New Milton Neighbourhood Plan

Habitats Regulations Assessment

New Milton Neighbourhood Plan Group

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Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
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1. Introduction

Background to the Project

1.1 AECOM was appointed by Locality to produce a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Regulation 14/15 (2024 update) of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan (NMNP). The objectives of the assessment are to:

- Identify any aspects of the NMNP that would cause any adverse effect on the integrity of Habitats sites (previously "European sites") which are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), candidate SACs (cSACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), potential SPAs (pSPAs) and, as a matter of Government Policy, Ramsar Sites, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects; and,
- To advise on appropriate policy mechanism for delivering mitigation where such effects were identified.

Legislation

1.2 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 continues as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019[1].

1.3 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 or not site integrity will be affected, an Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken of the Plan or project in question. Figure 1 below sets out the legislative basis for Appropriate Assessment.

1.4 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 would be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of the site network.

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

1.5 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 arisen in order to distinguish the process from the individual stage described in the law as an 'Appropriate Assessment'.

1.6 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 Habitats site that would otherwise arise)

[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"*.
[3] People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)

should **not** be taken into account when forming a view on Likely Significant Effects. Mitigation should instead only be considered at the Appropriate Assessment stage. This HRA is cognisant of that ruling.

Scope of the Project

1.7 There is no pre-defined guidance that dictates the physical scope of an HRA of a Neighbourhood Plan document. Therefore, in considering the physical scope of the assessment, we were guided primarily by the identified impact pathways (called the source-pathway-receptor model) including work undertaken for the HRA of the adopted Local Plan[4].

1.8 Briefly defined, impact pathways are routes by which the implementation of a policy within a Neighbourhood Plan document can lead to an effect upon a Habitats site. An example of this would be new residential development resulting in an increased population and thus increased recreational pressure, which could then affect Habitats sites by, for example, disturbance of non-breeding or breeding 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).

1.9 This basic principle has also been reflected in court rulings. The Court of Appeal[5] 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 a planning permission (rather than a Core Strategy document)[6]. 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'*.

1.10 Given an initial assessment of the relevant Habitats sites and the impact pathways present, and referring to the HRA work that was previously undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, this HRA considers likely significant effects on the following Habitats sites:

- The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar – adjacent to the north and within the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Dorset Heaths SAC – approximately 4.5 km to the west of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Dorset Heathland Ramsar – approximately 12 km to the west of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Dorset Heathland SPA – approximately 7 km to the west of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- River Avon SAC – approximately 6 km to the west of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Solent and Southampton Water Spa/Ramsar – approximately 2.5 km to the southeast of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Solent Maritime SAC – approximately 3 km to the southeast of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Avon Valley SPA/Ramsar – approximately 6 km to the west of the New Milton Parish boundary.
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons – approximately 5.8 km to the east of the New Milton Parish boundary.

1.11 Details of these Habitats sites are provided in Appendix A, and in Appendix D, **Figure 5**.

1.12 Although within 10km of the New Milton Parish boundary the South Wight SAC and Isle of Wight Downs SAC have been scoped out of this report as there are no linking pathways of impact.

[4] Habitat Regulations Assessment of New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036 [Available at https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/01/HRA_of_New_Forest_NPA_Local_Plan_Reg_19.pdf : Accessed 28/01/2025]
[5] No Adastral New Town Ltd (NANT) v Suffolk Coastal District Council Court of Appeal, 17th February 2015
[6] High Court case of R (Devon Wildlife Trust) v Teignbridge District Council, 28 July 2015

2. Methodology

Introduction

2.1 The HRA has been carried out with reference to the general EC guidance on HRA[7] and general guidance on HRA published by government in July 2019 and February 2021[8]. 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.

