen deposition. For example, dystrophic lakes and ponds have a nitrogen CL of 3-10 kg N/ha/yr and exceedance impacts include increased algal productivity and a shift in nutrient limitation (from N to P). Transition mires and quaking bogs (CL of 10-15 kg N/ha/yr) and dry / wet heathland (CL of 10-20 kg N/ha/yr) may also experience ecosystem changes as a result of excessive atmospheric nitrogen deposition. Nitrogen deposition trends on APIS indicate that the maximum nitrogen deposition (15.7 kg N/ha/yr) exceeds the critical upper limit of 10 kg N/ha/yr for the natural dystrophic lakes and ponds feature. Regarding the Woolmer Forest SAC, Natural England's SIP states that '*aerial pollution may be promoting changes in species composition of mires towards Molinia and sedge dominated systems rather than Sphagnum dominated; ponds may be losing characteristic aquatic plant assemblage partly because of increasing nutrient status.*'

5.65 The Shortheath Common SAC lies to the north-west of Bordon and is considered to be a functional part of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA complex, partly because it also supports ground-nesting birds. It is designated for a range of habitats that are potentially sensitive to atmospheric nitrogen deposition, including transition mires and quaking bogs, European dry heaths and bog woodland. However, a review of existing road infrastructure surrounding the SAC indicates that there are no major commuter routes (A roads) within 200m of the site boundary. Potential traffic-related nitrogen deposition impacts of the residential site allocations on the Shortheath Common SAC are therefore screened out from further consideration.

5.66 The SPA is a composite site that lies in the east of East Hampshire District and is widely distributed within 200m of (and in many places directly adjoining) major commuter routes, including the A3 and A325 (the same applies to the Woolmer Forest SAC, which overlaps with the SPA to the south of Bordon). Furthermore, habitat mapping on MAGIC indicates that sensitive lowland heathland within the designated site boundary also occurs within 200m from these roads and, in many places, adjoins the roadside. Importantly, Woolmer Pond lies approx. 79m from the A325, placing it well within the screening distance for atmospheric pollution effects. The proposed

allocations four allocate residential and employment development in Bordon, Bramshott and Liphook, the settlements that lie closest to the SPA. Development in these settlements and indeed other parts of the district, are likely to lead to an increase in commuter traffic on the identified roads.

5.67 **Overall, LSEs of the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA and Woolmer Forest SAC regarding atmospheric pollution cannot be excluded. An AA of this impact pathway, including traffic and air quality modelling, will be required at the Reg.19 stage of the Local Plan.**

5.68 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

East Hampshire Hangers SAC

5.69 The East Hampshire Hangers SAC is a composite site that bisects East Hampshire District on a north-south axis. The SAC is designated for a range of habitats and species which are sensitive to atmospheric pollution. Its feature that is most sensitive to atmospheric nitrogen deposition is the *Taxus baccata* wood of the British Isles (nitrogen CL of 5-15 kg N/ha/yr). Exceedance impacts listed on APIS encompass changes in soil processes, nutrient imbalances, and altered composition of mycorrhiza and ground vegetation. The maximum nitrogen deposition of 33.3 kg N/ha/yr exceed the maximum nitrogen CL for all designated woodland habitats (e.g. *Taxus baccata* woods, *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forest, *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines). Furthermore, the qualifying 'semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies' and '*Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests' also harbour lichens and bryophytes, which are sensitive to direct toxicity effects from high ammonia (NH_3) concentrations with an identified Critical Level of 1 µg/m^3.

5.70 A review of the road infrastructure along the SAC indicates that there are no major commuter routes within 200m of the site. However, there are several smaller B roads (B3004, B3006) alongside the SAC that connect the conurbations of Whitehill & Bordon and Alton. While B roads are less likely to experience significant increases in traffic flows, this cannot be excluded particularly where large developments (dwellings and / or employment floorspace) are situated in close proximity.

5.71 **Overall, LSEs of Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the East Hampshire Hangers SAC regarding atmospheric pollution cannot be excluded. An AA of this impact pathway, including traffic and air quality modelling, will be undertaken at the Reg.19 stage of the Local Plan as a precautionary measure.**

5.72 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Butser Hill SAC

5.73 The Butser Hill SAC lies in the southern part of East Hampshire District to the north of Clanfield and Horndean. It is designated for two habitats, including semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous susbrates, and *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. APIS identifies both habitats as being sensitive to atmospheric nitrogen deposition with nitrogen CLs of 15-25 kg N/ha/yr and 5-15 kg N/ha/yr respectively. The potential exceedance impacts differ depending on the ecosystem type that is present. For example, in dry grasslands excessive atmospheric nitrogen deposition generally leads to an increase in tall grasses, overall decline in biodiversity, nitrogen leaching and surface acidification. In *Taxus baccata* woods, ecosystem changes mainly relate to ground flora and associated soil processes.

5.74 Review of the road infrastructure alongside the SAC indicates that the A3 is the only commuter route requiring consideration. The Butser Hill SAC adjoins the A3, and habitat mapping indicates

that lowland calcareous grassland and woodland within the designated site boundary occurs widely near to the roadside. The A3 connects the southern and north-eastern parts of East Hampshire District, as well as providing direct / indirect links to the adjoining authorities of Havant, Chichester and Waverley. Residential and employment development site allocations have the potential to lead to an increase in commuter traffic along the A3, with potential knock-on effects on air quality within the Butser Hill SAC.

5.75 Generally, it is to be noted that over 90% of the SAC lies beyond 200m from the A3 and atmospheric nitrogen deposition from traffic would not occur in these parts of the site. Furthermore, even the closest parts of the SAC are often separated from the A3 by a 20-40m wide road embankment, which would experience the largest proportion of traffic-related nitrogen deposition. Notwithstanding this, Natural England's SIP identifies atmospheric pollution as a threat to the site, highlighting that '*nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads for the Taxus baccata woodlands and is approaching the upper critical load in the chalk grassland… Overall, this creates conditions less favourable to the characteristic vegetation of the SAC features.*'

5.76 **Overall, LSEs of the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the Butser Hill SAC regarding atmospheric pollution cannot be excluded. An AA of this impact pathway, including traffic and air quality modelling, will be required at the Reg.19 stage of the Local Plan.**

5.77 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC

5.78 The Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and part of the overlapping Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC lie to the north-east of East Hampshire District in the adjoining authority of Waverley. The SPA is designated for its populations of breeding Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark, which all nest on the ground. All three species rely on a combination of bare ground and dwarf shrub heath (e.g. heather and gorse) for successful nesting and foraging. Clearly, the suitability of their supporting habitats depends on limited additional nutrient inputs such as through atmospheric nitrogen deposition. APIS identifies a nitrogen CL of 10-20 kg N/ha/yr for dry heath, adopted as the applicable supporting habitat class for these species. The same nitrogen CLs apply to European dry heaths and northern Atlantic wet heaths, qualifying features of the overlapping Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC. An exceedance of CLs leads to ecosystem-level changes, including a transition from heather to grass dominance, decline in lichens, change in plant biochemistry and increased sensitivity to abiotic stress.

5.79 There are two relevant site allocations within 5 km, and allocations for 672 residential units within 5 – 10 km. Journeys from these sites could bring commuters within the bounds of the SPA via the A287 which runs from Farnham to Hindhead.

5.80 **Overall, LSEs of the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and part of the overlapping Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC regarding atmospheric pollution cannot be excluded. An AA of this impact pathway, including traffic and air quality modelling, will be required at the Reg.19 stage of the Local Plan.**

5.81 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Thames Basin Heaths SPA

5.82 The Thames Basin Heaths SPA, the closest component part of which lies in the northernmost section of Waverley, is also designated for ground-nesting Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark. As highlighted above, there is a clear potential for traffic-related atmospheric nitrogen deposition to reduce the suitability of supporting habitats for these qualifying species. However, it is very unlikely that major roads within 200m of these sites constitute journey-to-work routes for East Hampshire residents for several reasons. The approx. driving distance to the closest parcel of the SPA within 200m of a major road (the Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSI adjoining the M3) is over 25km, which is significantly more than the average commuting distance for a UK resident of 10.1km. Furthermore, the Thames Basin Heaths SPA sits amidst a very complex and convoluted road network, meaning that commuters can choose between various routes to reach their destination, including several that would not involve travelling within 200m of sensitive habitats. There are areas of Thames Basin Heaths SPA closer to the East Hampshire boundary but they tend not to lie on roads expected to be journey to work routes for East Hampshire residents.

5.83 There are no Residential Site Allocations within 5 km, and allocations for 39 residential units within 5 – 10 km. Journeys from these sites could bring commuters within 200m of the SPA via either the A327 or the A325. Likely commuting journeys using the A327 would be for 18 km to the nearest likely conurbation (Hook) which is a greater distance than the average commuting distance of 10.1 km. Commuting journey to Aldershot (9 km distant) urban area could bring commuters within 200m of the SPA via the A325.

5.84 **Overall, LSEs of the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the Thames Basin Heath SPA regarding atmospheric pollution cannot be excluded. An AA of this impact pathway, including traffic and air quality modelling, will be required at the Reg.19 stage of the Local Plan.**

5.85 The following policies are screened in for Appropriate Assessment:

- Policy S1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy H1: Housing Strategy

Loss of Functionally Linked Habitat

Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA

5.86 The ground-nesting species in the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Dartford warbler, nightjar and woodlark, are likely to be largely confined to the designated site boundary. However, all species are mobile and may routinely travel beyond the designated site boundary. None of the three species have specialised requirements for foraging habitats. For example, while nightjar may forage up to 6km from their nesting territory, they feed on various prey (flying moths, beetles, dragonflies, flies) in a wide range of habitats, including deciduous woodland, open oak scrubland, young conifer plantations, heathland, wetlands, mature hedges and old pastures. Woodlark use a range of habitats adjacent to heathland for foraging, including short grassland, stubble fields, golf courses and bare areas in quarry sites. Overall, potential loss of non-designated foraging habitat is unlikely to be a threat to the three qualifying species.

5.87 Regarding breeding and roosting habitats, all three species are tightly linked to structurally diverse dwarf shrub vegetation, including areas of bare ground, heather and gorse. Such habitat patches may be located in open heath or at the heathland – woodland interface. Ideally, nesting locations support a clear line of sight for the early detection of predators. Research undertaken in the Breckland Forest area indicates that nightjar and woodlark will also nest in rotationally managed conifer plantations (both within and outside designated site boundaries) at different times in the management cycle. Where suitable undesignated nesting habitats (i.e. areas of structurally diverse heath and conifer plantations) for nightjar and woodlark lie within 2km of a designated site, a potential loss of functionally linked habitat should be evaluated. However, no such habitats in East Hampshire District in proximity of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA have been identified.

5.88 Overall, LSEs of the Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA regarding loss of functionally linked habitat can be excluded. This impact pathway is screened out from AA.

Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

5.89 The Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar are designated for a range of waterfowl and wader species that are mobile, routinely travelling beyond the designated site boundaries for foraging, roosting and resting. Within these sites, the species with strongest associations with functionally linked habitats are dark-bellied brent goose (qualifying species of both SPAs / Ramsars) and, to a lesser extent, wigeon, curlew and redshank (Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar only). Given the importance of greenfield sites along the Solent coastline to qualifying birds and the increasing pressure of development, the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS) was developed by the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Steering Group, with the ultimate objective to safeguard the most important non-designated supporting habitats (i.e. functionally linked habitats) in the Solent region.

5.90 In their guidance on Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for SSSIs notified for birds[110], Natural England specify that wintering waders, brent goose and wigeon have a maximum foraging distance of 2km. At its closest point, East Hampshire District lies approx. 2.8km to the north of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and, therefore, outside the IRZ associated with its qualifying species. Furthermore, mapping undertaken in support of the SWBGS shows no functionally linked habitat parcels within (or indeed close to) East Hampshire District. Therefore, LSEs of Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations on the Solent Habitats sites regarding loss of functionally linked habitat can be excluded. This impact pathway is screened out from AA.

In-Combination Assessment

5.91 The potential anticipated growth in East Hampshire District will need to be assessed in the context of the growth in adjoining authorities, such as Hart, Waverley, Chichester, Havant, Winchester, South Downs National Park and Basingstoke & Deane. Development in these authorities has the potential to act in-combination with East Hampshire growth, thereby exacerbating the potential impacts associated with the EHLP. In practice, in-combination assessment is of greatest relevance where an impact pathway to the EHLP exists, but it would be screened out based on its small individual contribution. However, no impacts have been screened out based on a small (i.e. de minimis) contribution of the EHLP. Appropriate Assessments for the impact pathways that were identified as a cause for concern (e.g. recreational pressure, atmospheric pollution) will involve in-combination assessment. For example, survey data that are used to identify recreation patterns consider visitors from all authorities and ‘apportion’ the contribution of different authorities based on postcode data. Data that inform air quality modelling encompass in-combination traffic flows and allow for an appraisal of different scenarios (contribution of the EHLP alone and in-combination with development plans of other authorities).

5.92 It is to be noted that all planning documents will be subject to their own HRA prior to implementation, ensuring that their own impacts regarding recreational pressure, water quality and atmospheric pollution will be adequately mitigated. Therefore, no residual in-combination effects with other strategic development plans will remain. Relevant HRAs will be consulted in the AA of the Reg.19 Preferred Strategy.

[110] Knight M. (2019). Impact Risk Zones Guidance Summary – Sites of Special Scientific Interest Notified for Birds. Version 1.1. 8pp.

6. Appropriate Assessment

Recreational Pressure

Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC

6.1 LSEs of the emerging Reg.18 EHLP on the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC (collectively referred to in the following as the 'heathland complex', unless reference to a specific site is required) regarding recreational pressure could not be excluded. A material increase in recreational usage of the heathland complex due to increased housing growth has the potential to result in disturbance to SPA breeding birds, as well as leading to changes in SAC vegetation community composition through direct trampling damage, soil compaction and nutrient enrichment. Several SSSI component parts of the SPA and SACs lie within East Hampshire District within close travel distance of the district's urban centres (e.g. Whitehill Parish) and are therefore likely to be key destinations for recreational outings undertaken by existing and future residents.

6.2 Natural England's Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACO)[111] highlights disturbance caused by human activity as a potential threat to the long-term viability of the populations of SPA breeding birds. This includes changes to foraging and roosting behaviour, increases in energy expenditure, abandonment of nest sites and desertion of supporting habitats. Cumulatively, this can lead to contraction of distribution ranges and impede reproductive success. The SACO also states that '*human disturbance plays a key role in increasing the vulnerability of eggs and chicks to predation.*' Public access / disturbance is also listed as a threat in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP)[112] for the heathland complex, which specifies that '*Visitor access provision is not currently coordinated between sites or managed so as to reduce impacts on ground-nesting birds.*'

2018 Footprint Ecology Visitor Survey

6.3 To update the baseline evidence on recreational patterns within the heathland complex obtained in a previous survey undertaken in 2012, AECOM (on behalf of EHDC) commissioned Footprint Ecology to carry out a repeat visitor survey across these sensitive Habitats sites. The survey points represented a subset of locations used in the 2012 survey to enable a direct comparison in visitor trends, including Shortheath Common, Kingsley Common, Broxhead Common, Woolmer Forest and Ludshott & Bramshott Commons. Each survey location was surveyed over 16 hours, with even 8-hour splits between a weekday and weekend day. Tally counts of discrete user groups, number of people and dogs seen were undertaken to provide an estimate of site busyness. Visitor interviews were carried out to characterise the nature of recreational usage in the heathland complex, including type of activity, frequency and length of visit, reasons for visiting and home postcode. Obtaining the home postcode of interviewees is a key parameter to calculate the distance travelled from home and establish a core recreational catchment for the heathland complex.

6.4 Overall, across all 23 survey locations, 2,012 people and 1,345 dogs were recorded over 16 hours, equating to 87.5 people and 58.5 dogs per survey point. In turn this represents 5.5 people and 3.7 dogs per hour at each survey location, which indicates an expected moderate busyness given the urban location of these heathland sites. However, there was a marked difference in visitor counts between different sub-parts of the heathlands. For example, Ludshott and Bramshott Commons were by far the busiest areas (with visitor numbers equating to 11 people and 8.3 dogs per hour per survey point), followed by Woolmer Forest (4.2 people per hour per survey point, noting that dog numbers at Woolmer Forest were lowest). The Shortheath Common SAC was the quietest site with an average of only 2.3 people and 1.5 dogs per hour per location. The available data indicate that the recreational burden is not distributed evenly across the heathland complex, with Bramshott & Ludshott Common and Woolmer Forest clearly being focal

[111] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5729030657540096 [Accessed on the 21/11/2023]
[112] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431913779036160 [Accessed on the 21/11/2023]

points of interest. In part, this is likely to reflect the higher density of housing development adjoining these two sites compared to Broxhead Common, Kingsley Common and Shortheath Common. It is also an important observation because the EHLP allocates a significant quantum of dwellings on Preferred Sites in parishes close to the heathland components that experience the highest existing levels of recreational pressure.