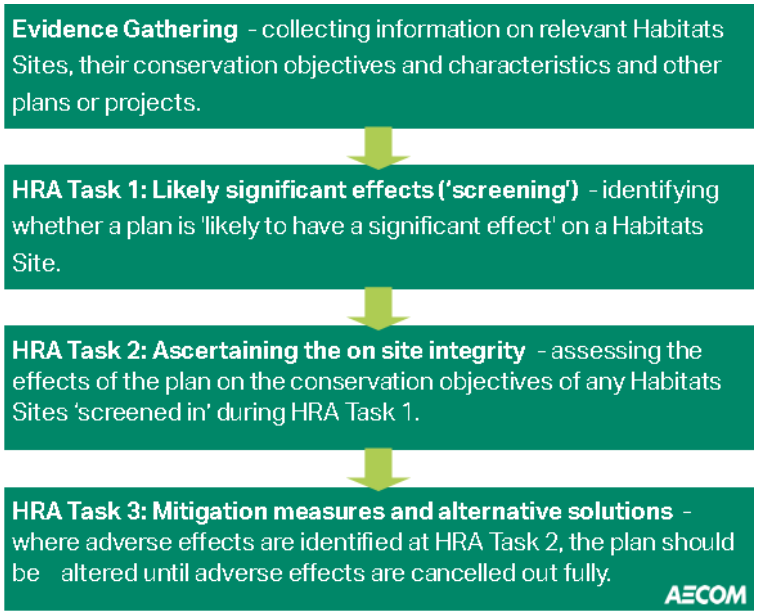

Figure 2: Four Stage Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment. Source EC, 2001[1].

Description of HRA Tasks

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

2.3 Following evidence gathering, the first stage of any Habitats Regulations Assessment is the screening for Likely Significant Effects (LSEs), essentially a high-level assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as Appropriate Assessment is required. The essential question is:

"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?"

2.4 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 mechanism for a negative interaction. This stage is undertaken in Chapter 4 of this report and in Appendix A.

HRA Task 2 – Appropriate Assessment (AA)

2.5 Where it is determined that a conclusion of 'no Likely Significant Effects (LSEs)' cannot be drawn, the analysis proceeds to the next stage of HRA known as Appropriate Assessment. Case law has clarified that 'Appropriate Assessment' is not a technical term. In other words, there are no particular technical analyses,

[7] 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.
[8] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment and https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site

or level of technical analysis, that are classified by law as belonging to Appropriate Assessment compared to the screening stage.

2.6 By virtue of the fact that it follows screening for LSEs, there is a clear implication that the analysis will be more detailed than undertaken at the previous stage. One of the key considerations during Appropriate Assessment is whether there is available mitigation that would entirely address the potential effect. In practice, the Appropriate Assessment would take any policies or allocations that could not be dismissed following the high-level screening and assess the potential for an effect in more detail, with a view to concluding whether there would be a potential for an adverse effect on site integrity (in other words, disruption of the coherent structure and function of the Habitats site(s)). A decision by the European Court of Justice[9] concluded that measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a proposed Plan or project on a Habitats site may no longer be considered by competent authorities at the screening for LSEs stage of HRA. That ruling has been taken into account in producing this HRA.

2.7 Also. in 2018 the Holohan ruling[10] 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]. Due account of this decision has been given in this HRA in relation to the Ashdown Forest SPA, which is designated for mobile ground-nesting birds (although it is to be noted that the qualifying species are not considered to be critically dependent on functionally linked habitats).

HRA Task 3 – Avoidance and Mitigation

2.8 Where necessary, measures are recommended for incorporation into the Plan in order to mitigate and / or avoid adverse effects on Habitats sites. There is considerable precedent concerning the level of detail that a Neighbourhood Plan document needs to contain regarding mitigation for impact pathways on Habitats sites (e.g. regarding recreational pressure). The implication of this precedent is that it is not necessary for all measures to be fully developed prior to adoption of the Plan, but the Plan must provide an adequate policy framework within which these measures can be delivered.

2.9 When discussing mitigation for a Neighbourhood Plan, one is concerned primarily with the policy framework to enable the delivery of such mitigation rather than the details of the mitigation measures themselves since a Neighbourhood Plan document is a high-level policy document.

2.10 In any Neighbourhood Plan, there are numerous policies for which there is a limit to the degree of assessment that is possible at the Plan level. This is because either:

- The policy in question does not contain any specifics as to what will be delivered or where, and so cannot be assessed in detail at the Plan level. In these cases, the Appropriate Assessment focusses on precautionary mitigation that can be included in the plan to ensure that whatever proposals come forward will not result in adverse effects on integrity; or
- The nature of potential impacts (e.g. visual and noise disturbance arising from construction or loss of functionally linked habitat) are related to how the development will be designed and constructed, and therefore cannot be assessed in detail at the plan level. In these instances, the Appropriate Assessment focusses on available mitigation measures, the extent to which such measures would be achievable and effective, and whether an adequate protective framework exists to ensure that the policy would not lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of any internationally designated sites.