6.5 Interview data indicate that the vast majority of interviewees (96% of interviewees) are local residents, undertaking a short visit directly from home. This implies that a large portion of the recreational burden in the heathland complex is likely to originate from East Hampshire and adjoining authorities. As is commonly observed across most Habitats sites, dog walking was by far the most common activity undertaken (71%), followed by walking (12%), cycling (5%) and angling (specifically at Shortheath Common). However, there were statistically significant differences in activities undertaken between sites, particularly for dog walkers. For example, while Woolmer Forest experiences high footfall (see previous paragraph), the proportion of dog walkers here was much lower (52%) than at other sites (e.g. Kingsley Common; 81%). Accounting for differences in the volume of footfall and recreational activities is important, because each parameter is associated with its own implications for ecological receptors. For example, excessive trampling is associated with higher impact potential to SAC vegetation, whereas a high proportion of dog walkers implies a higher disturbance potential to ground-nesting birds. Therefore, it would appear that the component part of the heathland complex experiencing the highest existing pressure is Ludshott & Bramshott Common, with the highest visitor counts and second-highest proportion of dog walkers (80%) recorded. Moreover, the highest proportion of dogs off-lead (87%) was also recorded at Ludshott and Bramshott Common.

6.6 A common trend across all sites was that interviewees undertake short, but frequent visits. The most frequently given visit duration was between 30 minutes and 1 hour (55%), with only 2% of interviewees visiting for more than 3 hours. The two most common visit frequencies given were daily (26%) and ‘1 to 3 times a week’ (26%). Furthermore, a majority of interviewees have been highly loyal to this heathland complex, visiting for more than 10 years (49%) or between 5 to 10 years (10%). These data lend further support to the notion that the heathland complex is primarily a recreational resource for local residents. If the site were visited from further afield (i.e. more akin a tourism destination), it is expected that the average visit would be less frequent and of longer duration.

6.7 A total of 437 interviewees provided valid, georeferenced postcodes. Most interviewed visitors originated from East Hampshire District (85%), followed by Waverley District (10%). All other local authorities contribute a negligible portion of the recreational burden in the heathlands complex. Within East Hampshire District, the majority of interviewees were living in Headley (23%), Whitehill (16%) and Bramshott and Liphook (12%). When considering the 75th percentile of interviewees visiting from home (i.e. the three-quarters of postcodes that lie closest to the heathland sites), an approach that is typically used to identify the core recreational catchment of Habitats sites, this yields a core catchment of 3.6km. There were also considerable differences in catchment size between different heathland parcels. Three-quarters of interviewees to Woolmer Forest came from within 3.2km, while Kingsley Common had the largest core catchment of 6.9km.

6.8 A fourth formal monitoring programme for EHDC and Whitehill Town Council (WTC) was undertaken in 2023, following five years of monitoring under contract with Natural England. This survey targeted the designated breeding species (nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler) that utilise habitats within the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC. Importantly, compared to the populations cited at the time of designation in 1998, all three species were considerably more abundant in 2023 (nightjar by +120%, woodlark by +173% and Dartford warbler by +619%). As a general trend this appears to indicate that the qualifying bird populations are thriving, despite an increase in housing development within the 5km core recreational catchment of the heathland complex.

6.9 It should also be noted that the breeding populations of all three species experience strong inter-annual fluctuations. For example, the 2023 territory data for both woodlark and Dartford warbler were considerably lower than previously recorded peak figures and differences to population numbers at the time of citation. Weather patterns are a key driver of the fluctuation in Dartford warbler abundances. Mild winters in the 1990s and early 2000s likely fuelled the initial population increase, with the increased frequency of colder winter weather since 2008 being responsible for

inter-annual dips in numbers. Conversely, habitat improvements are likely to be a key factor for the increase in nightjar and woodlark. Crucially, the long-term population trends of all three species most likely are driven by factors other than human disturbance (e.g. availability of suitable habitat, weather). This indicates that meeting the Conservation Objectives of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA is unlikely to be impeded by recreation, although it does not imply that recreational pressure is not an important additional stressor on qualifying breeding birds.

6.10 Table 2 summarises the number of dwellings by settlement requiring mitigation in the Heathlands complex (Sites within 5 km of the complex). A full list of proposed sites and distances from the Heathland complex sites can be found in Table 4.

Table 2: Number of dwellings requiring mitigation by Parish.

Settlement	Sites	Sites Requiring Mitigation	Number of Dwellings in this Settlement Requiring Mitigation	Percentage of Dwellings Requiring Mitigation in this Settlement
Alton and Holybourne	4	1	1000[113]	56.1%
Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford	7	7	667	37.4%
Liphook	3	3	111	6.2%
Headley Down	1	1	6	0.3%
Total (Allocation)	**14**	**13**	**1784**	**100%**
Windfall for period of plan (18.8 / annum)			376	
Total (Allocation + Windfall)			**2160**	

6.11 Table 3 summarises the number of dwellings requiring mitigation in the Heathlands complex (Sites within 5 km of the complex) assessed against nearest complex component. A full list of preferred sites and distances from the Heathland complex sites can be found in Table 4.

Table 3 Number of dwellings within 5 km of the Heathlands complex by SSSI component

Heathland Complex Component	Number of dwellings
Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI	117
Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI	917
Shortheath Common SSSI	1677
Woolmer Forest SSSI	778

6.12 The largest portion of growth (1000 dwellings) will be delivered on a single allocation in Binsted Parish, wholly within 5km of Shortheath Common SAC and partly within 5km of Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI. However, another key location for growth of 541 dwellings is Whitehill

[113] Only 25% of this large allocation at Binstead is within 5km of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, However, 100% of it is within 5km of Shortheath Common SAC which is covered by the existing Whitehill-Bordon mitigation strategy.

Parish, which is close to the Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC.

6.13 According to Natural England's latest SSSI condition assessment, none of the component units of these SSSIs are in 'Unfavourable – no change' or 'Unfavourable Declining' conditions. For example, Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI unit 1 is assigned 'Favourable Condition' and the assessment states that '*There is now an appropriate balance between open heathland and woodland, and current management is effectively maintaining good structural diversity as well as the distinctive nature of the common.*' Regarding recreational pressure, the condition assessment indicates that '*There are three areas on the edge of the common used for car parking and it is evident that there is a lot of use by people, particularly dog walkers. The most obvious impact is the proliferation of paths criss-crossing the heath. At present this is within acceptable levels from a nature conservation perspective, but it will need to be kept under review.*' Therefore, while recreational usage is currently unlikely to hinder the achievement of the site Conservation Objectives, recreational impacts should continue to be monitored, particularly against the background of predicted future housing growth in south-east England.

6.14 Units 1 and 38 along the northern edge of the Woolmer Forest SSSI/SAC are in 'Unfavourable Recovering' condition. However, the SSSI condition assessments indicate that the historic / current unfavourable condition is **not** related to recreational pressure. In both instances, site condition primarily relates to excessive cover and density of secondary woodland, which hinders a structurally diverse heathland and scrub vegetation from forming.

Mitigation

6.15 Natural England advise that, based on existing visitor data for the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA and cases of precedence in the Thames Basin Heaths and Dorset Heaths, all emerging residential developments within 5km of Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA/Woolmer Forest SAC will require mitigation in relation to recreational pressure. Natural England has not identified a specific requirement for the Local Plan to present a strategic mitigation framework solution for housing growth within 5km of Shortheath Common SAC. However, that site is covered by the mitigation strategy developed for the consented Whitehill-Bordon development. East Hampshire District Council is therefore considering the appropriateness of encompassing Shortheath Common SAC within a Local Plan strategic mitigation solution.

6.16 Generally, there are two main pillars for mitigating housing growth in core catchments and reducing recreational pressure in Habitats sites, including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) provision and Suitable Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). In the Dorset Heaths and Wealden Heaths area an additional strategy known as Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs) or Wealden Heaths Infrastructure Projects (WHIPS) has also been developed.

6.17 The general rationale behind SANG provision is to increase access to attractive greenspaces locally to new housing, with the aim to reduce the number of recreational visits to more sensitive Habitats sites. Natural England have established comprehensive criteria that a site must fulfil to be acceptable as SANG, which are tailored to maximise attractiveness to particular user groups, particularly dog walkers.

6.18 Natural England has advised the Council that any individual sites within 5km of the SPA which allocate 50 or more dwellings may require bespoke SANG. The rest of the development within 5km can be addressed through a combination of SAMM and/or WHIPS. Policy NBE2 (Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation) states that '*Development proposals… must be supported by adequate and up-to-date ecological information which demonstrates that development proposals… Will not have an adverse effect on an international, national or locally designated wildlife site...*' Policy NBE4 (Wealden Heaths European SPA and SAC sites) sets out the strategy for protecting these specific Habitats sites, including the 400m buffer zone in which no net new residential development will be permitted within 400m of Shortheath Common SAC, Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA or Woolmer Forest SAC, and the 5km recreational catchment around Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA within which mitigation will be required. As discussed, the Council is considering whether Shortheath Common SAC should also be included.

6.19 The following allocated sites allocated in the Local Plan will deliver or require SANG:

- 497 dwellings at Whitehill & Bordon regeneration area, across four sites: WHI-016 & WHI-017 Whitehill & Bordon Town Centre Intensification, WHI020 Land at former Bordon Garrison, WHI034 BOSC Residential Expansion and WHI-022 Louisburg Residential Extension. In line with policy and previous agreements these developments will all need to be addressed by bespoke SANG at the rate of 8ha per 1000 population.
- Land at Hollywater Road and Mill Chase Road (HEA-018) for 126 dwellings, will have its own bespoke SANG.
- Chiltley Farm – 67 dwellings, will need its own bespoke SANG.
- Land at Neatham Manor Farm - BIN-011, for 1000 dwellings will need its own SANG, at least for the c. 25% of the allocation that lies within 5km of Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA.

6.20 If these are addressed, it leaves 1,690 dwellings within 5km of Wealden Heaths Phase II, all of which will be on sites of less than 50 dwellings. For these developments, a SAMM and/or a WHIPs approach is being explored.

6.21 To assess their potential suitability as a SANG, AECOM has collated information on various features of several sites which were put forward for potential allocation in the Local Plan but not ultimately selected for allocation for housing. WHIPS are generally smaller-scale, more flexible projects than SANG. WHIPs are tailored towards specific geographic locations and/or residential developments and are progressed in consultation with Natural England.

6.22 The sites investigated score well in different themes ranging from parking availability, accessibility, semi-natural feel and geographic siting in relation to European site boundaries. The primary objective of any WHIPs would be to divert recreational use from the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and (if required) Shortheath Common SAC, all of which are characterised by a combination of openness, habitat diversity and 'natural' feel. Therefore, preference should be placed on WHIPs sites that recreate this experience as much as possible.

6.23 At time of writing, two sites in Liphook have currently been identified as having particular potential as WHIPS and will be explored further: These have the most attractive semi-natural character based on an analysis of satellite imagery. There is also the potential to run a proactive search for WHIPS sites, and to liaise with South Downs National Park Authority about delivering WHIPS sites in the area within their planning control, as parts of the National Park lie close to areas of development within East Hampshire District Council planning control.

6.24 Footprint Ecology undertook a recent study on the mitigation potential of WHIPs in southern England[114]. It assigns each set of proposed interventions to a range of simple uplift categories in terms of person visits per day. Using the commonly accepted SANG delivery standard (8ha per 1,000 new residents) and a target metric of 1 person per ha per hour, the study estimated that a project delivering an uplift of 0.23 people per day could provide mitigation for a single dwelling. These data were then used to determine the mitigation potential of different uplift categories in terms of the number of houses mitigated:

- Negligible uplift: less than approx. 1 person / day – 4.3 dwellings
- Low uplift: approx. 1-5 persons / day – 10.9 dwellings
- Moderate uplift: approx. 5-20 persons / day – 54.3 dwellings
- High uplift: more than approx. 20 persons / day – 218 dwellings

6.25 WHIPs were also assigned a geographic catchment, broadly equivalent to the catchment areas used for SANGs in the Thames Basin Heaths. The catchments proposed in the WHIPs study are based on a range of site criteria (e.g. parking availability, size and promotion) and range from 400m (very local catchment) to 5km (moderate catchment).

[114] Liley D., Caals Z. & Panter C. (2021). Wealden Heaths Infrastructure Projects (WHIPs) Selection Study. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology. 64pp.

6.26 This approach will therefore be undertaken as the Local Plan proceeds to further explore potential WHIP sites and quantify their mitigation potential.

6.27 In addition to SANG or WHIPS, a mitigation solution applied to the designated sites themselves is also in existence. At the moment this only covers the existing consented growth at the Whitehill & Bordon extension area. EHDC are in the process of developing a wider SAMM programme which will expand the existing SAMM programme to cover all net new housing within 5km of the SPA and Woolmer Forest SAC (and potentially Shortheath Common SAC if deemed appropriate).

Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC (Wealden Heaths Phase I)

Assessment

6.28 Natural England's Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives (SACO)[115] highlights disturbance caused by human activity as a potential threat to the long-term viability of the populations of SPA breeding birds. This includes changes to foraging and roosting behaviour, increases in energy expenditure, abandonment of nest sites and desertion of supporting habitats. Cumulatively, this can lead to contraction of distribution ranges and impede reproductive success. The SACO also states that '*human disturbance plays a key role in increasing the vulnerability of eggs and chicks to predation.*' Public access / disturbance is also listed as a threat in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP)[116] for the SPA and SAC, which specifies the need to '*Agree and implement an over-arching access management strategy.*'

6.29 Natural England have identified a core recreational catchment for the SPA of 5km, including a 400m development exclusion zone and a 400m – 5km mitigation zone. Within that mitigation zone, it was agreed with Natural England as part of the Waverley Local Plan Part 2 HRA and Examination that developments comprising 20 dwellings or fewer do not require mitigation. Flexible mitigation should be provided for developments between 21 – 49 dwellings and bespoke SANG must be identified for developments of 50 dwellings or more. There are presently no SAMM requirements for the site.

6.30 The Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC is covered under the mitigation strategy for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. An avoidance strategy, comprising on-site SAMM and off-site SANG provision is in place to help mitigate adverse recreational impacts. The mitigation strategy establishes a core recreational catchment for the complex of 5km, within which housing developers must make financial contributions to the SANG and SAMM elements. Policy NBE5 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) sets out the strategy for protecting this specific Habitats site, including the 400m buffer zone in which no net new residential development will be permitted, and the 5km catchment around the SPA within which mitigation will be required.

6.31 Two proposed development sites are within the 5 km catchment for the SPA and SAC (which overlap):

- HEA-011 – Land at Middle Common, Headley Down is allocated for 6 travelling showpeople plots,
- BIN-005 – Land north of Fullers Road is allocated for 19 residential units.

6.32 HEA-011 is 500m north of Wealden Heaths Phase II (Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI) and additional recreational pressure from HEA-011 is likely to be directed to this SSSI. Mitigation is therefore already considered in the previous section. Given the considerably shorter travel durations, new residents are much more likely to visit the Phase II site than the Phase I site. Therefore additional mitigation is not considered necessary for Wealden Heaths Phase I.

6.33 BIN-005 is below 20 dwellings and therefore would not require mitigation in line with the approach agreed with Waverley Borough Council at their Local Plan Part 2 Examination for Wealden Heaths Local Plan Part I. Moreover, it is within 200m of Alice Holt Forest. Alice Holt Forest is 247

[115] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5729030657540096 [Accessed on the 21/11/2023]
[116] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431913779036160 [Accessed on the 21/11/2023]

ha of forest which is well provisioned with walking trails, a well-being trail and activity centre with health and fitness activities.

6.34 It is therefore concluded that no adverse effect on integrity would arise regarding Wealden Heaths Phase I (Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons) SPA or Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC.

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

Assessment

6.35 The EHLP allocates sites for 145 new residential units within the visitor catchment area of 5.6 km for the Solent Habitats Sites, all of which are sensitive to recreational disturbance to varying degrees. Many of the threats and pressures for these different sites will arise from similar recreational activities. Furthermore, the measure that is in place to mitigate recreational pressure effects is of strategic nature and applies to all Habitats sites in the Solent. Therefore, to avoid repetition, the discussion of all relevant sites is combined into the sections below.

6.36 The Solent is estimated to receive approx. 52 million recreational visits per annum and recreational pressure has thus been a historic issue over the past decade. Consequently, a lot of research on various aspects surrounding recreation has been undertaken in the Solent. The following evidence base assessing different components of recreational pressure has been compiled (note that this HRA will not re-examine all these data, as this is regarded as well-established and is assessed in detail in numerous other reports).

1. Desk-based study identifying the strategic issues in the Solent,
2. Winter visitor fieldwork to establish a recreational baseline,
3. Field study on recreational disturbance of overwintering waterfowl and waders,
4. Household survey to assess the Solent's importance as a recreation resource in the wider population,
5. Detailed modelling of future housing scenarios and their impacts on disturbance, and
6. Emerging avoidance and mitigation strategy for the Solent.

6.37 The cumulative evidence available for the Solent region highlighted that recreational use was unsustainable and impacts on the qualifying SPA / Ramsar bird species is evident, putting the Conservation Objectives of Solent's European sites at risk.

6.38 Further surveys extending the evidence base and assessing the long-term effectiveness of the Bird Aware project have since been undertaken. Footprint Ecology undertook a further visitor survey analysing visitor data from winter 2017 / 2018. This survey was commissioned as part of the baseline monitoring for the Bird Aware Project and in line with the monitoring strategy designed for the project. Continued monitoring work is required to ensure that mitigation is successfully delivered, is effective and developer charges have been sufficient / appropriate. Visitor surveys are key to this, enabling conclusions to be drawn on the type and frequency of recreational activities undertaken and, most importantly, confirming whether core recreational catchments have changed over time.

6.39 The Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar and the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar are most likely to be affected by the EHLP, given their proximity to the East Hampshire District Boundary. Footprint Ecology's survey covered two access locations in the Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar (Salterns Quay, Hilsea) and three survey points in the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar (Langstone, West Itchenor, Hayling Billy Trail). It is considered that these are the locations most likely to be relevant for new residents. The visitor survey results for these locations are summarised in the following.