2.11 In these instances, the advice of Advocate-General Kokott[11] is also worth considering. She commented that: *'It would …hardly be proper to require a greater level of detail in preceding plans* [rather than planning applications] *or the abolition of multi-stage planning and approval procedures so that the assessment of implications can be concentrated on one point in the procedure. Rather, adverse effects on areas of conservation must be assessed at every relevant stage of the procedure* ***to the extent possible on the***

[9] People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)
[10] Case C-461/17
[11] Opinion of Advocate General Kokott, 9th June 2005, Case C-6/04. Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, paragraph 49http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=58359&doclang=EN

basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure' [emphasis added].

'In Combination' Assessment

2.12 It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and project that may also be affecting the Habitats site(s) in question.

2.13 For the purpose of this assessment the following documents will be considered in-combination with the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Southampton Local Plan (Adopted 2015)
- New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 (Adopted 2020)
- Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan (Adopted 2014)
- West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (Adopted 2015)
- The Island Plan Core Strategy (Adopted 2012)
- Gosport Borough Local Plan (Adopted 2015)
- Fareham Local Plan 2037 (Adopted 2023)
- Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (Adopted 2016)
- The Portsmouth Plan (Adopted 2012)
- Havant Borough Local Plan (Adopted 2011 (Core strategy) and 2014 (Allocations))
- Draft Regulation 19 Chichester Local Plan 2021 - 2039
- Adopted East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy to 2028 (Adopted 2014)
- New Forest National Park Core Strategy (2010)
- New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Adopted 2019)

2.14 This list of plans has been devised through an understanding of local authority connections around New Milton.

2.15 When undertaking this part of the assessment it is essential to bear in mind the principal intention behind the legislation i.e. to ensure that those projects or plan which in themselves have minor impacts are not simply dismissed on that basis but are evaluated for any significant cumulative contribution they may make to an overall significant effect.

3. Test of Likely Significant Effects

3.1 This stage of the HRA assesses all policies in the Neighbourhood Plan for impact pathways linking to Habitats sites. The screening assessments of all policies contained in the plan are also provided in Appendix B.

Introduction

3.2 In carrying out an HRA it is important to determine the various ways in which land use plan can impact on Habitats sites by following the pathways along which development can be connected with Habitats sites, in some cases many kilometres distant. Briefly defined, pathways are routes by which a change in activity associated with a development can lead to an effect upon a Habitats site.

3.3 In determining pathway-receptor potential for impacts of the Neighbourhood Plan on Habitats sites, the following data sources have been interrogated:

- The UK Air Pollution Information System (www.apis.ac.uk);
- Visitor studies for relevant Habitats designated sites, where available, notably those undertaken for both he Solent coast and the New Forest;
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) and its links to SSSI citations (www.naturalengland.org.uk) and the JNCC website (www.jncc.gov.uk); and
- Habitats Regulations Assessments of surrounding Local and Neighbourhood Plans, where available and appropriate to use.

Habitats Sites for Consideration

3.4 AECOM uses a minimum precautionary buffer of 10km outside of the borough boundary when first considering which Habitats sites need assessing within the HRA. However, Habitats sites further afield are also considered where there may be linking impact pathways to development within the borough; for example, a Habitats site with a recreational catchment larger than 10km or abstraction and transfer licences.

3.5 Although outside of this 10km buffer Dorset Heathland Ramsar has been included for consideration as it overlaps with the Dorset Heathland SPA to a great extent.

Recreational Pressure including from Urbanisation

Pathway of Impact

3.6 Recreational use of a Habitats site has the potential to:

- Prevent appropriate management or exacerbate existing management difficulties;
- Cause damage through erosion and fragmentation; and
- Cause eutrophication as a result of dog fouling.
- Cause disturbance to sensitive species, particularly ground-nesting birds and wintering wildfowl.