6.40 In terms of visitor numbers, survey points in the Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar were less busy than survey locations in the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar. For example, Hayling Billy Trail (on Hayling Billy Island, a total of 275 people counted over a 16-hour

period) was twice as busy as Hilsea and three times as busy as Salterns Quay. Notwithstanding this, although experiencing a lower overall recreational footfall, a higher number of dogs was recorded in the Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar. This is noteworthy because dog walkers are likely to represent the most significant disturbance factor to the SPA / Ramsar bird interest.

6.41 A total of 334 interviews were conducted with visitors, giving important insight in their recreational habits and distance travelled from home. Notably, a total of 316 visitors (95%) were on a day trip / short visit from home (100% in the Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar), indicating that the recreational burden in the Solent is mainly driven by local residents rather than holiday makers. 66% of interviewees were dog walking, followed by 21% that were walking and 4% that were on an outing with their family. Very few interviewees were undertaking fishing, beach activities or 'other' activities (e.g., beachcombing). As evident from visitor surveys in many other European protected sites, dog walking is generally carried out for relatively short durations (54% of dog walkers stay on site between 30 minutes and 1 hour), but on a regular basis (48% of dog walkers visit daily). Other – arguably more 'niche' activities – are undertaken infrequently (i.e., a few times per month) but often involve visits of three hours or more. Therefore, a clear discrepancy exists in the spatio-temporal footprint of recreational activities, which is important from an HRA perspective. Recreational pressure in the Solent continues to appear to be a year-round issue, with the majority of visitors indicating they visit equally all year.

6.42 Overall, 321 interviewees (96%) gave full, valid postcodes that were georeferenced in GIS. The distance from the home postcode to the interview location ranged from 76m to 300km, with a mean of 8.4km and a median of 1.6km. Pooled for all recreational activities and across all survey locations, the 75th percentile of visitors travelled 5km to the relevant survey location. However, when the postcode data was split by survey location, differences in the catchment zones for the Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar and the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar became apparent. Survey locations in the Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar had a particularly local visitor pool (75th percentiles of 1.4km and 0.5km respectively). The Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar had comparatively larger catchment zones of up to 17.1km at West Itchenor.

Mitigation

6.43 Policy NBE6 (Solent Special Protection Areas) sets out the recreational pressure catchment (5.6km) around these SPAs, and the need for mitigation via contributions to BirdAware Solent. An initial framework for an avoidance and mitigation strategy conceptualised by Footprint Ecology was therefore developed further, culminating in the Bird Aware Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (2017). Bird Aware Solent stipulates that all net new residential development within a 5.6km catchment zone will result in Likely Significant Effects on coastal SPAs / Ramsars. The catchment boundary was based on the distance where the majority (i.e. 75%) of coastal visitors live. It was therefore decided that mitigation measures and monitoring delivered as part of Bird Aware Solent are to be funded by developer contributions, depending on the number of bedrooms delivered, for each new residential dwelling delivered within the 5.6km catchment zone. Current rates (from 1st April 2023) for each property built are:

- 1 bedroom property £443
- 2 bedroom property £639
- 3 bedroom property £834
- 4 bedroom property £980
- 5 bedroom property 1,150
- Flat rate £740 (usually used in cases of caravans, tents or gypsy and traveller sites).

6.44 The EHDC is a member of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership and is signed up to the approach set out within the Solent Bird Aware strategy. The SRMP provides a strategic solution to ensure the requirements of the Habitats Regulations are met with regard to the in-combination effects of increased recreational pressure on the Solent SPAs arising from new residential development and has been endorsed by Natural England. The approach includes a series of management measures which actively encourage all coastal visitors to enjoy their visits in a responsible manner, by:

- employing a team of 5-7 coastal rangers to advise people on how to avoid bird disturbance, liaise with landowners, host school visits, etc.,
- developing communications, marketing and education initiatives and an officer to implement them,
- developing initiatives to encourage responsible dog walking and an officer to implement them,
- preparation of codes of conduct for a variety of coastal activities,
- securing site-specific projects to better manage visitors and provide secure habitats for the birds,
- providing new/enhanced greenspaces as an alternative to visiting the coast, and
- employing a partnership manager to coordinate and manage all the above

6.45 Footprint Ecology prepared a report in November 2023, reviewing the likelihood of impacts on breeding birds around the Solent from increasing recreational disturbance from new housing. The report considered the impact on five species of breeding birds, namely Mediterranean gull, sandwich tern, common tern, little tern and roseate tern. All of these bird species are qualifying features of the Solent and Southampton Water SPA. The sandwich tern, common tern and little term are qualifying features of Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA. Even if the Bird Aware Solent project is expanded to encompass tern and gull nesting sites during the summer, this could still be facilitated through the same mitigation framework and policy.

Water Quality

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar

Assessment

6.46 LSEs of the emerging Reg.18 EHLP on the Solent Habitats Sites (Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC and Portsmouth Harbour SPA / Ramsar) with regard to water quality could not be excluded. An increase in nitrogen load from housing growth at 11 sites and estimated as 410 Kg TN/Year has the potential to result in detrimental impact on the SPAs and SAC.

6.47 The Solent Operational Catchment covers areas in the south of the district (between Havant and the designated National Park) and to the northwest of the district (Above the designated National Park and west for Four Marks settlement). All residential site allocations assessed within Table 5 are within the catchment for both surface water run-off and waste water treatment works discharge.

6.48 The site improvement plans for the Solent Habitats Sites lists water pollution as a threat or pressure.

6.49 The East Hampshire catchment covers a geographical area of approximately 571 km^2. All of the watercourses discharge into the Solent, Portsmouth Harbour or Langstone Harbour, which are of national and international nature conservation importance. The Solent and Southampton Water have both Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site designations and the Solent is additionally a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

6.50 Budds Farm WwTW at Havant services the development areas of the EHLP and discharges into Langstone Harbour. This WwTW serves the communities of Portsmouth, Southsea, Havant, Hayling Island, Port Solent, Waterlooville, **Horndean**, **Rowlands Castle**, Denmead and Hambledon. It serves an equivalent of 366,725 people every day.

6.51 The DWMP[117] indicates that of the seven WwTW in the catchment area, Budds Farm is the lowest performing (2019-2020) in the following areas:

[117] Sothern Water (2022). Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) Overview of the East Hampshire River Basin

- Number of sewer blockages,
- Sewer collapses,
- Internal Sewer Flooding within properties, and
- External Flooding within the curtilage of a property.

This is the entire list of categories for which data was reported and indicate a system working under stress conditions.

6.52 In the BRAVA (Baseline Risk and Vulnerability Assessment) summary for East Hampshire[118] the vulnerability related to Nutrient Neutrality is flagged as Very Significant (the highest level) in 2020 and 2050. The following assessment is provided "*Our risk assessment for nutrient neutrality has indicated that new development in the East Hampshire catchment might put additional pressure on achieving favourable condition of the internationally designated habitats sites in the Solent. The local councils are working with Natural England and the Government to find suitable solutions to ensure that development is nutrient neutral. This risk may require additional future investment in our wastewater treatment processes*."

6.53 There are no plans currently in place to increase capacity to deal with Nitrogen Loading, therefore individual developments must reach nutrient neutrality to ensure that there is no impact on the Habitats Sites.

In Combination Assessment

6.54 The available headroom at WwTWs is the primary factor in determining whether additional growth can be supported. The Environment Agency sets permit levels for aquatic pollutants (this includes nutrients such as nitrogen) for WwTWs. These permits identify the maximum amount of pollutants that can be discharged from sewage works without putting the Conservation Objectives of European sites at risk. If permit limits are exceeded, mitigation measures are required to ensure that adverse effects on the integrity of linked European sites are prevented. Mitigation measures may include technological improvements at WwTWs, off-site measures (e.g., downstream construction wetlands) or rerouting of sewage to works that have remaining capacity.

6.55 Moreover, under the Environment Act 2021 there is a statutory requirement for water and sewerage companies to produce DWMPs (they must cover a minimum of 25 years) looking at current and future capacity, pressures, and risks to their networks such as climate change and population growth. DWMPs must detail how companies will manage these pressures and risks through their business plans and how they will work with other risk management authorities or drainage asset owners. The DWMP for the East Hampshire Catchment is currently in progress.

6.56 Water and sewerage companies are obliged to service growth so if that requires them to provide an alternative treatment solution they will do so. Each DWMP has its own HRA and cannot be adopted if the water and sewerage companies can't either avoid effects on European sites or deliver suitable compensation. The DWMP for the East Hampshire Catchment is currently in progress.

Mitigation

6.57 Given the need to achieve nutrient neutrality the EHLP will need to include provision for land which can be used to off-set the estimated nitrogen loading of 410 Kg TN/Year through change in use (for example, removal from arable usage or selective planting). The land will need to be within the operational catchment for East Hampshire. **In particular, East Hampshire District Council should ensure before submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State that they can identify sufficient probable mitigation to cover the first five years of the plan period, after which the Local Plan will require a review in any event.**

6.58 The EHLP includes a specific policy to ensure that adequate water supply and wastewater infrastructure to existing, new, or improved, wastewater drainage and treatment facilities is secured prior to first occupation of the development. Policy NBE9 (Water Quality Impact on the Solent International Sites) sets out the nutrient neutrality requirements for these Habitats sites.

Catchment Available at f0003-overvieweasthampshirerb.pdf (southernwater.co.uk) [Accessed 18/12/2023]

[118] Sothern Water (2022). BRAVA Summary for East Hampshire. Available at https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/4252/east-hampshire-wastewater-systems.pdf [Accessed 18/12/2023]

7. Conclusions

7.1 This report undertakes a LSEs screening assessment (the first stage of HRA) on the Reg.18 Local Plan for East Hampshire. The following impact pathways were considered relevant in the context of development in East Hampshire District:

- Recreational pressure
- Water quality
- Water quantity, level and flow
- Atmospheric pollution
- Loss of functionally linked habitat

Recreational Pressure

7.2 LSEs of the EHLP on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, East Hampshire Hangers SAC, Butser Hill SAC, Rook Clift SAC and Kingley Vale SAC were also excluded for various reasons (see main body of text).

7.3 While no adverse effect on integrity of Thames Basin Heaths SPA is identified from its allocations, the Local Plan does have a policy regarding this SPA, Policy NBE5.

7.4 LSEs of the EHLP on the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC regarding recreational pressure were screened in for Appropriate Assessment; however, closer examination identified no additional mitigation was required beyond that proposed for the Wealden Heaths Complex.

7.5 LSEs of the EHLP on the Wealden Heaths complex could not be excluded. The plan allocates housing growth within the core recreational catchments of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA and Woolmer Forest SAC (5km). LSEs from additional residential growth within these zones will arise due to a forecast increase in the number of recreational visits to these sensitive areas.

7.6 Mitigation will be required to reduce recreational pressure either through provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), or Wealden Heaths Infrastructure Projects (WHIPS), and/or Suitable Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM). EHDC are in the process of developing a SAMM programme which will recognise these mitigation requirements and seek to provide the means to deliver them. A specific policy in the emerging EHLP has been drafted (NBE4) to recognise and implement this.

7.7 LSEs of the EHLP on the Solent Habitats sites could not be excluded. The plan allocates housing growth within the core recreational catchments of the sites (5.6 km). LSEs from additional residential growth within these zones will arise due to a forecast increase in the number of recreational visits to these sensitive areas. Provided that all development applications comply with the policy and the Bird Aware Solent Strategy, the potential adverse effects of the development on the integrity of the Habitats sites can be mitigated through this policy. Adherence to this is the subject of a specific policy within the EHLP (NBE6).

Water Quality

7.8 LSEs of the EHLP on the water quality in the Woolmer Forest SAC, Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar and River Itchen SAC were excluded due to there being no realistic hydrological pathways to these Habitats sites.

7.9 However, Reg.18 EHLP residential site allocations result in LSEs on the water quality in Solent Habitats sites. SSSI component parts in the Habitats sites are in ‘Unfavourable’ condition due to high nutrient concentrations. LSEs of development associated with the discharge of additional treated sewage effluent in hydrological connectivity with these sites cannot be excluded. Mapping for Solent Habitats sites show that the hydrological catchments include the north-western and southern parts of EHD.

7.10 While the DWMP for East Hampshire is being determined, no capacity for additional nutrient loading can be assumed and therefore each allocation must reach neutrality through effective mitigation.

7.11 **In particular, East Hampshire District Council should ensure before submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State that they can identify sufficient probable mitigation to cover the first five years of the plan period, after which the Local Plan will require a review in any event.** The EHLP has a policy (NBE9) to ensure the availability of sufficient land within the catchment to allow for this.

Water Quantity, Level and Flow

7.12 LSEs of the EHLP on the water quantity, level and flow in the River Itchen SAC, Solent sites and Woolmer Forest SAC were excluded. This was due to the WRMPs of South East Water and Portsmouth Water highlighting that no additional water abstraction beyond existing consents would occur to meet the potable water demand in the district.

Atmospheric Pollution

7.13 LSEs of the EHLP on the Shortheath Common SAC, were excluded for several reasons, such as there being no major commuter routes relevant to East Hampshire within 200m of this site.

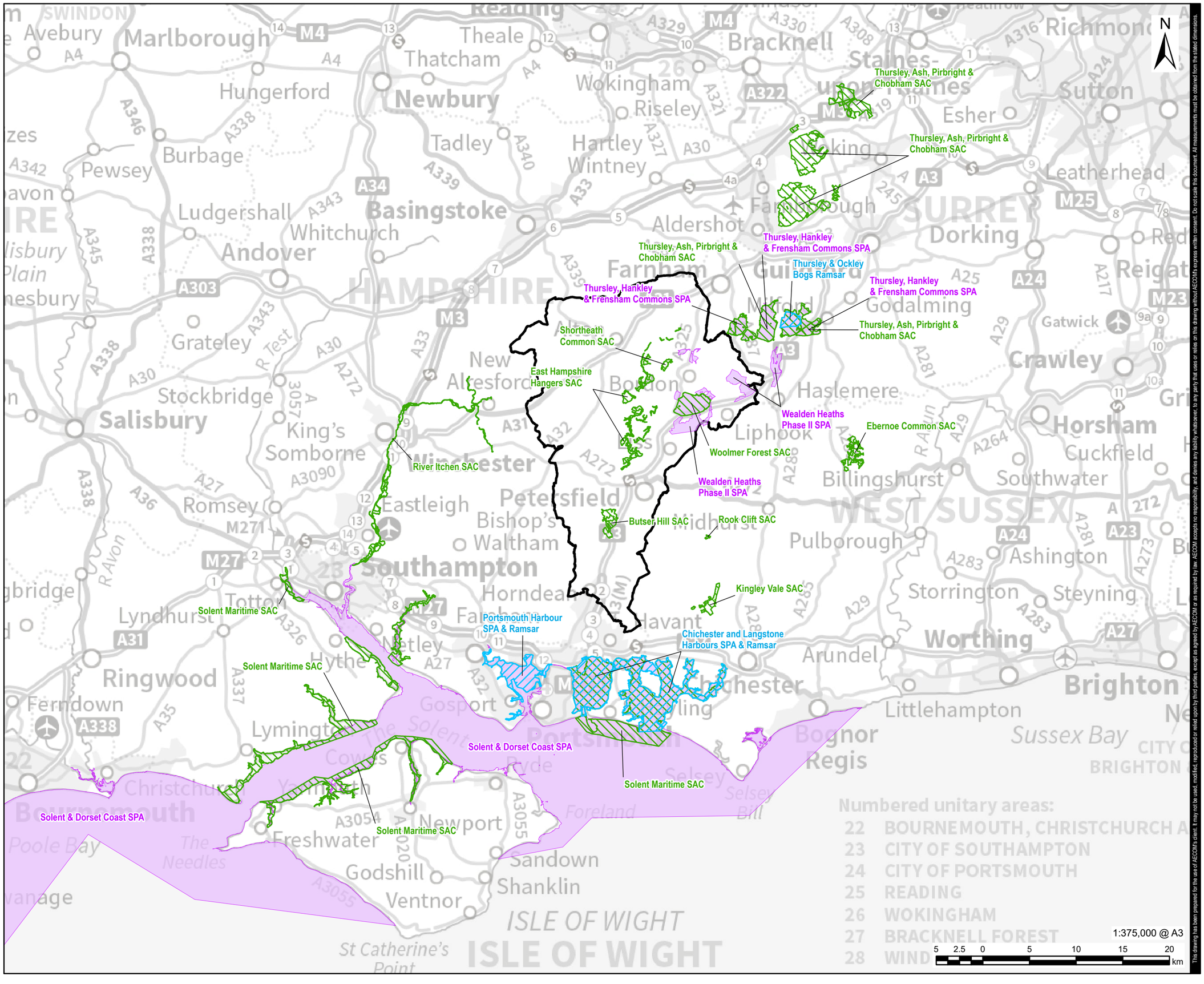
7.14 The increase in residential and employment development in EHD will lead to an increase in commuter traffic within the district and to neighbouring authorities. Depending on the route taken by individual residents, this is likely to lead to an increase in flows within 200m of sensitive designated habitats. Based on a preliminary analysis of road infrastructure and existing commuter trends, this HRA has identified that LSEs on the Wealden Heaths complex, Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SPA, Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC, East Hampshire Hangers SAC, Butser Hill SAC and the Thames Basin SPA regarding atmospheric pollution cannot be excluded. The AA for this impact pathway will encompass traffic and air quality modelling to identify effects on air quality, in-combination with other plans and projects.