3.7 Different types of Habitats sites are subject to different types of recreational pressures and have different vulnerabilities. Studies across a range of species have shown that the effects from recreation can be complex.

3.8 It should be emphasised that recreational use is not inevitably a problem. Many Habitats sites also contain nature reserves managed for conservation and public appreciation of nature. Parts of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, for example, are managed by the National Trust. At these sites, access is encouraged and resources are available to ensure that recreational use is managed appropriately.

3.9 Most types of land-based Habitats site can be affected by trampling, which in turn causes soil compaction and erosion. Walkers with dogs contribute to pressure on sites through nutrient enrichment via dog fouling and also have potential to cause greater disturbance to fauna as dogs are less likely to keep to marked footpaths and move more erratically. Motorcycle scrambling and off-road vehicle use can cause serious erosion, as well as disturbance to sensitive species.

3.10 New Milton Parish borders an internationally designated site (The New Forest SAC, SPA & Ramsar site) designated for habitats and species that could be adversely affected by excessive trampling and erosion to their supporting habitats.

3.11 There have been several papers published that empirically demonstrate that damage to vegetation in woodlands and other habitats can be caused by vehicles, walkers, horses and cyclists:

- Wilson & Seney (1994)[12] examined the degree of track erosion caused by hikers, motorcycles, horses and cyclists from 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 (1995a, b)[13] conducted experimental off-track trampling in 18 closed forest, dwarf scrub and meadow and grassland communities (each tramped 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 morphological characteristics were found to explain more variation in response between different vegetation types 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. 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 (1995c)[14] conducted a follow-up study (in 4 vegetation types) in which shoe type (trainers or walking boots) and trampler 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 difference in effect on cover.

- Cole & Spildie (1998)[15] experimentally compared the effects of off-track trampling by hiker and horse (at two intensities – 25 and 150 passes) in two woodland vegetation types (one with an erect forb understorey and one with a low shrub understorey). Horse traffic was found to cause the largest reduction in vegetation cover. The forb-dominated vegetation suffered greatest disturbance but recovered rapidly. Higher trampling intensities caused more disturbance.

3.12 The total volume of dog faeces deposited on sites can be surprisingly large. For example, at Burnham Beeches National Nature Reserve over one year, Barnard[16] estimated the total amounts of urine and faeces from dogs as 30,000 litres and 60 tonnes respectively.

3.13 Concern regarding the effects of disturbance on birds stems from the fact that they are expending energy unnecessarily and the time they spend responding to disturbance is time that is not spent feeding[17]. Disturbance therefore risks increasing energetic output while reducing energetic input, which can adversely affect the 'condition' and ultimately survival of the birds. In addition, displacement of birds from one feeding site to others can increase the pressure on the resources available within the remaining sites, as they have to sustain a greater number of birds[18].

3.14 Human activity can affect birds either directly (e.g. through causing them to flee) or indirectly (e.g. through damaging their habitat). The most obvious direct effect is that of immediate mortality such as death by shooting, but human activity can also lead to behavioural changes (e.g. alterations in feeding behaviour, nest abandonment, avoidance of certain areas etc.) and physiological changes (e.g. an increase in heart rate) that, although less noticeable, may ultimately result in major population-level effects by altering the balance between immigration/birth and emigration/death.[19]

[12] 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

[13] 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

[14] 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

[15] 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

[16] 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

[17] Riddington, R. *et al*. 1996. The impact of disturbance on the behaviour and energy budgets of Brent geese. *Bird Study* 43:269-279

[18] Gill, J.A., Sutherland, W.J. & Norris, K. 1998. The consequences of human disturbance for estuarine birds. *RSPB Conservation Review* 12: 67-72

[19] Riley, J. 2003. Review of Recreational Disturbance Research on Selected Wildlife in Scotland. Scottish Natural Heritage.