Loss of Functionally Linked Habitat

7.15 LSEs of the EHLP on the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA and the Solent SPAs regarding loss of functionally linked habitat were excluded. With regard to the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA this was due to there being no significant parcels of non-designated conifer plantations and heathland that may be utilised by breeding nightjar and woodlark. Furthermore, the district lies beyond the maximum foraging / roosting distances for Solent waders and waterfowl. The SWBGS shows no mapped functionally linked habitat parcels near East Hampshire.

7.16 It is therefore concluded that, subject to the traffic and air quality modelling being updated prior to submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State, the East Hampshire Local Plan contains a sufficient policy framework to ensure an adverse effect on the integrity of Habitats sites will not arise.

Appendix A Map of Habitats sites



AECOM

PROJECT

HRA of the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan

CLIENT

East Hampshire District Council

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
2 City Walk
Holbeck, Leeds
LS11 9AR
www.aecom.com

LEGEND

- East Hampshire District Boundary
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar

NOTES

ISSUE PURPOSE

FINAL

PROJECT NUMBER

60572250

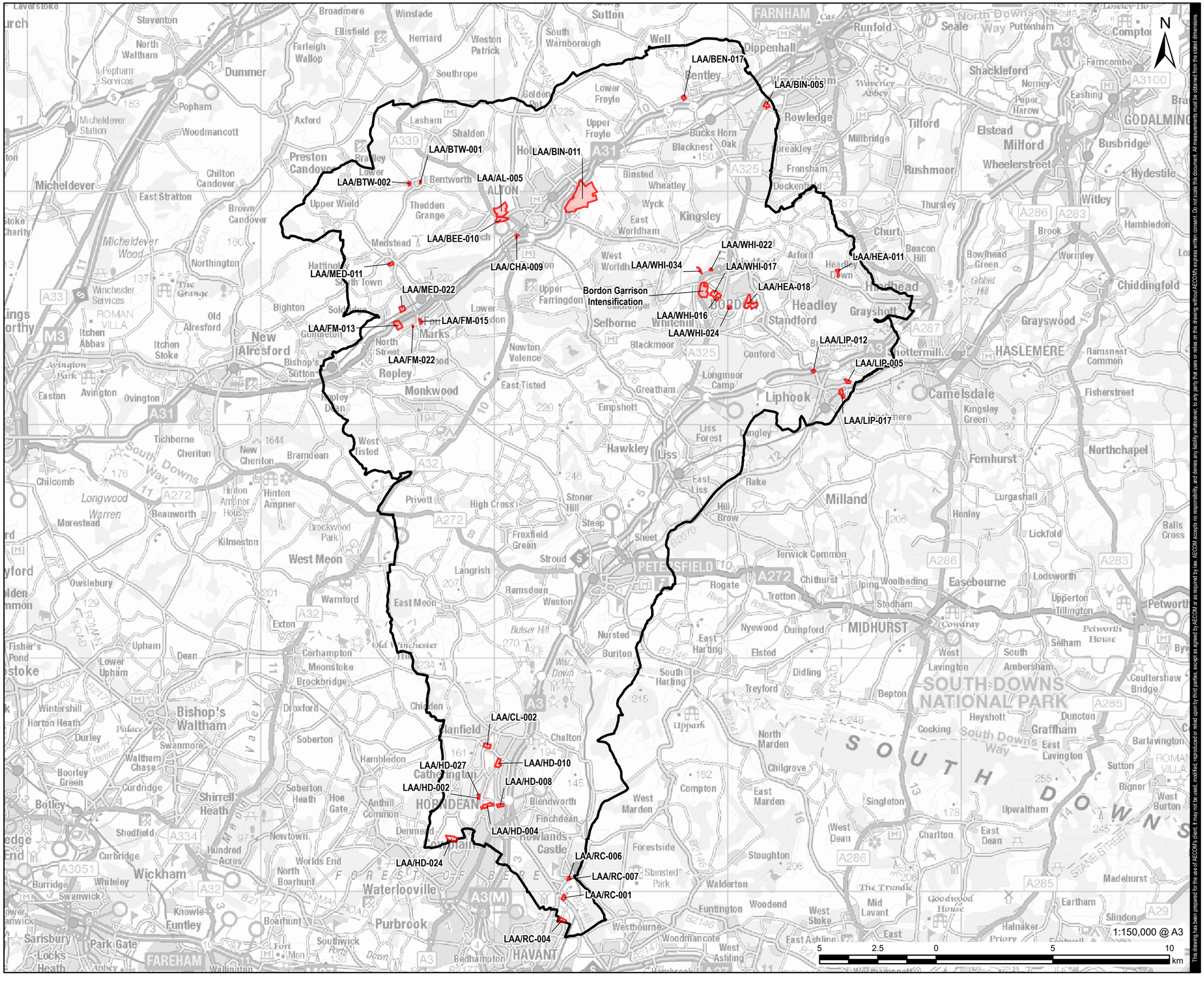
FIGURE TITLE

European Sites

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 1

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\lfs\EMEA\Leeds-UKLDS2\Legacy\UKLDS2PFPSW001\WIP\LE_Projects\GIS Management\#HRA\20230130124_60572250_East_Hampshire_HRA\02_Maps\01_East_Hampshire_HRA\02_East_Hampshire_HRA.aprx Revision: 0 Drawn: ER Checked: LC Approved: DW Date: 2024-01-18



AECOM

PROJECT

HRA of the emerging East Hampshire Local Plan

CLIENT

East Hampshire District Council

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
2 City Walk
Holbeck, Leeds
LS11 9AR
www.aecom.com

LEGEND

- East Hampshire District Boundary
- Preferred Site Allocation

NOTES

ISSUE PURPOSE

FINAL

PROJECT NUMBER

60572250

FIGURE TITLE

Preferred Site Allocations

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 1

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\Leeds-UKLDS2\Legacy\UKLDS2PFPSW001\WIP\LE_Projects\GIS Management\#HRA\20230130124_60572250_East_Hampshire_HRA\02_Maps\01_East_Hampshire_HRA\03_East_Hampshire_HRA.aprx Revision: 0 Drawn: ER Checked: JG Approved: JR Date: 2024-01-16

Appendix B – Site Allocations LSE assessment

Recreational Pressure

7.17 Table 4 provides details of the proposed allocations and LSE assessment in relation to recreational pressure on the Heathlands Complex, the Solent Habitats Sites and the Thames Basin Heath Habitats Site.

Table 4 – Summary of preferred residential sites in relation to the Habitats Sites (and SSSI components) of the Heathlands Complex, Solent Habitats Sites and Thames Basin Habitats Site.

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
Alton (Alton & Holybourne)	Land at Brick Kiln Lane	AL-005	150	7 km east Shortheath Common SAC	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Alton (Alton & Holybourne)	Whitedown Lane	BEE-010	90	6.9 km east Shortheath Common SAC	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Alton (Alton & Holybourne)	Travis Perkins (Mounters Lodge part)	CHA-009	24	6.3 km east Shortheath Common SAC	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Bentley (Bentley)	Land west of Hole Lane	BEN-017	20	5.8 km south Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	>10 km	>10 km	6.9 km southeast
Bentworth (Bentworth)	Land at the corner of Church Street	BTW-002	5	>10 km Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Bentworth (Bentworth)	Top Field land adj to Glebe Field	BTW-001	5	>10 km Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
Binsted (Alton & Holybourne)	Land at Neatham Manor Farm	BIN-011	1000	3.9 km southeast Shortheath Common SAC. The entire site is within 5km. 4.6 km east Wealden Heaths Phase II (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI) – Approximately 25% of allocation within 5 km.	>10 km	>10 km	9.7 km east
Binsted (Holt Pound)	Land north of Fullers Road	BIN-005	19	5.15 km south Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	>10 km	5.4 km north	3.8 km southeast
Clanfield (Horndean)	Clanfield County Farms	CL-001	100	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Four Marks (Four Marks)	Land rear of 97-103 Blackberry Lane	FM-015	20	10 km northeast Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Four Marks (Four Marks)	Land south of Winchester Road	FM-013	100	>10 km northeast Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Four Marks (Four Marks)	Fordlands	FM-022	2	>10 km northeast Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km southwest	>10 km northeast	>10 km
Headley (Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford)	Land at Hollywater Road and Mill Chase Road	HEA-018	126	0.9 km south Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA 1.5 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
				3.1 km west Shortheath Common SSSI			
Headley (Horndean)	Land at Drift Road	HD-010	80	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	10 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Headley (Headley Down)	Land at Middle Common	HEA-011	6	185 m – 500m south Wealden Heaths Phase II (Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI). The proposal is for 6 plots which will be outside the 400 m buffer	>10 km	>10 km	3.3 km north
Horndean (Horndean)	Woodcroft Farm	HD-024	164	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	7 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Horndean (Horndean)	Land South of Five Heads Road	HD-004	118	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	8 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Horndean	Chalk Hill Road	HD-008	38	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	8 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Horndean (Catherington)	Parsonage Farm	HD-002	6	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	8.5 km southwest	>10 km	>10 km
Horndean (Catherington)	The Dairy	HD-027	7	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	8.5 km southwest	>10 km	>10 km

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
Horndean (Lovedean)	Land rear of 191-211 Lovedean Lane	HD-001	30	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	7.5 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Liphook (Liphook)	Chiltley Farm	LIP-017	67	1.2 km north Wealden Heaths Phase II (Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI) 2.5 km west Woolmer Forest SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	8.4 km north
Liphook (Liphook)	Land north of Haslemere Road	LIP-005	24	0.75 km north Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA (Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI) 2.7 km west Woolmer Forest SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	7.9 km north
Liphook (Liphook)	Land west of Headley Road	LIP-012	20	1.2 km east Wealden Heaths Phase II (Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI) 1.4 km west Woolmer Forest SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	7.7 km north
Medstead (Medstead)	Land rear of Junipers	MED-011	15	>10 km Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
Medstead (Four Marks)	Land west of Lymington Barn, Lymington Bottom Road	MED-022	90	>10 km Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	>10 km
Rowlands Castle (Rowlands Castle)	Land at Oaklands House	RC-001	51	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	4.2 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Rowlands Castle (Rowlands Castle)	Land south of Little Leigh Farm	RC-004	81	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	3.2 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Rowlands Castle (Rowlands Castle)	Land at Deerleap (north)	RC-006	5	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	5.1 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Rowlands Castle (Rowlands Castle)	Land at Deerleap (south)	RC-007	8	>10 km Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA	5.1 km south	>10 km	>10 km
Whitehill (Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford)	Whitehill & Bordon Town Centre intensification	WHI-016	64	1.4 km Wealden Heaths Phase II north (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI)	>10 km	>10 km	6.3 km northeast

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
				1.6 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI 2 km west Shortheath Common SSSI			
Whitehill (Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford)	Whitehill & Bordon Town Centre intensification	WHI-017	253	1.4 km Wealden Heaths Phase II northeast (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI) 1.8 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI 1.8 km west Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	6.4 km northeast
Whitehill (Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford)	Land at former Bordon Garrison	WHI-020	115	1.1 km northwest Shortheath Common SSSI 1.35 km south Wealden Heaths Phase II (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI) 1.9 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	6.5 km northeast
Whitehill (Whitehill,	Louisburg Residential Extension	WHI-022	27	0.8 km northeast Wealden Heaths Phase II (Broxhead	>10 km	>10 km	5.8 km northeast

Parish (Settlement)	Preferred Site	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	Distance to Heathlands Complex	Distance to closest Solent Habitats Sites	Distance to Thames Basin Habitats Site	Distance to Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Common SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC
Bordon & Lindford)				and Kingsley Commons SSSI) 1 km west Shortheath Common SSSI 2.9 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI			
Whitehill (Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford)	Forest Centre	WHI-024	44	1.4 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI 1.8 km southeast Wealden Heaths Phase II (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI) 2.8 km northwest Shortheath Common SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	6.35 km northeast
Whitley (Whitehill, Bordon & Lindford)	BOSC Residential Expansion	WHI-034	38	0.6 km west Shortheath Common SSSI 1.2 km east Wealden Heaths Phase II (Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI) 2.9 km south Woolmer Forest SSSI	>10 km	>10 km	6.3 km northeast

Nutrient Neutrality

7.18 The River Itchen SAC and the Solent Habitats Sites are sensitive to water pollution and eutrophication. Allocated sites which fall within the hydrological catchment for these Sites need to be assessed for impact on water quality as part of the screening process. Table 5 provides details of the proposed allocations, indicates which are within the relevant catchments and gives nutrient budget calculations based on the Solent Nutrient Budget Calculator[119] or the Itchen Nutrient Budget Calculator[120].

7.19 The southern parishes of Clanfield, Horndean, and Rowlands Castle, in East Hampshire District Council are served by Budds Farm Wastewater Treatment Works which discharges in the Solent catchment.

7.20 East Hampshire sites within the catchment for the River Itchen process waste water via PTPs.

7.21 Calculations are based on 30 dwellings per hectare, remaining land in the allocation is assumed to be maintained as greenspace.

Table 5 – Summary of preferred sites in relation to catchments and nutrient neutrality calculations

Parish	Preferred Site (Parish)	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	River Itchen Catchment	Solent Catchment
Alton	Brick Kiln Lane (Alton)	AL-005	150	N/A	N/A
Alton	Whitedown Lane	BEE-010	90	N/A	N/A
Alton	Travis Perkins (Mounters Lodge part)	CHA-009	15	N/A	N/A
Bentley	Land west of Hole Lane	BEN-017	20	N/A	N/A
Bentworth	Land at the corner of Church Street	BTW-002	5	N/A	N/A
Bentworth	Top Field land adj to Glebe Field	BTW-001	5	N/A	N/A
Binsted	Land at Neatham Manor Farm	BIN-011	1000	N/A	N/A
Binsted	Land north of Fullers Road	BIN-005	19	N/A	N/A

[119] Solent Nutrient Budget Calculator [Accessed 14/12/2023]
[120] Itchen Nutrient Budget Calculator [Accessed 14/12/2023]

Parish	Preferred Site (Parish)	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	River Itchen Catchment	Solent Catchment
Clanfield	Clanfield County Farms	CL-002	102	N/A	31.09 Kg TN/year
Four Marks	Land rear of 97-103 Blackberry Lane	FM-015	20	N/A	N/A
Four Marks	Land south of Winchester Road	FM-013	100	<5% of land allocation is in catchment. Assumed development will not take place in this part of the package	N/A
Four Marks	Fordlands	FM-022	2	N/A	N/A
Headley	Land at Hollywater Road and Mill Chase Road	HEA-018	126	N/A	N/A
Headley	Land at Middle Common	HEA-011	6	N/A	N/A
Horndean	Land at Drift Road	HD-010	80	N/A	0 Kg TN/year
Horndean	Woodcroft Farm	HD-024	164	N/A	230.83 Kg TN/year
Horndean	Land South of Five Heads Road	HD-004	118	N/A	35.72 Kg TN/year
Horndean	Chalk Hill Road	HD-008	38	N/A	54.95 Kg TN/year
Horndean	Parsonage Farm	HD-002	6	N/A	8.67 Kg TN/year
Horndean	The Dairy	HD-027	7	N/A	6.86 Kg TN/year
Horndean	Land rear of 191-211 Lovedean Lane	HD-001	30	N/A	42.21 Kg TN/year
Liphook	Chiltley Farm	LIP-017	67	N/A	N/A
Liphook	Land north of Haslemere Road	LIP-005	24	N/A	N/A

Parish	Preferred Site (Parish)	LAA Site Reference	Capacity	River Itchen Catchment	Solent Catchment
Liphook	Land west of Headley Road	LIP-012	20	N/A	N/A
Medstead	Land rear of Junipers	MED-011	15	N/A	N/A
Medstead	Land west of Lymington Barn, Lymington Bottom Road	MED-022	90	N/A	N/A
Rowlands Castle	Land at Oaklands House	RC-001	51	N/A	71.77 Kg TN/year
Rowlands Castle	Land south of Little Leigh Farm	RC-004	81	N/A	110.96 Kg TN/year
Rowlands Castle	Land at Deerleap (north)	RC-006	5	N/A	6.9 Kg TN/year
Rowlands Castle	Land at Deerleap (south)	RC-007	8	N/A	11.01 Kg TN/year
Whitehill	Whitehill & Bordon Town Centre intensification	WHI-016	64	N/A	N/A
Whitehill	Whitehill & Bordon Town Centre intensification	WHI-017	253	N/A	N/A
Whitehill	Land at former Bordon Garrison	WHI-020	115	N/A	N/A
Whitehill	Louisburg Residential Extension	WHI-022	27	N/A	N/A
Whitehill	Forest Centre	WHI-024	44	N/A	N/A
Whitley	BOSC Residential Expansion	WHI-034	38	N/A	N/A

Appendix C Policy Screening for Likely Significant Effects (LSEs)

Table 6: Screening table of the policies included in the EHDC Local Plan.

Where a policy is shaded green, there are no linking impact pathways to Habitats sites and LSEs can be excluded. Where the screening outcome is shaded orange, LSEs cannot be excluded and the policy is screened in for Appropriate Assessment.

Policy number/ name	Policy detail	Likely Significant Effects Screening Assessment.
Policy S1: Spatial Strategy	Over the plan period (2021-2040), the Local Plan will make provision for the delivery of at least 9,082 new homes, equivalent to 478 homes per annum. Employment Needs (office, light industrial, industrial and warehousing) will be met through the intensification of existing strategic employment zones and local employment sites, as well as the delivery of additional employment floorspace that is compatible with residential use in existing centres. All Retail needs will be met within existing centres. Provision will be made for 2 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, as well as 12 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople within the Local Plan Area over the plan period. The Local Planning Authority will seek to make provision for additional pitches and plots for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople by permitting suitable sites. To help achieve sustainable growth the Local Planning Authority will ensure development is distributed in accordance with the spatial strategy shown on the Key Diagram, in line with the settlement hierarchy (Policy S2), with a greater proportion of development in the larger and more sustainable settlements (as identified in Chapter 12).	**LSEs for this policy on Habitats sites cannot be excluded.** The policy identifies a net increase of at least 9,082 dwellings that will be delivered during the Local Plan period. Allocations for employment sites and permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers as well as 12 permanent plots for travelling showpeople are made. These allocations will result in a population increase and, depending on their location, may contribute to the following impact pathways: • Atmospheric pollution • Recreational pressure • Water quantity, level and flow • Water quality Overall, this policy is screened in for Appropriate Assessment.
Policy S2: Settlement Hierarchy	The settlement hierarchy sets out a framework for the Local Planning Authority to achieve its vision for the Local Plan Area, meet the scale of development required and enhance the quality of the built, natural, historic, social and cultural environments, while sustaining the vitality of communities. The development requirements for all settlements will be delivered through existing commitments, site allocations (identified in Chapter 12) and through windfall development in accordance with other policies in this Local Plan. The broad distribution of development in the Local Plan Area will be shaped by the role	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy does not in itself lead to any development but rather simply identifies the relative hierarchy of different settlements within East Hampshire District Council's planning control.

<table>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and function of places, based on the following hierarchy of settlements (and identified on the Key Diagram):

<table>
<tr><th>Tier</th><th>Settlement</th></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 1</td><td>Alton (including Holybourne)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 2</td><td>Horndean, Liphook, Whitehill & Bordon (including Lindford)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 3</td><td>Bentley, Clanfield, Four Marks, Grayshott, Headley, Holt Pound, Rowlands Castle</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 4</td><td>Arford, Catherington, Headley Down, Kingsley, Lovedean, Medstead, Ropley</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 5</td><td>Beech, Bentley Station, Bentworth, Bramshott, Griggs Green, Lasham, Lower Froyle, Oakhanger, Passfield Common, Ropley Dean, Shalden, Upper Froyle, Upper Wield</td></tr>
</table>
All settlements identified above have a Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) as identified on the Policies Map. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the SPB, which will be reviewed through the preparation of development plan documents and/or neighbourhood plans, reflecting the following general approach:

• Respecting the setting, form and character of the settlement;

• Avoiding actual or perceived coalescence of settlements; and

• Ensuring good accessibility to local services and facilities.

Development outside the settlements listed above is considered ccountryside and will be restricted to that which is appropriate in a rural area as set out in Policy NBE1.</td>
<td>Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy CLIM1: Tackling the Climate Emergency</td>
<td>Development must contribute to mitigating future climate change, whilst adapting to its impacts and helping society to meet local, national and international climate-related objectives.

In planning new development, this means that:

• The energy demands of buildings and structures will be mitigated by implementing the energy hierarchy, to help achieve radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (see Policy CLIM2);</td>
<td>This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

The policy lays out conditions and limitations for developments designed to mitigate against future climate change. It is likely to have a long-term beneficial impact on Habitats sites.</td>
</tr>
</table>

	• Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy-generating and distribution infrastructure will be supported where they accord with Policy CLIM4; • Sustainable modes of transport (e.g. walking, cycling, public transport) will be prioritised through the location, design and layout of new development (see Policies DES1, DES2 and DGC2); • Development will avoid areas at the greatest risk of flooding and be designed to help minimise flood risks and provide resilience against flood events, using natural flood management measures where appropriate (see Policy NBE7); • Impacts on the water environment will be minimised through applying high standards of water efficiency and through carefully planned water use and wastewater disposal (see Policy NBE8); and • Buildings and open spaces will be designed to maximise their resilience to extreme weather, whilst offering nature-based solutions to a changing climate (see Policy CLIM5). Planning permission will be granted when the following requirements are met: a. The operational carbon dioxide emissions of residential development would be reduced to a net-zero level through on-site measures that are appropriate to site-related constraints and opportunities. b. The regulated carbon dioxide emissions of major non-residential development would be reduced to net-zero through on-site measures that are appropriate to site-related constraints and opportunities; c. The embodied carbon emissions of development would be reduced, including through the careful choice, use and sourcing of materials; d. Any new transport infrastructure (roads, footpaths, cycleways) has been designed to prioritise walking, cycling and the use of public transport; e. Infrastructure to support the use of zero-emissions vehicles would be provided; f. Development has been designed to minimise the overheating of buildings, conserve water supplies, reduce the 'urban heat island' effect, and provide or contribute to shaded and sheltered routes through open spaces. For new-build residential development (other than householder applications) and non-residential developments over 500m^2, a Sustainability Statement will be submitted to demonstrate a development's compliance with the energy hierarchy, its achievement of net-zero requirements, and the ways in which it prioritises sustainable transport, and implements climate resilience. The Sustainability Statement will include details of how policy criteria a) to f) are met by a development proposal and how this will be monitored through its implementation.	The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy CLIM2: Net-Zero Carbon Development: Operational Emissions	New development will demonstrate how it addresses the climate emergency through implementing the principles and meeting the relevant requirements that are set out below. a. All proposals should follow the Energy Hierarchy (Figure 4.4) when designing new buildings and structures for purposes of minimising their energy demands. **Requirements for all new residential development** b. All proposals for new homes will be informed by calculations of their predicted energy use intensity (EUI) prepared using an operational energy model. The calculations should be set out in	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy lays out conditions and limitations for developments designed to mitigate against future climate change. It is likely to have a long-term beneficial impact on Habitats sites.

	the Sustainability Statement and will be expected to demonstrate that each new dwelling would achieve: • a space heating demand of not more than 15 kWh/m^2/year • a total energy demand of not more than 35 kWh/m^2/year c. Developments will generate at least the same amount of renewable energy on-site as their annual electricity demand for the operational energy of new homes (which should accord with criterion b), above). d. All heating requirements should be met without on-site use of fossil fuels. Exceptions to meeting criteria b)-d) will only be made due to site-specific technical constraints, or where development would otherwise be rendered unviable as per the outcomes of a project specific viability assessment. Where exceptions are made, the Sustainability Statement must explain why the requirements of b)-d) cannot be met and the degree to which each requirement will be met, where the objective is to address the requirements as far as it is practicable to do so, given the relevant constraint(s). Applicants should confirm a metering, monitoring and reporting strategy as part of a detailed (i.e. full or reserved matters) planning application. **Requirements for all new non-residential development** e. All proposals for the development of 500m^2 or more of non-residential floorspace (measured as gross internal area) should achieve a 100% regulated carbon emissions reduction from Building Regulations Part L 2021 (or future equivalent legislation). On-site renewable energy generation should be proposed where this would meet the requirements of Policy CLIM4. f. All other proposals must demonstrate how they have sought to reduce emissions as far as possible, exceeding the energy efficiency requirements of Part L 2021 (or future equivalent legislation). **Requirements for development involving existing buildings** Where development involves the extension, alteration or retention of existing buildings, applicants should aim to meet the above residential or non-residential policy requirements (criteria a-f)) as applicable. If this is not technically feasible or where development would be rendered unviable as per the outcomes of a project-specific viability assessment, the Sustainability Statement must explain why the relevant criteria cannot be met and how criterion a) has been implemented to reduce energy demands to the lowest practical level. Retrofitting measures to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings will be supported, subject to other policies of the development plan.	The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy CLIM3: Net-Zero Carbon Development: Embodied Emissions	All development will be expected to reduce the carbon emissions arising from the production of its building materials, their transportation, installation and maintenance, and their disposal at the end of their lifecycle.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

	For development proposals of 10 or more new homes, estimates for the development's whole life-cycle emissions (excepting operational energy13) should be calculated and reported in accordance with a nationally recognised Whole Life Carbon Assessment. Throughout the design, procurement, construction and post-construction stages, decisions should be taken to identify and make reductions in carbon emissions. For proposals on previously developed land, the following hierarchy should be followed in respect of any existing buildings and structures: a. Renovate and retrofit; b. Re-design and re-purpose; c. Demolish and re-use or recycle the materials on site. There is a presumption against demolition unless it is demonstrated that steps a) and b) would lead to similar or higher embodied carbon emissions, or that there would be significant planning benefits that outweigh the carbon savings of retaining existing buildings or structures.	The policy lays out conditions and limitations for developments designed to mitigate against future climate change. It is likely to have a long-term beneficial impact on Habitats sites. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy CLIM4: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	Proposals for renewable energy schemes, including ancillary development, will be under a presumption in favour of permission where the direct, indirect, individual, and cumulative impacts on the following considerations are, or will be made, acceptable. This means that: a. the impacts are acceptable having considered the scale, siting and design, and the consequent impacts on landscape character16; visual amenity; biodiversity; geodiversity; flood risk; townscape; heritage assets, the settings and the historic landscape including impact on the South Downs National Park and the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and highway safety and rail safety; and b. aeronautical and other military considerations have been satisfactorily addressed; and c. the impacts are acceptable on the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses (including local residents) by virtue of matters such as noise, dust, odour, shadow flicker, air quality and traffic. The Local Planning Authority will support schemes for wind-based energy proposals where they are located in potentially suitable areas. The Local Planning Authority will also support schemes for solar-based energy proposals. Site specific assessments and design will still be required. Where planning permission is needed, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals which are necessary for, or form part of, the transition to a net zero carbon East Hampshire. This could include proposals which are necessary for, or form part of, the transition to a net zero carbon East Hampshire. This could include proposals for energy generating technologies to meet the requirements of Policy	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy lays out general support for renewable energy schemes. It is likely to have a long-term beneficial impact on Habitats sites. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	CLIM2; energy storage facilities (such as battery storage or thermal storage); and upgraded or new electricity facilities (such as transmission facilities, sub-stations or other electricity infrastructure).	
Policy CLIM5: Climate Resilience	All development should be located and designed to avoid or minimise the risks associated with a changing climate, taking account on the latest available evidence on the nature and extent of these risks. Development proposals should include site-specific and building-specific measures that ensure the safety, comfort, health and well-being of occupiers and visitors. These measures should include: a. Building designs that will minimise the risk of overheating (focusing on: layout, form, massing, fenestration, materials, roof design and shading devices) whilst also allowing for a level of passive heating so that net-carbon requirements would be efficiently achieved; b. The inclusion of green and blue infrastructure that introduce or augment natural features to provide substantial areas of shade, shelter and cooling within the development and (where appropriate) on its boundaries. New green infrastructure should provide a mix of species that are resilient to pests, diseases and changes in growing conditions associated with climate change; and c. Site and building layouts that will provide comfortable external spaces and internal refuges to mitigate the effects of extreme weather. For new residential development, private or communal amenity space should be of a size, shape and orientation to enable residents to grow food and create space for natural within residential plots or the development site as a whole. All developments that include landscaping must also include some form of rainwater collection to reduce reliance on mains water for irrigation.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy lays out conditions and limitations for developments designed to mitigate against future climate change. It is likely to have a long-term beneficial impact on Habitats sites. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE1: Development in the Countryside	Development proposals within the countryside (the area outside settlement policy boundaries and designated Strategic Employment Sites, as defined by the Policies Map) will only be supported where they are: a. meeting the proven essential need of a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work; or b. providing business floorspace on existing employment sites and to support small scale tourism and rural enterprises (Policies E3 and E4; or); or c. providing community facilities close to an existing settlement which is accessible by sustainable transport modes; or d. providing affordable housing on rural exception sites (Policy H4; or e. providing specialist housing where there is a proven local need and where this cannot be accommodated within the built up area (Policy H5); or f. providing either a replacement dwelling, an extension to an existing dwelling or the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or g. converting previously used permanent buildings or redundant agricultural buildings for appropriate uses (Policy DM19); or	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy which does not in itself lead to any development but sets out the criteria against which planning applications will be judged. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	h. of exceptional quality or innovative design which responds to the local character and significantly enhances its immediate setting; or for a replacement building that is not temporary in nature, provided that the proposal does not require extension or significant alterations; or i. for a replacement building that is not temporary in nature, provided that the proposal does not require extension or significant alterations; or j. for an extension to an existing building, provided these are proportionate to the site and its surroundings; or k. proposals for small scale informal recreation facilities such as interpretation centres and car parks which enable people to enjoy the countryside; or l. to secure the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or appropriate enabling development to secure the future of a heritage asset (Policy NBE14); or m. for traveller sites that comply with Policy H7	
Policy NBE2: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation	Development proposals will be permitted where they protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity features and must be supported by adequate and up-to-date ecological information which demonstrates that development proposals: a. Will not have an adverse effect on an international, national or locally designated wildlife site or sites that meet designated sites criteria. The level of protection afforded to these sites is commensurate with their status within this hierarchy.[1] b. Will retain, protect and enhance biodiversity features, including priority habitat types and irreplaceable habitats, and geodiversity interests within the development site and its zone of influence through the development's design and implementation. c. Will incorporate a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain as measured through the submission of a required biodiversity metric and biodiversity net gain plan and to cover a time period of at least 30 years. BNG to be delivered first and foremost on-site, if not possible, off-site offsets should be delivered which support agreed strategically nature recovery initiatives. d. Will protect and support the recovery of protected and notable priority species ensuring no adverse impact of the local conservation status of such species. e. Will contribute to the protection, restoration and enhancement of existing wildlife habitats, the creation of new wildlife habitats and to the maintenance of existing f. Any residual losses of biodiversity must be delivered first and foremost on-site or offset as a last resort. g. Will enable biodiversity to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Where development proposals do not comply with the above, they will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that there is an overriding public need for the proposal which outweighs the need to safeguard biodiversity and/or geodiversity and there is no satisfactory alternative with less or no harmful impacts. In such cases, as a last resort, compensatory measures will be secured to ensure no net loss of biodiversity/geodiversity and provide a net gain.[3]	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy which does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE3: Biodiversity Net Gain	Development will only be permitted where a measurable BNG of at least 10% is demonstrated and secured in perpetuity (for at least 30 years) subject to:	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

	a. The latest DEFRA metric or agreed equivalent being submitted to quantify the baseline and post-development biodiversity value of the development site and off-site areas proposed for habitat creation. b. The assessment being undertaken by a suitably qualified and/or experienced ecologist and is submitted together with baseline and proposed habitat mapping in a digital format with the application. c. The submission of a 30 year management plan detailing how the post-development biodiversity values of the site and any supporting off-site mitigation will be achieve and funded over the time period; and d. The location of any off-site habitats created are within areas which maximise opportunities for local nature recovery wherever this is possible.	The policy is a management policy which does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE4: Wealden Heaths European SPA and SAC sites	No net gain in residential dwellings or Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots will be permitted within 400m of the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC boundaries, unless an Appropriate Assessment that demonstrates that the development would not result in harm to the SPA or SACs, has been agreed by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Natural England. Development within the 400m to 5 km core catchment area around the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, Woolmer Forest SAC and Shortheath Common SAC boundaries must be supported by a Habitats Regulations Assessment setting out the likely significant effect (or effect on site integrity where the appropriate assessment stage of HRA is triggered) of the development on the interest features of the SPA and SACs. If an adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites will arise (such as through the delivery of net new residential development) the HRA must also set out the avoidance and/or mitigation measures proposed. The types of mitigation measures considered and/or required will depend on the type and size of the proposed development. Any such mitigation measures are to be delivered prior to occupation and in perpetuity.[11] Planning permission will only be granted where an Appropriate Assessment concludes that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of either the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area, Woolmer Forest SAC or Shortheath Common SAC, unless the applicant can demonstrate that the subsequent tests of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (namely demonstrating Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and No Alternatives) can be met.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy which does not in itself lead to any development. The policy recognises the status of Habitats sites and the requirement to protect them. The policy requires that all sites undergo a HRA before planning permission is granted. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE5: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area	Development proposals for residential development resulting in a net increase in dwellings or Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots within the buffers of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) must be supported by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) setting out the likely impacts of the development on the interest features of the SPA. Details of any	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

	avoidance and/or mitigation measures will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the council, following agreement with Natural England. Large scale residential development (over 50 new dwellings) within 5-7km of the SPA will be assessed individually and, if needed, bespoke mitigation will be required in accordance with Natural England guidance. Planning permission will only be granted where an Appropriate Assessment concludes that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the TBHSPA.	The policy is a management policy which does not in itself lead to any development. The policy recognises the status of Habitats sites and the requirement to protect them. The policy requires that all sites undergo a HRA before planning permission is granted. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE6: Solent Special Protection Areas	Development proposals for residential development resulting in a net increase in dwellings or Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots within the 5.6km buffer of the Solent SPAs must be supported by a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) setting out the likely impact of the development on the interest features of the Solent SPAs and details of any mitigation measures proposed. Mitigation could be: a. A financial contribution; or b. A developer-provided package of measures associated with proposed development designed; c. A combination of measures in (a) and (b) above. Planning permission will only be granted where an Appropriate Assessment concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity[15] of the Solent SPAs	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy which does not in itself lead to any development. The policy recognises the status of Habitats sites and the requirement to protect them. The policy requires that all sites undergo a HRA before planning permission is granted. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE7: Managing Flood Risk	In order to reduce the overall risk from any sources of flooding, development will be permitted provide that: a. It meets the sequential and exception test (where required) as outlined in Government guidance; b. Within the site, the highly vulnerable development will be located in areas of lowest flood risk; c. It is safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and where possible, will reduce flood risk overall, demonstrated through a site-specific flood risk assessment which must take into account climate change allowances; d. It incorporates flood protection, flood resilient and resistant measures including safe access and escape routes where required and that any residual risk can be safely managed by emergency planning; and priority is given to the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs); and e. It will not increase off site flood risk either via increasing surface water run-off or through the displacement and obstruction of flood waters from any sources.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to manage flood risk but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	Safeguard land and designated structures and features from development that is required for current and future flood management. All development will be required to ensure that, as a minimum, there is no net increase in surface water run-off. Priority will be given to the use of SuDS to manage surface water drainage and these should be considered from the outset. SuDS should be designed to meet the relevant standards and accompanied by a concise maintenance and management plan. SuDS play an important role in positively addressing climate resilience and assisting developments to reduce their carbon footprints. Any 'natural' SuDS features should manage flood risk but should also seek to improve water quality increase biodiversity and provide amenity benefits, such as additional public open space. Development should be avoided in areas at risk from, susceptible to, or have a history of ground water flooding. If this is not possible then the development must be designed to incorporate flood resistance and resilience measures to ensure the site can be delivered safe from flooding over its lifetime.	
Policy NBE8: Water Quality, Supply and Efficiency	New development must be phased using appropriate timescales, and funded in advance, for the construction of any necessary water and/or wastewater infrastructure associated with development proposals. Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades. New development will need to meet strict environmental standards for adequate wastewater conveyance and treatment and may be required to incorporate well designed mitigation measures to ensure the water environment does not deteriorate, both during construction and during the lifetime of the development. Suitable arrangements for the disposal of foul water into a sewerage system will need to be incorporated at the nearest point of adequate capacity in consultation with the service provider. All residential developments for new dwellings will be required to demonstrate that it meets a water efficiency standard of no more than 95 litres per person per day unless it can be demonstrated that doing so is not technically feasible or would make the scheme unviable.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to safeguard water quality, supply and efficiency, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE9: Water Quality Impact on the Solent International Sites	Development that results in a net gain in residential units and/or overnight accommodation will be permitted (subject to other material considerations) where the applicant can demonstrate through a nutrient budget and Habitats Regulations Assessment that the proposal is either nutrient neutral or has approved on-site and/or off-site mitigation measures which result in the proposal becoming nutrient neutral.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy but does not in itself lead to any development.