3.15 The factors that influence a species response to a disturbance are numerous, but the three key factors are species sensitivity, proximity of disturbance sources and timing/duration of the potentially disturbing activity. Visitor survey work has been undertaken for both the Solent coast and the New Forest. The issue at the Solent Coast is addressed in the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy[20] and on the website http://www.birdaware.org/. The surveys undertaken to identify the mitigation strategy identified that all net new housing within 5.6km of the Solent Habitats sites would result in recreational pressure that required mitigation. For New Forest an analysis undertaken by Footprint Ecology[21] identified that 75% of regular visitors to the New Forest live within 10km of the SAC/SPA. New Milton Parish lies well within 10km of the New Forest and part of the parish (south-east of the mainline railway) also lies within 5.6km of the Solent Maritime SAC and Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar site.

Test of Likely Significant Effects

3.16 The following Habitats sites have been scoped out of due to either distance from site allocations (in the case of the Dorset Heathlands, which is 7 km from the parish boundary at the closest) or having low vulnerability to recreational pressure:

- Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar – the maximum zone of influence for this site is set at 5 km and therefore can be ruled out from being impacted by recreational disturbance resulting from population increases as a result of the NMNP.
- Dorset Heaths SAC
- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar
- River Avon SAC
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC

3.17 The following Habitats sites are vulnerable to recreational pressure and/or disturbance resulting from the Plan either alone or 'in-combination' with other plans and projects:

- The New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar
- Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar
- Solent Maritime SAC

3.18 Policy NM5 (New Milton Town Centre Regeneration Area). Sites 1-15 will result in a likely significant effect due to increased recreational pressure on the Solent Habitats sites and the New Forest SAC/SPA in combination with other plans and projects (since the allocation lies within 5.6km of the Solent coastal sites and within 10km of the New Forest).

3.19 Policy NM16 (Tourism) could also contribute to recreational pressure; creating more tourist accommodation may allow for more people from outside of the area to stay within New Milton and therefore travel more easily to the New Forest SAC/SPA which borders and is partially within the boundaries of New Milton.

3.20 Policy NM24 (Brownfield sites) will result in a likely significant effect due to increased recreational pressure on the Solent Habitats sites and the New Forest SAC/SPA in combination with other plans and projects (for the allocations which lie within 5.6km of the Solent coastal sites and within 10km of the New Forest).

3.21 Overall, AECOM concludes that The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC are screened in for appropriate assessment of recreational pressure.

[20] Bird Aware Solent. (2017) Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy. December 2017.
[21] Sharp, J., Lowen, J.& Liley, D. (2008). Changing patterns of visitor numbers within the New Forest National Park, with particular reference to the New Forest SPA. Unpublished report by Footprint Ecology for the New Forest National Park Authority

Loss of Functionally Linked Land

Pathway of Impact

3.22 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 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.

3.23 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.

3.24 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 land[22]. 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 were affected while on functionally linked land, 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 adjacently located functionally linked land had a peak survey count of 108% of the 5-year mean peak population of golden plover. This finding led to considerable amendments in the planning proposal to ensure that the site integrity was not adversely affected.

3.25 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.

Test of Likely Significant Effects

3.26 The following Habitats sites have been excluded from further consideration in relation to functionally linked land as they are not designated for mobile (bird) species:

- Dorset Heaths SAC
- Dorset Heathland Ramsar
- River Avon SAC
- New Forest Ramsar /SAC
- New Forest SAC
- Solent Maritime SAC
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons

3.27 The following Habitats sites have been further considered in relation to functionally linked land as they are designated for bird species:

- Dorset Heathland SPA
- Avon Valley SPA/Ramsar
- New Forest SPA
- Solent and Southampton Water Spa/Ramsar

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

3.28 The Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS)[23], a conservation partnership project focusing particularly on brent geese and wading birds in the Solent, has undertaken surveys over three winters between 2016 and 2019. The strategy is an attempt to identify the sites these birds rely on in the Solent, 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. There are no areas identified within the New Milton Parish, the closest area is NF135D (Low Use Site) just west of the southwestern part of the parish and over 2 km from the nearest allocation.

3.29 None of the allocations are on parcels of land likely to support nesting territories of breeding birds, or significant congregations of non-breeding birds for which the New Forest SPA and Dorset Heathlands SPA is designated (specifically, breeding nightjar, woodlark, Dartford warbler and honey buzzard and non-breeding hen harrier). Based on aerial photography the habitat on each site is of low suitability unsuitable for these species to nest (being urban areas mainly covered by buildings or hard standing, as opposed to heathland, acid grassland, managed plantation or undisturbed woodland with clearings). While both nightjar and woodlark will forage widely, including in farmland, this habitat is widespread and abundant in the area around the New Forest (in contrast to suitable nesting habitat) and in most cases the land parcels intended for development are in too close proximity to busy roads, other housing or employment to be widely used. Non-breeding hen harriers roost communally in wetlands; none of the site allocations are in or adjacent to such wetland habitats.