		The policy recognises the status of Habitats sites and the requirement to protect them. The policy requires that all sites undergo a HRA before planning permission is granted. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE10: Landscape	Development proposals must conserve and wherever possible enhance the special characteristics, value, features and visual amenity of the Local Plan Area's landscapes. Development proposals will be supported where there will be no significant impact to: a. The qualities and principles identified within the relevant landscape character assessments, capacity study21 and relevant guidance; b. The visual amenity and scenic quality of the landscape; c. Important local, natural and historic landscapes and features; and d. The setting of the South Downs National Park, with regard to its special qualities (including dark skies), tranquillity and essential characteristics of the National Park. Development proposals must be sensitively located and designated to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the South Downs National Park. Where appropriate, proposals will be required to include a comprehensive landscape strategy to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect the landscape, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE11: Gaps Between Settlements	New development in the countryside must avoid reducing the open land that contributes to the form and character of existing settlements and maintains their separate identities. Planning permission will be granted for development which maintains the open character and appearance of the countryside between settlements and the individual identity of towns and villages.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect the identity of settlements, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE12: Green and Blue Infrastructure	Development will be supported provided that: a. it maintains, protects and enhances the function, integrity, quality, connectivity and multi-functionality of the existing green and blue infrastructure network and individual sites thereby	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

	supporting the findings and guidance set out in the East Hampshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, GI Framework Urban Greening Factor Standard and Natural England's 15 GI Principles. b. it contributes to nature recovery and the protection, creation and restoration of wildlife rich habitats, including the potential to create new designated wildlife sites and the maintenance and creation of ecological connectivity and the integrity of linkages within the site. c. It protects existing trees and hedges and ensures no loss of canopy cover as a minimum. Proposals will be supported which incorporate existing trees and hedges into the new development and provide an uplift in canopy cover including tree lined streets and the consideration of the location and species of new trees with regards to biodiversity, connectivity, climate change and adaptation. d. any adverse impacts on or loss of the green and blue infrastructure network should be fully mitigated and/or compensated through the provision of green and/or blue infrastructure on site. Where it can be proven that on-site provision and management of GI sites and will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis. e. where new green infrastructure is provided within new development, suitable arrangements should be in place for its future funding, maintenance and management long term. A Green Infrastructure Plan should be submitted as part of the application process detailing how the development responds to Natural England's 15 GI Principles and how it responds to the EHDC GI Strategy's seven themes.	The policy is a management policy designed to protect green and blue infrastructure, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy NBE13: Protection of Natural Resources	Development proposals will be permitted provided that they ensure that the Local Plan Area's natural resources remain safe, protected, and prudently used. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they: a. Do not give rise to soil contamination or air, noise, radiation, light or water pollution where the level of discharge, emissions or contamination could cause harm to sensitive receptors (including impact on dark night skies); b. Ensure that, where evidence of contamination exists, the land is made fit for its intended purpose and does not pose an unacceptable risk to sensitive receptors; c. Do not result in a reduction in the quality or quantity of groundwater resources; this includes the protection of principal aquifers and the source protection zones within the southern part of the Local Plan Area; d. Where appropriate, identify how the proposals will contribute to achieving the objectives of the relevant River Basin Management Plan(s), which require the restoration and enhancements of water bodies to prevent deterioration and promote their recovery of waterbodies. e. Avoid the best and most versatile agricultural land unless the benefits of the proposal outweigh the need to protect the land for agricultural purposes; f. Do not sterilise mineral resources identified as of particular importance unless it can be demonstrated that it would not be practicable and environmentally feasible to extract the identified mineral resource prior to development taking place.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect natural resources, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

Policy NBE 14: Historic Environment	Development proposals will be permitted which: a. protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and the contribution they make to local distinctiveness and sense of place; and b. make sensitive use of historic assets, especially those at risk, through regeneration and re-use, particularly where redundant or under-used buildings are brought into appropriate use. **Proposals likely to cause harm to a heritage asset** **Substantial harm** Where development is likely to cause substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset or its setting, planning permission will not be granted unless either: a. the development is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit, that cannot be achieved otherwise, and which would outweigh the harm or loss; or b. all of the following apply: • the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and, • conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and, • the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use and, • no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation (see appendix 3 for guidance on marketing). c. Where development is permitted that would result in harm to or loss of the significance of a heritage asset, developers will be required to record and advance understanding of the significance of that asset, in a manner appropriate to its importance and the impact, and to make that evidence publicly accessible. **Less than substantial harm** Where a development is likely to cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset or its setting, the following will apply: a. for a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development, including whether these benefits could be secured in some other way without harm to the asset and securing its optimum viable use b. for a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. c. Where development is permitted that would result in harm to or loss of the significance of a heritage asset, developers will be required to record and advance understanding of the significance of that asset, in a manner appropriate to its importance and the impact, and to make that evidence publicly accessible.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect the historic environment, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	Proposals for the removal of all or part of a heritage asset The removal of all or part of a heritage asset cannot proceed until it is proven that the approved replacement development will take place. **Heritage Statements** A development that would affect, or has the potential to affect, a heritage asset will be required to submit a Heritage Statement that: a. describes the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise and where necessary a site-specific survey, at a level of detail proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the development; and b. sets out: • the impacts of the development on the heritage asset; • measures taken to avoid potential harm; and • if harm cannot be avoided, mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification, irrespective of whether that harm is considered substantial or less than substantial. Any identified necessary mitigation measures must be fully incorporated into the development.	
Policy DES1: Well-Designed Places	New development will be permitted where it would help to achieve the following design vision: Through its location, design and layout, new development will prioritise the avoidance of new greenhouse gas emissions whilst creating or supporting climate resilient environments. In delivering this priority, proposals will need to ensure that development: a. Follows the energy hierarchy through its block, plot and/or building layout and design, whilst maintaining or enhancing the landscape and built character of its immediate surroundings and the wider local area; b. Reinforces or creates a strong, positive identity that comes from the ways in which buildings, infrastructure, boundary treatments, open spaces and natural features visually and physically interact; c. Creates or contributes to a form of development that is easy to navigate, conveniently laid out for access on foot or by bike, and involves the right density, mix and orientation of building types and forms for attractive, green and safe environments; d. Integrates well with existing streets, cycle and walking connections and where relevant extends these movement networks within a development site, to create attractive, accessible, safe and direct routes that are inclusively designed;	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to avoid new greenhouse gas emissions, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	e. Supports the recovery of natural habitats and native species through providing space for nature and new green infrastructure that is managed and maintained to secure multi-functional benefits (ecology, drainage, local food production) f. Creates or contributes to public spaces that encourage social interactions, feel safe and support the health and well-being of all users; g. Within Tier 1 and 2 settlements enables residents to "live locally" by accessing some services and facilities within convenient walking or cycling distances, taking account of their varied needs and how the delivery of services may change over time; and h. Incorporate contextually appropriate building materials of a high quality and durability. Proposals for new development should be prepared in accordance with the following process (Figure 6.2), which should be applied in a manner proportionate to the scale of development and/or to its potential to have adverse impacts on the issues that are regulated by other policies of the development plan, or by national planning policy. Development proposals that could have a significant impact on the character or appearance of an area by virtue of their scale, or due to the sensitivities of their surroundings, will be required to demonstrate how they comply with DES1.1 and DES1.2 of this policy by means of a planning statement or a Design and Access Statement.	
Policy DES2: Responding to Local Character	Detailed proposals for the design and layout of new development will be required to: a. Respect local characteristics for plot size and shape, plot layout, building form, scale, height and massing, unless a departure from any of these characteristics is demonstrably more appropriate for delivering the Council's design vision (Policy DES1); b. Ensure that the layout of new development is sympathetic to its immediate setting in terms of its relationships to adjoining buildings, spaces around buildings and landscape features; c. Ensure that building facades, fenestration, roofs, boundary treatments, street furniture and green spaces respect or improve the character and appearance of the local area; d. Demonstrate how and where good quality, resilient, low embodied carbon materials of an appropriate scale, profile, finish and colour would be used; e. Take particular account of local landscape and townscape features such as those identified within neighbourhood plans, design statements or guides, or townscape character assessments; f. Ensure that the design of new buildings, open spaces and streets would provide passive surveillance of the public realm and security for private areas, to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; g. Ensure that areas of new public open space are easily accessible, attractive to use and designed to serve all of their intended functions (e.g. recreation, leisure, social interaction, food production, sustainable drainage, supporting local wildlife) in complementary ways; h. Provide car parking in ways that would remove cars from the street or that would not enable cars to visually or physically dominate local streets, whilst being safe and convenient to use for all residents and visitors;	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect the local character, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	i. Provide enough room within the public realm, including street spaces and along new pedestrian and cycle routes, to allow for the planting and growth of contextually appropriate vegetation, including native tree species that would offer shade and shelter; j. Provide adequate private amenity space for new residential uses whilst meeting nationally described internal space standards and ensuring separation distances between buildings that avoid over-looking or over-shadowing; k. Provide high-quality, secure waste and recycling bin storage and collection points that are conveniently located for collection purposes whilst avoiding adverse impacts on street scenes; and l. Avoid or minimise light pollution (such as glare or light spillage from buildings and the site as a whole) through the design of new light fixtures and by proposing the minimum amount of lighting necessary to achieve its purposes without compromising safety.	
Policy DES3: Residential Density and Local Character	Residential development proposals within settlement policy boundaries and on allocated sites must optimise the density of new residential uses through making an efficient use of land, whilst delivering a contextually appropriate and coherent built form. In addition to meeting the criteria of Policies DES1 and DES2, proposals should ensure that either: a. The density of proposed residential development, measured in dwellings per hectare within the development site (including street spaces and private amenity space, but excluding areas of public open greenspace and other land uses) is within the range of existing residential densities on streets adjoining the development site; or b. The proposed density of built form within new residential blocks and on new plots could be accommodated in a manner that is consistent with the predominant pattern of development for streets and blocks adjoining the development site, in terms of: • Building line position and compliance • Height-to-width ratios for streets • Back-to-back distances for buildings • Plot coverage • Building heights and massing In all cases, the proposed residential density must be compatible with meeting the following criteria: c. Any new streets must be wide enough and any new public open spaces must be large enough to accommodate green infrastructure that will provide effective climate resilience for residents (see Policy CLIM5). d. The requirements of neighbourhood- or settlement-specific design codes that affect block or plot design, plot coverage and building layout must be met in full.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy, which does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DES4: Design Codes	A design code for the Local Plan Area will be prepared by East Hampshire District Council and will apply to relevant development. The scope, vision and coding within the design code will be informed by a separate community engagement process, taking account of the design vision of this emerging Local Plan (Policy DES1) and related consultation responses.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to require adherence to design codes where these are

	Where design codes are prepared for smaller geographies (e.g. parishes, settlements, neighbourhoods or sites), these must be prepared in accordance with the coding process of the National Model Design Code Whenever a design code is not intended to support the design of new development on a specific application or pre-application site, design code preparation should omit the masterplanning stage. Any visual and numerical design requirements that are established by design codes that have been approved by the local planning authority must be met through the design and layout of related new development. Such requirements must be clearly identified as binding within a design code. To prevent design codes from artificially stifling creativity and innovation to the detriment of sustainable development, the binding requirements of design codes under this policy will be limited to the National Design Guide's characteristics of: • Built form; • Movement; • Homes & buildings; • Resources; and • Lifespan. Other requirements and guidance within a design code will be of significant weight for decision-making on planning applications to the extent that they are underpinned by and reflect the baseline evidence for the code and other relevant policies of the development plan.	established, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy HWC: Health and Wellbeing of Communities	Developments should contribute to healthy and active lifestyles through the provision of: a. Active design principles which support wellbeing and greater physical movement, and an inclusive development layout and public realm that considers the needs of all; b. Access to sustainable modes of travel, including safe, well-designed, and attractive cycling and walking routes and easy access to public transport to reduce car dependency; c. Access to safe and accessible green infrastructure, including to blue corridors, open spaces and leisure, recreation and play facilities to encourage physical activity; and d. Access to local community facilities, services and shops, which encourage opportunities for social interaction and active living. The council will require a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) setting out the expected effects on health, wellbeing and safety, from all residential developments of 50 homes or more. The HIA must demonstrate how the positive health impacts it can deliver are maximised, and reduce and/or mitigate negative health	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to promote healthy and active lifestyles, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	impacts, with a particular regard to removing health inequalities. Where unavoidable negative impacts on health wellbeing and safety are identified, mitigation measures must be incorporated into the proposal.	
Policy DGC1: Infrastructure	Infrastructure necessary to support new development will be available when first needed. To achieve this, the delivery of development may need to be phased to reflect the delivery of infrastructure. Development proposals must consider all the infrastructure implications of a scheme; not just those on the site or its immediate vicinity. The delivery of necessary infrastructure will be secured by planning condition and/or, planning obligation and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy. When determining planning applications and attaching appropriate planning conditions and/or planning obligations, regard will be had, to the delivery and timing of delivery of the key infrastructure, or otherwise alternative interventions which provide comparable mitigation. If appropriate, the imposition of Grampian conditions will be considered to secure the provision of infrastructure when it is needed. If the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to support new development cannot be secured in line with this policy, planning permission will be refused.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to ensure adequate infrastructure is provisioned for, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DGC2: Sustainable transport	Development of more than ten new homes or more than 500m^2 of non-residential floorspace should be situated in the most sustainable locations, taking account of the settlement hierarchy, to reduce demands on transport and reliance on private car travel. Sustainable locations are those that are in an accessible distance to enable local living and offer genuine opportunities to travel by sustainable modes (walking, cycling and public transport) for multiple journey purposes. Development will be permitted that: a. provides linkages to existing or proposed transport infrastructure and networks, prioritising connections to public transport services and routes promoted in the LCWIP; b. provides attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with relevant supporting infrastructure that will improve the perceived safety and security of these modes; c. provides inclusively designed streets that are safe and accessible for all of the community and relevant services, including emergency and refuse vehicles; d. takes appropriate measures to avoid the harmful effects of poor air quality, to people and the environment, including in connection with internationally designated biodiversity sites; e. provides well-designed parking provision for a range of vehicles, including cycle, electric and ultra-low emission vehicles, in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix F;	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to support the use of sustainable transport, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	f. protects or enhances the character of historic rural roads, particularly within the setting of the South Downs National Park; g. does not have a severe impact on the operation of, safety of, or accessibility to the local or strategic highway networks; h. mitigates impacts on the local or strategic highway networks, caused from the development itself and/or the cumulative effects of development, through the provision of, or contributions towards, necessary and relevant transport improvements; and i. recognises the importance of adequate lorry parking as part of any proposals for large distribution centres, particularly when such parking provision is likely to be required overnight.	
Policy DGC3: New and Improved Community Facilities	Planning permission will be granted for: a. the redevelopment, improvement or expansion of existing community facilities where the development complies with other relevant policies in the plan. b. new community facilities, only where it can be demonstrated that demand cannot be met by existing facilities (whether in current form or improved/expanded/redeveloped). Any new facilities must be designed to be resilient to changing social needs.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy related to community facilities, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DGC4: Protection of Community Facilities	**Open Space, Sports and Recreation** Development involving the loss of open space, sports or recreation facilities will only be permitted if: a. the site or facility is surplus in terms of all the functions an open space or facility can perform, and is of low value and poor quality, as shown by the East Hampshire Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs and Opportunities Assessment (2018, 2023) or subsequent update; or b. replacement provision is made in a location well-related to the users of the existing facility, and is of equivalent or greater quality, quantity and accessibility; or c. the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the benefits to sport and recreation of which clearly outweighs the loss; or d. the development is for a small part of the site; where it has been demonstrated that it will result in an enhanced sport or recreational facility. **All other Community Facilities** Development proposing the change of use or loss of premises or land currently or last used for community facilities will only be permitted if: 1. it is no longer needed, and alternatives are easily accessible for the community they are intended to serve without causing unreasonable reduction or shortfall in the local service provision; and 2. it can be demonstrated through a rigorous marketing exercise that: i. the use is no longer viable, and	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect community facilities, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	ii. all reasonable efforts have been made to retain it, and there is no alternative viable use of the land or facility as a community facility Details of the marketing requirements are set out in Appendix D.	
Policy DGC5: Provision and Enhancement of Open Space, Sport and Recreation	New residential development will be required to provide new or enhanced provision of useable public open space, sports and recreation facilities in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix E and in compliance with the latest Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs and Opportunities Assessment (2018) or its subsequent replacement. However, consideration will also be given to the improvement and enhancement of nearby sports and recreation facilities that are of a low-quality standard or a poor state of repair. Open space, sports and recreation provision requirements should: a. be provided on-site or within close proximity to the site, in a suitable location. Exceptionally, where the development does not allow for the provision of such open space on site or within close proximity of the site, developers will be required to make a financial contribution of equivalent value towards the provision of new, or improvement of open space, sport or recreational facilities elsewhere in the locality, through entering into a legal agreement or another suitable mechanism; b. be multifunctional, fit for purpose, publicly accessible, support healthy lifestyles and meet the demands for participation now and in the future for outdoor recreation; c. consider the context of any existing provision (including deficiencies in particular types9 of open space or identified priorities in terms of facilities) and maximise any opportunities for improvement within the wider area where these are relevant to the development of the site; d. secure (when new provision is provided), appropriate mechanisms which will ensure the future satisfactory maintenance and management of the open space, sports and recreational facility in the long term. A holistic approach to the design of new open space should be taken including considering the contribution to place making, the green network and protecting and enhancing nature conservation and the water environment. New provision should also protect, enhance and manage path networks for active travel and/or recreation, including new and existing links to the wider countryside.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to ensure the provision of open space, sport and recreation, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy H1: Housing Strategy	Provision is made for about 3,500 new homes in the most sustainable and accessible locations in the Local Plan Area in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy S2) and the following patterns of distribution: **Tier** **Number of new homes to be provided** Tier 1 700 + Strategic allocation 1000	**LSEs for this policy on Habitats sites cannot be excluded.** The policy identifies a quantum and broad locations for housing development.