3.30 Similarly, none of the allocations are on land identified as being of value for wintering Brent goose and waders associated with the Solent European sites, based on the latest mapping provided on the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy website (https://solentwbgs.wordpress.com/page-2/). According to this website the nearest Brent goose and wader site is NF134D which is east of the Barton-on-Sea golf course, and is a low use plot. No core high tide roosting habitat is found within the New Milton Parish.

3.31 None of the allocations are on land suitable for use by birds for which the Avon SPA and Ramsar are designated (Bewick's swan, gadwall, Northern pintail and black-tailed godwit). These birds tend to occupy wetlands (including lakes, marshes and flooded pastures) and are highly unlikely to make use of the urban habitats of the allocations.

3.32 Based on available information, the impact pathway 'functionally linked land' can therefore be screened out; no likely significant effects will occur either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

3.33 Overall, AECOM concludes that all Likely Significant Effects are screened out for functionally linked land as a result of the policies of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan.

Water Quantity, Level and Flow

Pathway of Impact

3.34 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 wetlands and coastal waters, including current velocity, water depth, dissolved oxygen levels, salinity and water temperature. In turn these 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 and changes in wave exposure, and often interact with coastal squeeze.

3.35 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.

3.36 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. However, while the natural fluctuation of water levels within narrow limits is desirable, excess

[23] 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 30/01/2025]

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

- The supply of new housing with potable water will require increased abstraction of water 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.

3.37 The Environment Agency produced a report which classified water stress areas across England in 2021[24]. This report indicates that the Bournemouth Water Resource Zone is seriously water stressed (for the purpose of metering). Water stress applies both to the natural environment and to public water supplies. Both will be affected by climate change. Public water supplies are under pressure from reductions in abstraction to make them more environmentally sustainable. There is also a need to make public water supplies more resilient to droughts and meet additional demands associated with development and population growth.

3.38 New Milton lies within the area serviced by Bournemouth Water (supply) and Southern Water (sewerage and wastewater). Bournemouth Water provides drinking water to a population of 450,000 across parts of Dorset and Hampshire. Most of the water supply comes from abstraction from the River Stour and River Avon with the rest being made up by ground water. Southern Water supplies water and treats wastewater for parts of Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, covering a total of 10,530km^2.

Test of Likely Significant Effects

3.39 The following Habitats sites are potentially vulnerable to impacts on water quantity and quality resulting from the NMNP either alone or 'in-combination' with other plans and projects:

- Solent & Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar
- Solent Maritime SAC
- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar
- River Avon SAC

3.40 The Draft Water Resource Management prepared by South West Water[25] states that the Bournemouth zone is showing a large risk of deficit and that there is a need to reduce the amount of water taken from the River Avon particularly in its lower reaches. The Bournemouth area is classified as water stressed by Defra, to help reduce demand all properties will be fitted with a water meter and a need for five new supply schemes has been identified.

3.41 The SEA for the Draft Water Resource Management provides an HRA assessment in Annex H[26] which concludes that.

For the supply options assessed within this report, assuming that all proposed mitigation measures are implemented, it is considered that at the plan level there will not be a significant change in:

[24] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60dd7f328fa8f50ab1d0128a/Water_stressed_areas___final_classification_2021.odt [Accessed 29/01/2025]
[25] Non-Technical Summary of the Draft Water Resource Management Plan Available at: https://www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/siteassets/documents/about-us/wrmp/sww-dwrmp-non-technical-summary2.pdf [Accessed: 29/01/2025]
[26] Available at: https://www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/siteassets/documents/about-us/wrmp/sww-dwrmp24-appendix-7-sea-report-dec23-annex-h-hra.pdf [Accessed 28/01/25]

- *The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species;*
- *The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats or 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 Habitats Sites.*

3.42 Overall, AECOM concludes that Likely Significant Effects are screened out for water quantity, level and flow impacts as a result of the policies of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan either alone or in-combination.

Water Quality

Pathway of Impact

3.43 Increased amounts of housing or business development can lead to reduced water quality of rivers and estuarine environments. Sewage and industrial effluent discharges can contribute to increased nutrients on European sites leading to unfavourable conditions. In addition, diffuse pollution, partly from urban run-off has been identified during an Environment Agency Review of Consents process and a joint Environment Agency and Natural England evidence review (Environment Agency, 2007), as being a major factor in causing unfavourable condition of Habitats sites.

3.44 The quality of the water that feeds Habitats sites is an important determinant of the nature of their habitats and the species they support. Poor 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 can have detrimental effects even at lower levels, including 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, augmenting the oxygen depleting effects of eutrophication. In the marine environment, nitrogen is the limiting plant nutrient and so eutrophication is associated with discharges containing available 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.

3.45 At sewage treatment works, additional residential development increases the risk of effluent escape into aquatic environments in addition to consented discharges to the catchment. In many urban areas, sewage treatment and surface water drainage systems are combined, and therefore a predicted increase in flood and storm events could increase pollution risk.

Test of Likely Significant Effects

3.46 The following Habitats sites are potentially vulnerable to impacts on water quantity and quality resulting from the NMNP either alone or 'in-combination' with other plans and projects:

- Solent & Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar
- Solent Maritime SAC
- Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar
- River Avon SAC

3.47 The surface water catchment data made available by Natural England[27] indicates that New Milton lies outside the River Avon SAC catchment **and therefore, AECOM concludes that likely Significant Effects on the Avon Habitats sites are screened out for water quality as a result of the policies of the NMNP.**

3.48 New Milton lies within the catchment of the Danes Stream Water Body. The Danes Stream ultimately drains into the Solent, meaning that any increase in nutrient levels or pollution from NMNP developments could potentially affect the downstream Solent Habitats sites (Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC).

3.49 The Solent Maritime, and Solent and Southampton Water Habitats sites are particularly vulnerable to water quality impact with specific regard to nutrient neutrality.

3.50 With the increase of new developments within the NMNP area, there is a potential for an increase strain on sewage and water treatment works. New Milton is within the catchment for the Pennington Wastewater system. The Pennington wastewater system plan[28] results of the Baseline Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (BRAVA) assign a risk band of "2 – Very Significant" to nutrient neutrality.

3.51 Due to the impacts of eutrophication upon the Habitats sites, Natural England have issued guidance[29] requiring all developments that may have an impact on Habitats sites (including those within the Solent area) which would generate new and additional overnight accommodation to be 'nutrient neutral'.

3.52 **Therefore, AECOM concludes that Likely Significant Effects on the Solent Habitats sites are screened in for water quality as a result of the policies of the NMNP and require appropriate assessment.**

Atmospheric Pollution

Pathway of Impact

3.53 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 3-1. Ammonia can have a directly toxic effect upon vegetation, particularly at close distances to the source such as near road verges[30]. 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 nitrogen deposition from the atmosphere can, if sufficiently great, enhance soil fertility and lead to eutrophication. This often has adverse effects on the community composition and quality of semi-natural, nitrogen-limited terrestrial and aquatic habitats[31] [32].

[27] Catchment Data Explorer Available at: https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[28] Available at: https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/wpxhgpml/l3_penn.pdf [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[29] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6386921274867712 [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[30] http://www.apis.ac.uk/overview/pollutants/overview_NOx.htm.
[31] 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.
[32] 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.

Table 3-1: Main sources and effects of air pollutants on habitats and species[33]

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 1980'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.	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 nitrogen 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.
Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)	Nitrogen oxides are mostly produced in combustion processes. Half of NO_X emissions in the UK derive from motor	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

[33] Information summarised from the Air Pollution Information System (http://www.apis.ac.uk/).