	Tier 2 1,100 Tier 3 600 Tier 4 100 + 5 Housing should be accommodated through development and redevelopment opportunities within existing settlement policy boundaries in the first instance. Housing outside settlement policy boundaries will be permitted where they accord with Policy NBE1 or allocated for development in this Local Plan or are identified in a 'made' neighbourhood plan. There should be no net losses from the existing stock of homes in the Local Plan Area. Existing homes should be retained in residential use (or replaced at least in equal numbers, normally on the proposed site), unless there is a reasoned justification in the form of a benefit to the wider community.	These allocations will result in a population increase and, depending on their location, may contribute to the following impact pathways: • Atmospheric pollution • Recreational pressure • Water quantity, level and flow • Water quality Overall, this policy is screened in for Appropriate Assessment.
Policy H2: Housing Mix and Type	Proposals for residential development (including small sites) must take account of the housing needs of the local area to ensure a range of house types, tenures and sizes are provided. Taking account of the most up to date housing information, applications for residential development should demonstrate how the proposal will address the: a. need for smaller homes; b. requirements of an ageing population and people wishing to downsize, including the provision of single-storey dwellings; Proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported where these comply with other development plan policies as relevant to the site and location. Subject to design considerations developers should demonstrate that all market homes will meet part M4(2) of the Building Regulations, Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings unless evidence indicates it is not feasible. Subject to site suitability, affordable dwellings should be built to accessible and adaptable standards to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(2), and, where evidenced by local need, a proportion of affordable dwellings to be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3). Proposals for new residential units (including those created through changes of use or conversions) will ensure that the internal layout and size of the units are suitable to serve requirements of future occupiers	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to ensure the provision of an appropriate mix of housing, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	and be fit for purpose. The Local Planning Authority will assess all development proposals against the nationally described space standard.[4]	
Policy H3: Affordable Housing	In order to help meet affordable housing needs, all development which increases the supply of housing by 10 dwellings or more (or is on sites of over 0.5 hectares) will be required to provide at least: 40% of the net number of dwellings as affordable housing, of which 70% will be affordable housing for rent, of which a minimum of 25% should be provided as social rent; and The remainder (30%) as other affordable home ownership products to be agreed with the Local Authority Affordable housing should be provided on-site, indiscernible from, well integrated with and dispersed throughout the market housing. Only where it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist, or where the Local Planning Authority exercises discretion to deliver a more favourable strategic outcome, will off-site provision be allowed, a hybrid delivery model, or the payment of a financial contribution made (equivalent in value to it being provided on-site). The type and size of dwellings, in terms of bedroom numbers, habitable rooms or floorspace will be determined on a site-by-site basis using the most appropriate information that helps deliver the type and size of affordable units needed, as identified by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with Nationally Described Space Standards. Subject to site suitability, affordable dwellings should be built to accessible and adaptable standards to meet the requirements of Building Regulations M4(2), and where evidenced by local need, one or more of the affordable dwellings will be built as wheelchair user dwellings to meet, or exceed where justified, the requirements of Building Regulations M4(3). The affordable housing for rent should be used solely for that purpose and remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. Only when fully justified, will the Local Planning Authority grant planning permission for schemes that fail to provide 40% affordable housing, or fail to include the requirements set out above. Any such proposals must be supported by evidence in the form of an open book viability assessment (subject to independent assessment at the expense of the applicant), demonstrating why the requirements cannot be met.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to ensure the provision of an appropriate mix of housing, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	Developments that seek to avoid the requirements of this policy by failing to make efficient use of land or by artificially subdividing land into smaller sites will not be permitted.	
Policy H4: Rural Exception Sites	Outside of defined settlement boundaries, developments of affordable housing on land adjoining or closely related to villages will be supported provided that: a. there is an identified local need as indicated by the most recent Hampshire Home Choice and as agreed by the Local Planning Authority; and b. the proposal must not be in excess of the local identified need; and c. any site must be adjacent to and well related to the village and existing facilities; and d. the proposal to be of a size proportionate to the settlement which has adequate facilities and services to ensure the development is sustainable and the proposal will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities; and e. the Local Planning Authority must be satisfied that the long-term occupancy of the dwellings can be controlled to ensure that the housing will continue to be available for a local need at an affordable price and this will be defined by a legal agreement; and f. the affordable rent products will be brought forward and managed by an affordable housing provider, approved by the Local planning Authority; and g. occupancy (rented tenures) both initially and on subsequent change of occupancy, will be restricted to a person in housing need, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, that is: a. A resident of the parish; or b. works in the parish; or c. has strong links with the parish as set out by Hampshire Home Choice; h. proposals for Entry-Level Exception Sites7 suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home) will also be considered; and i. consideration will be given to incorporation of a small proportion (up to 30%) of market housing, provided that it can be demonstrated that this is necessary in order to ensure the overall viability of the site.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy related to rural housing development, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy H5: Specialist housing	Proposals for specialist and supported housing that meets the needs of older persons or others requiring specialist care will be permitted: a. on sites within settlement boundaries; and b. on sites in the countryside provided: i. there is a proven local need for the development; and ii. this cannot be accommodated in the built-up area, and iii. the site is well related to an existing settlement with appropriate access to services and facilities either on or off site	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy related to specialist housing development, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	Proposals that result in the loss of specialist housing will not be considered acceptable unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for such accommodation in the Local Plan Area, or alternative provision is being made available locally through replacement or new facilities.	
Policy H6: Park Home Living	Land with planning permission for permanent residential mobile home parks will be safeguarded from alternative development. Where this land is located within a large development site, relocation of the accommodation within the site is acceptable in principle subject to sufficient justification and no harmful impacts on the environment, access, drainage and other considerations. At least the equivalent amount of accommodation must be provided as part of any relocation. Relocation off site will not be permitted. Development proposals for new residential mobile home parks (including expansion and intensification of existing sites) will be treated as new dwellings and determined in accordance with the relevant policies in the Development Plan.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy related to park home development, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy H7: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation	Development proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots (as defined in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (2015) or any subsequent policy and taking account of any relevant case law) and ancillary buildings will be permitted where: a. the site is conveniently located for access to schools, medical services and other community facilities; b. the use of the land will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact upon local amenity, the landscape, the existing character and appearance of the area and the natural and historic environment; and c. the use of the land is of a scale which respects, and does not dominate, the settled community; d. the site has a safe vehicular and pedestrian access from the public highway and adequate provision for parking; turning and safe manoeuvring of vehicles within the site; e. the site is or has the potential to be provided with infrastructure such as power, water supply, foul water drainage and recycling/waste management; f. the site can provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles for residents; g. the site is not enclosed with hard landscaping, high walls or fences, to an extent that suggests deliberate isolation from the community; h. ancillary buildings are of an appropriate scale and size and should not be capable of being used as or converted to a bricks and mortar dwelling. Proposals for mixed residential and business activities will be assessed on a site-specific basis, taking the above criteria into account. Proposals for transit Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be permitted where the proposal:	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy related to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	a. complies with the above criteria (except for d); b. can demonstrate it is located on an established travelling route; c. provides accommodation available to all members of the Gypsy and Traveller community (i.e. it is not restricted to family, friends or by association). Any development granted under this policy will be subject to a condition limiting occupation to Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople (as defined in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (2015) or any subsequent policy and taking account of any relevant case law), as appropriate	
Policy H8: Safeguarding Land for Gyspy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation	Land with planning permission for permanent gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation will be safeguarded from alternative development. Where this land is located within a proposed large development site, relocation of the accommodation within the site is acceptable provided at least the equivalent amount of accommodation is provided and there are overall benefits to the occupants. Relocation off site will not be permitted.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy design to safeguard land identified for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches or plots, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy E1: Planning for Economic Development	Proposals for new development and the redevelopment of existing buildings and premises for employment uses will be supported: a. Within the designated strategic employment sites and existing local employment sites within settlement boundaries; and b. On suitable sites within a settlement policy boundary; or c. Within the countryside, proposals will be required to demonstrate a need for development at that location and compliance with other plan policies. Opportunities for employment and workforce skills training will be required by means of Section 106 agreements for non-residential developments exceeding 1,000sqm or from developments providing 50 or more (net) dwellings.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy expresses general support for development related to economic development, but does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy E2: Maintaining and Improving Employment Floorspace Across the Plan Area	Strategic Employment Sites To contribute towards meeting the future economic growth needs of the Plan Area, the following areas as shown on the Policies Map are designated as Strategic Employment Sites and given the highest protection and safeguarding against loss to non-employment uses: Alton • Newman Lane Industrial Estate	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy providing general support for strategic employment sites. Although broad locations are identified no quantum of floorspace or specific development is included.

	• Riverwey Industrial Park • Sycamore Park • Caker Stream • Waterbrook Road • Grove Park • Unit 13 Mill Lane, Turner House • Land at Lynch Hill and to rear of Alton Sewage Treatment Works Whitehill and Bordon • Asmodee, Templars Way • Land at Lion Court, Farnham Road • Tech Forest and land to the North, Louisburg Avenue • Bordon Innovation Centre (BASE), Barbados Road • Bordon Future Skills Centre, Hudson Road The development and regeneration of these sites will be supported to provide employment floorspace that meets the needs of the market, with a focus on improving productivity and job density. Small-scale proposals for changes of use or redevelopment to non employment uses will be supported where they would provide complementary use(s) that are not detrimental to the function and operation of the Strategic Employment Site. Local Employment Sites In cases where planning permission is required, proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of land and buildings in employment use outside of the Strategic Employment Sites but within a settlement boundary, will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that, the proposed use is of a similar character to employment uses in Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8. Development which would result in the loss of an existing employment use to a non-employment use within the identified Strategic Employment Sites or a Local Employment Site, will only be permitted where the loss of that use can be justified having regard to the following considerations:	The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	• market signals indicate that the premises/site are unlikely to be utilised for employment use; or • the site is not appropriate for the continuation of its employment use due to a significant detriment to the environment or amenity of the area. Proposals involving the loss of employment land or premises without appropriate replacement must be supported by evidence of an active and comprehensive marketing of the site for a continuous period of at least 12 months prior to the submission of a planning application, which satisfies the requirements set out in Appendix D (Marketing).	
Policy E3: Rural economy	The regeneration and intensification of employment sites that lie outside of defined settlement boundaries will generally be supported subject to compliance with other development plan policies, taking into consideration the location and nature of the site and its surroundings, with particular regard to: • impact on the environment, local landscape and amenity of the area; and • accessibility to public transport, shared transport, walking and cycling opportunities; and • levels of traffic movement. Conversion of existing buildings and provision of well-designed new buildings of an appropriate scale within the confines of the existing site, provided they are in accordance with other policies in the development plan and that are relevant to the likely impacts of the proposed development will be supported.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy expresses general support for regeneration and intensification of rural employment sites. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy E4: Tourism	To protect existing tourism provision, development proposing the loss of tourism facilities and/or accommodation will only be permitted if: a. there will be no significant loss of tourism uses or accommodation, or an alternative provision in the locality can meet the needs; b. the existing business / service is not viable and redevelopment for tourism use has been investigated but shown to be unviable or unacceptable in terms of other planning policies of the development plan; and c. the site has been robustly marketed as an on-going business and for all alternative tourism related uses, in accordance with the marketing requirements as set out in Appendix D. Development for new and the redevelopment/expansion of existing tourist attractions, facilities and accommodation will be supported across the Local Plan Area where it can be demonstrated that: a. the proposal provides opportunities for communities and visitors in appropriate locations where need is not met by existing facilities/services; and	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is designed to protect existing tourism provision. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	b. where possible, there are good physical and functional connections with other tourist destinations including those in South Downs National Park, the green infrastructure network and local services, preferably by walking, cycling or other sustainable modes of transport; and c. there will not be any significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area and amenity of local residents.	
Policy E5: Retail Hierarchy and Town Centres	Main town centre uses, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), will be permitted within the defined town, district, local and neighbourhood centres in accordance with the following retail hierarchy: **Town Centres:** Alton and Whitehill & Bordon **District Centre:** Liphook (The Square) **Local Centres:** Liphook (Station Road Area), Clanfield, Four Marks, Grayshott, Horndean, Bordon (Forest Centre) **Neighbourhood Centres:** Alton (station area); South Medstead (Lymington Bottom Barns); Old Clanfield; Rowlands Castle; Headley In addition, established retailing locations at Alton Retail Park (Mill Lane) and Country Market (Kingsley), will be retained for retail activity. To ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the designated centres, a 'town centre first' approach will be applied to proposals for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses. Development should be appropriate to the role, function and distinctive qualities of the centre within which it is to be located and support and improve the centre's vitality and viability. Any development that would significantly harm the vitality and viability of a defined centre or small local parade (3 or more units) will not be permitted.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy related to retail provision. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM1: The Local Ecological Network	Development which results in harm to the local ecological network will not be permitted unless the need for and benefits of the development outweighs the harm, if harm cannot be avoided measures which mitigate or compensate that harm will be required. Applications for development must include an assessment of the implications for the local ecological network. They must be supported by mitigation plans and or compensation plans, which informed by the assessment, will deliver a net gain for biodiversity and which set out in perpetuity the maintenance and funding of any measures.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect the local ecological network, which does not in itself lead to any development.

		Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM2: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland	Planning permission will be granted where the approach to the planting, retention and protection of trees (including those protected by Tree Preservation Orders), hedgerows and woodlands: a. reflects, conserves or enhances the existing landscape, including the ancient sunken lanes, and integrates the development into its surroundings taking account of local distinctiveness and local character by adding scale, visual interest and amenity; b. facilitates adaptation to climate change by providing shade, shelter and cooling through new tree planting; c. facilitates the provision of tree-lined streets and tree planting as an integral part of new development where appropriate; d. adequately protects existing trees and hedgerows including their root systems prior to, during and after the construction process; e. would not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees. f. includes proposals for the successful implementation, maintenance and management of landscape and tree planting schemes; and g. adequately protects, and not damage or destroy one or more trees protected by a tree preservation order or in a conservation area unless removal would be in the interests of good arboricultural practice. The Local Planning Authority will refuse planning permission for proposals that threaten the retention of trees, hedgerows, and other woodland or adversely affects the importance to the site's character, an area's amenity or the movement of wildlife. Development proposals that include the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees will be refused planning permission, other than in wholly exceptional circumstances and where a suitable compensation strategy is proposed.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect and enhance trees, hedgerows and woodland. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM3: Conservation Areas	New development in a conservation area should aim to preserve or enhance the special architectural, historic character or appearance of the historic environment and respect its surroundings in terms of height, massing, volume, scale, form, materials, details, roofscape, plot width and the design of any new pedestrian, cycle or vehicular access Development within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of, a conservation area should preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's special architectural, historic character, appearance or setting. Particular consideration will be given to the following: a. the retention of buildings, groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces;	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect conservation areas. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	b. retention of architectural details that contribute to the character or appearance of the area including plan form, built form and materials; c. the impact of the proposal on the townscape, roofscape, skyline, landscape and the relative scale and importance of buildings in the area; d. the need to protect trees and landscape; e. the removal of unsightly and negative features Proposals for consent to demolish a building in a Conservation Area will be permitted provided it has been demonstrated that: a. the building does not contribute to the character or appearance of the area; b. the building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and c. new development proceeds after the loss has occurred within a reasonable and agreed timescale and that the new development is of architectural merit which conserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area.	
Policy DM4: Listed Buildings	Alterations and extensions to listed buildings and development affecting the setting of listed buildings, should preserve and enhance their character and appearance and the special features for which they are designated. These features can include curtilage buildings, structures, spaces and the landscape setting that are integral to their character and important views within, of, into and out of the area or site. Development that would have an adverse impact on their special historic or architectural interest, or their setting, will not normally be permitted. The re-use of listed buildings will be encouraged where that use (the optimum viable use) is demonstrated to be compatible with the character, appearance, fabric, interior and setting of the building. Listed buildings should be retained wherever possible. Substantial harm to or demolition of listed buildings, including curtilage listed buildings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where an application will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance to the heritage asset, consent will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that: • the substantial or loss of significance is necessary to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm; or • the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and • no viable use can be found in the medium term; and	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect listed buildings. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	• the harm to or loss of the asset is outweighed by the public benefits of bringing the site back into use; and • conservation through grant funding is not possible. Applications for new works to listed buildings will be carefully assessed. Extensions will be required to be of an appropriate scale and design and in materials that retain the special interest of the original building. The character and significance of the building should not be diminished by over-restoration. Existing architectural or historic features including internal features should be retained as they are important to the character of the building. Applications for alterations to, or, for changes of use of listed buildings must be accompanied by: a. a detailed and accurate measured survey including full details of any structural timber framing. A scale drawing with large-scale details of joints will be required for timber-framed listed buildings.	
Policy DM5: Advertisements affecting heritage assets	In conservation areas and on, or affecting, listed buildings, advertisements will be kept to a minimum to maintain the character and appearance of conservation areas and to avoid harm to the fabric, character or setting of listed buildings. Their size, design, materials and colouring should not detract from the character and appearance of the area. Where a building is listed, locally listed or has a special character, the planning authority will grant advertisement consent or listed building consent for painted timber fascia advertisements and traditional hanging signs. Internally illuminated box signs and plastic blinds are inappropriate in an historic context. Where illumination of a sign in a conservation area is acceptable it should be achieved by halo or other illumination to individual letters. Projecting signs of traditional design will be acceptable provided they are: a. carefully positioned in relation to the elevation of the building; b. hung from traditional brackets; c. there is only one sign attached to the building; and d. any illumination is external and/or unobtrusive.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect heritage assets. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM6: Shopfronts affecting heritage assets	Shopfronts which are of architectural and/or historic interest should be retained. The Local Planning Authority will expect a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts, blinds and security measures. Where new shopfronts are proposed they should:	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

	a. create a fascia and shop window which is in character with the building itself, the upper floors and the surrounding street scene; b. be correctly proportioned and be designed in an architectural style appropriate for the building and its context; c. not result in a needless loss of architectural features; or d. not introduce 'house styles' and materials which are out of character with the building and its surroundings. Where a shopfront with historic significance and value survives there will be a presumption in favour of its retention particularly in conservation areas. If a new shopfront will form part of a group of original historic shopfronts its design should complement their character and quality. Proposals for external security shutters which are not sympathetic to the character of the building and townscape and would result in a blank and inactive frontage detrimental to the street scene will not be permitted.	The policy is a management policy designed to protect heritage assets. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM7: Archaeology and Ancient Monuments	The archaeological and historic integrity of designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Development which would adversely affect them will not be permitted. In addition, where important or potentially significant archaeological heritage assets may exist, developers will be required to arrange for field evaluations to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications. The evaluation should define: a. the character, importance and condition of any archaeological deposits or structures within the application site; b. the likely impact of the proposed development on these features (including the limits to the depth to which groundworks can go on the site); and c. the means of mitigating the effect of the proposed development including: a statement setting out the impact of the development. Where the case for development affecting a heritage asset of archaeological interest is accepted, the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ (i.e. in their original position). Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record will be required. In such cases archaeological recording works must be undertaken in accordance with a specification prepared by the County Council Historic Environment Team or a competent archaeological organisation that has been agreed by the County Council Historic Environment Team and planning authority in advance.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to protect heritage assets. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM8: Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens	The historic landscape, including ancient woodlands, hedgerows and field boundaries, parks and gardens of historic or landscape interest and archaeological features (such as standing remains and earthwork monuments) will be preserved and enhanced.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites.

	Within historic landscapes: a. development which would not adversely affect their historic character and appearance will normally be permitted subject to compliance with other Local Plan policies; b. the maintenance, restoration and reconstruction of the layout and features of historic parks and gardens will be encouraged where this is appropriate and based on historical research; and c. development that does not detract from landscape and village settings will normally be supported, subject to compliance with other Local Plan policies. d. Proposals involving substantial harm to designated heritage assets within a conservation area will normally be refused unless it can be shown that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or where all the other criteria in Policy S28: Heritage assets and historic environment, are met.	The policy is a management policy designed to protect historic landscapes, parks and gardens. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM9: Enabling Development	Development proposals for enabling development that would otherwise conflict with other planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset will be permitted provided: a. the proposals will not materially harm the heritage values of the asset or its setting; b. it can be demonstrated that alternative solutions have failed; c. the proposed development is the minimum necessary to protect the significance of the heritage asset; d. it meets the tests and criteria set out in Historic England guidance Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places; e. it is subject to a legal agreement to secure the restoration of the asset; and f. it enables public appreciation of the saved heritage asset.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to secure the future conservation of heritage assets. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM10: Locally Important and Non-Designated Heritage Assets	The District Council will aim to conserve or enhance locally important heritage assets. Planning permission for a development which affects a locally important heritage asset will be permitted provided that: a. the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use and external appearance of the proposal conserves or enhances the asset; and b. an appropriate historic desk-based study, or field evaluation in the case of archaeological interest, has been carried out demonstrating how the proposal will conserve or enhance the locally important heritage asset. Planning permission will only be granted where a proposal could result in harm to, or the loss of, a locally important heritage asset if it: a. can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweighs the asset's historical, architectural or archaeological significance;	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to conserve locally important heritage assets. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	b. demonstrates that any new development would proceed within a reasonable and agreed timescale; and c. ensures all appropriate recording of the building, structure or other feature has taken place before it is lost. If it is determined through the relevant evidence that currently undesignated buildings, structures landscapes or archaeology are of local significance, the above points (1-3) will apply. Development will only be permitted where it: a. does not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby buildings or spaces; b. provides acceptable standards of amenity for any existing and future users and occupiers of the development site; and c. where possible, contributes to improvements in the amenity of public spaces.	
Policy DM11: Amenity	Development will only be permitted where it: a. does not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby buildings or spaces; b. provides acceptable standards of amenity for any existing and future users and occupiers of the development site; and c. where possible, contributes to improvements in the amenity of public spaces	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to preserve and improve “amenity”. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM12: Dark Night Skies	New development proposals must consider the potential impacts of new external lighting and light-spill from internal lighting on the Local Plan Area’s dark skies and the South Downs National Park International Dark Sky Reserve. Adverse impacts should be avoided through the omission of lighting or through building design (as appropriate) unless it is demonstrated that such impacts are necessary to ensure the safety of occupants or visitors and that these impacts can be mitigated in accordance with DM12.2. Development proposals will be permitted where they conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of the dark night skies by; - a. Directing lighting downwards whilst preventing upward, sideways and outward spillage; b. Ensuring the colour and intensity of lighting is appropriate for wildlife and the wider setting; c. Ensuring the design and quality of fenestration minimises light glow, glare and light trespass.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed prevent light pollution in designated areas. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

Policy DM13: Air Quality	Development will be permitted where it follows design principles for minimising its impacts on local air quality, including by: a. Prioritising walking, cycling and the use of public transport b. Encouraging the use of low- and zero-emission vehicles through well-designed, accessible charging infrastructure c. Introducing green infrastructure that has the ability to absorb pollutants within street spaces and on property boundaries Major development that would contribute to traffic on roads at or close to the relevant national objectives for recognised pollutants may be required to produce an Air Quality Assessment. Proposals should demonstrate that steps would be taken to minimise emissions leading to air pollution.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed minimise air pollution. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM14: Public Art	The Local Planning Authority will encourage and support the inclusion of public art within new development schemes. New development proposals for public art should: d. Relate to local history, landscape and/or culture; e. Be of the highest design quality and craftmanship and involve the use of low-embodied carbon or recycled materials f. Make a positive contribution to the public realm; and g. Engage the local community in its creation.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to support the inclusion of public art in developments. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM15: Communications Infrastructure	Planning permission for communications infrastructure will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: a. the proposal does not cause significant equipment; b. evidence is provided to demonstrate that there is no reasonable possibility of sharing existing facilities in the locality (either in terms of antennae, buildings or sites); c. the visual and amenity impact is minimised by the considered siting and design of the development; and d. long-term requirements are considered (where appropriate) to minimise further works.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy offers general support for communications infrastructure projects. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

Policy DM16: Self and Custom Housebuilding	Proposals for Self-build and custom housebuilding within settlement policy boundaries will be supported subject to the following matters being met: i. the proposed development has no significant adverse effect on the local character; and ii. Serviced plots made available should respond to the needs of the individuals and groups on the Local Planning Authority's self and custom build register at the time of the application; and iii. Plots should be priced and marketed appropriately as self-build or custom-build plots for at least 12 months (see Appendix 3).	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy offers general support for self-build and custom house-building within settlement policy boundaries. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM17: Backland Development	Housing development on garden land and/or to the rear or side of existing residential property within a defined Settlement Policy Boundary will be supported provided that: a. the form, density, scale and external appearance of the development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area; b. the relationship between buildings within and outside the site ensures that the privacy and amenity of existing and future residents are preserved; c. the means of access is appropriate in size and design to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians safely and would not result in harm to the amenities of adjoining residents from noise and disturbance from vehicle movements; d. a high standard of landscape is incorporated into the design; and e. development of the site does not compromise the ability for the more comprehensive development of a wider area.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy offers general support for backland development projects. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM18: Residential extensions and annexes	Planning permission for residential extensions will be supported, provided that the scale, mass, layout, design, and external materials positively respond to the existing dwelling and locality and do not cause harm to the character of the area. The provision of ancillary accommodation for the purposes of habitation or homeworking will be permitted, provided that: a. It is within the curtilage of the principal dwelling; and b. It is proportionate in size to the principal dwelling; and c. It is of a design and structure that is in keeping with the existing dwelling and respects the character of the local area; and d. There is a physical connection with the main dwelling in terms of reliance on provision of utility and infrastructure services; and e. There is a functional connection in terms of providing living or working accommodation for the resident or a dependant or relative of the residents of the main dwelling; and	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to regulate residential extensions and annexes. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	f. There is no boundary demarcation or sub-division of curtilage areas between the principal dwelling and ancillary accommodation	
Policy DM19: Conversion of an existing agricultural or other rural building to residential use.	Planning permission for the conversion of an existing agricultural or other rural building to a dwelling will only be granted in the following circumstances: a. It has been demonstrated by means of a supporting statement to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the building has been continuously actively marketed in line with Appendix 3, for suitable preferred or alternative reuses, such as business, tourism or community; or b. The residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for a business, tourism or community resuse, which will have a positive benefit on the local community; or c. The residential conversion meets an identified local housing need; and d. The form bulk and design of the building is sympathetic to the rural surroundings, and it respects local styles and materials; and e. The building is structurally sound and is capable of conversion without major reconstruction or extension and any alterations can be achieved without a detrimental impact on its character and appearance; and f. The building is capable of conversion and reuse without requiring substantial additional outbuildings or a significant change in the setting of the building; and g. Where the building is of historic significance, this significance is conserved or enhanced and any features of architectural or historic merit are retained; and h. There is no overriding conflict with other policies in the Local Plan.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to regulate the conversion of rural buildings. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
Policy DM20: Rural Worker Dwellings	Planning permission for new rural worker dwellings in the countryside will only be granted in the following circumstances: a. where the proposal is linked to a new business in the countryside, the proposal is for temporary accommodation for a period of three years; and; i. there is an essential functional need for the dwelling based on evidence of that business; and ii. financial evidence has been submitted demonstrating the viability of the business and its intention to be established; and iii. the occupancy of the dwelling is restricted to those employed in the activity for which the dwelling was originally permitted; and iv. there is no suitable and available existing accommodation within the area.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to regulate the building of new rural worker dwellings. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	b. where the proposal is linked to an existing business which has been established for three years or more: and i. there is an essential functional need for the dwelling based on evidence of that business; and ii. financial evidence has been submitted demonstrating that the business is viable and established; and iii. an existing dwelling, either on or closely connected to the business which would have been suitable, has not been sold separately from the unit or in some other way alienated from it within the past five years; iv. there is no other suitable and available alternative existing accommodation within the area; and v. the occupancy of the dwelling is restricted to those employed in the activity for which the dwelling was originally permitted. Where the proposal is for the removal of the occupancy condition this will be permitted provided that: c. it can be demonstrated that the dwelling is no longer required to meet the needs of the occupational workers engaged or last engaged in the activity for which the dwelling was originally permitted.	
DM21: Farming & Forestry Development and Diversification	Development proposals for the purposes of agriculture or forestry will be permitted where: a. evidence is provided to demonstrate the operational need for the development and that the scale of development is commensurate with the needs; b. for units of more than 5ha, existing and proposed diversification activities remain subordinate to the main land use, in terms of physical scale and environmental impacts; c. the traffic generated by the development would not be of a type or volume that, in itself or cumulatively with existing or planned uses, would require highway improvements that would harm the character of rural roads, particularly narrow or sunken lanes; d. the development reuses or replaces existing buildings where feasible. Where this is not feasible, the development should be related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the enterprise, unless there are operational circumstances that necessitate a more isolated location; e. any new buildings are sited appropriately to their rural location so that they can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape without significant harm to local biodiversity, natural beauty, cultural heritage or recreational opportunities, and are of a scale and design that reflects the proposed use; and f. a building has not been disposed of or converted to an alternative use at the holding in the past three years, which could have met the needs of the development proposed.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to regulate development for the purposes of agriculture or forestry. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

DM22: Equestrian and Stabling Development	Development proposals relating to the keeping and riding of horses will be granted planning permission where: a. development is of an appropriate scale, design and intensity to be satisfactorily integrated with its surroundings, including the proposed means of enclosure which should be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the countryside; b. development does not harm the setting of a settlement or wider landscape character and there is no significant harm to local biodiversity, natural beauty, cultural heritage or other recreational opportunities; c. access, manoeuvring and parking provisions are acceptable, and the traffic generated by the development, or cumulatively with existing or planned uses, would not be of a type or volume that would require highway improvements that would harm the character of rural roads, particularly narrow or sunken lanes d. development is well-located in relation to infrastructure that is suitable for the safe exercising of horses, including bridleways and other off-road tracks; e. there is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby properties, including as a result of increases in traffic generated by the development; and f. lighting is kept to the minimum necessary to serve the unit and is designed so as to avoid light spillage and not to impact on neighbouring properties, the wider countryside, or the Dark Night Skies International Reserve in the South Downs National Park.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to provide general support for and to regulate development relating to the keeping and riding of horses. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.
DM23: Shopping and Town Centre Uses	Within the defined centres permission will be granted for uses with Class E, F and sui generis uses that support the vitality and viability of the area. Proposals that require planning permission and would result in the loss of these uses at ground floor, consideration will be given to: i. Absence of need or viability for the existing use; and ii. Individual or cumulative impact on neighbouring amenity; and iii. Adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the centre; and iv. Provision of an active frontage at ground floor level which relates well to the design of the building and street scene; and v. adequate marketing for Class E, F and sui generis uses. Planning permission for main town centre uses outside the identified centres, will be permitted where the applicant has successfully demonstrated: a. that there are no other more suitably located and available sites within or on the edge of the identified centres for the town centre use(s) proposed, using a sequential approach to site identification; b. the site is accessible and well connected to the centre through a range of transport modes other than the car, including good local public transport services, walking and cycling; and c. the proposed development does not have a significant detrimental effect on the highway network in terms of congestion, road safety and pollution.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to conserve shopping and town centre uses. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

	When assessing applications for main town centre uses outside the identified centres, which propose a floorspace that meets or exceeds 500 sqm. gross floorspace, the Local Planning Authority will also require an impact assessment, to include an assessment of: i. the impact of the development on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and ii. the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability, including local consumer choice and trade in the town centre and the wider retail catchment	
DM24: Alton town centre primary shopping frontage	The Primary Shopping frontage is shown on the Policies Map. The Local Planning Authority will support proposals that promote Class E uses which strengthen the retail function including proposals to enhance the local street market. Where planning permission is required, the change of use of ground floor premises from Class E to other uses (excluding residential) will be granted where: a. it can be shown that the premises is no longer needed for a Class E use and the retention of Class E use at the premises has been fully explored, without success, by way of active marketing for a period of at least 12 months (see Appendix 3); and b. the proposed change of use does not have an unacceptable impact on the retail function of the primary shopping area, or its vitality and viability including pedestrian circulation. An exception may be made where the proposal would clearly be beneficial to the vitality and viability of the primary retail function of the primary shopping area.	This policy is not associated with LSEs on Habitats sites. The policy is a management policy designed to strengthen the retail function of Alton town centre. The policy does not in itself lead to any development. Overall, this policy is screened out from further appraisal in the Appropriate Assessment.

aecom.com