Pollutant	Source	Effects on habitats and species
	vehicles, one quarter from power stations and the rest from other industrial and domestic combustion processes. NOx concentrations have been falling for decades due to improvements in vehicle emissions technology and this will accelerate after 2030 as electric vehicles (or other non-combustion engine vehicles) spread through the vehicle fleet following the the UK government's policy to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035 (recently postponed from 2030). This ban will result in a significant shift in the constitution of the UK vehicle fleet during the 2030s.	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 (N) 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 nitrogen 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 nitrogen eutrophication. This is because many semi-natural plants cannot assimilate the surplus nitrogen as well as many graminoid (grass) species. Nitrogen 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.
Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2)	Main sources of SO2 emissions are electricity generation, industry and domestic fuel combustion. May also arise from shipping and increased atmospheric concentrations in busy ports. Total SO2 emissions have decreased substantially in the UK since the 1980s.	Wet and dry deposition of SO2 acidifies soils and freshwater, and alters the species composition of plant and associated animal communities. The significance of impacts depends on levels of deposition and the buffering capacity of soils.

3.54 Sulphur dioxide 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[34]. As such these will not be associated with Neighbourhood Plan growth. Ammonia emissions originate from agricultural practices[35], with some chemical processes also making notable contributions and traffic also contributing materially at a local scale. 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[36]. Therefore, emissions of NOx and ammonia can reasonably be expected to increase as a result of the Plan, primarily due to an increase in the volume of commuter traffic associated with housing growth.

3.55 Ammonia emissions are dominated by agriculture, with some chemical processes also making notable contributions. As such, it is unlikely that material increases in SO2 or NH3 emissions will be associated with Neighbourhood Plans. NOx emissions, however, are dominated by the output of vehicle exhausts. Within a 'typical' housing development, by far the largest contribution to NOx (92%) will be made by the associated road traffic. Other sources, although relevant, are of minor importance (8%) in comparison. Emissions of NOx could therefore be reasonably expected to increase as a result of greater vehicle use as an indirect effect of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.56 The World Health Organisation has the following critical thresholds for plant communities: The critical NOx concentration (critical level) for the protection of vegetation is 30 μgm^{-3} and the critical level for ammonia 1-3 μgm^{-3} (depending on whether normal vegetation or lichens and bryophytes are involved). Additionally, ecological studies have determined 'Critical Loads'[37] of atmospheric nitrogen deposition (that is, NOx combined with ammonia NH3).

3.57 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 3 and The Local Air Quality Sub-Objective[38]). Therefore, this distance has been used throughout this HRA to determine whether Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) on sensitive Habitats sites may arise due to implementation of the Plan.

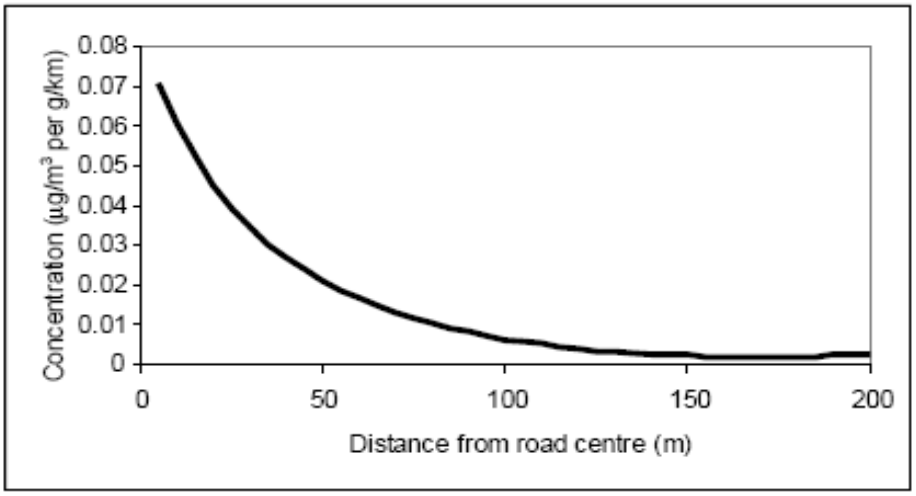

Figure 3: Traffic contribution to concentrations of pollutants at different distances from a road (Source: DfT[39])

[34] http://www.apis.ac.uk/overview/pollutants/overview_SO2.htm.
[35] 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.
[36] 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]
[37] The critical load is the rate of deposition beyond which research indicates that adverse effects can reasonably be expected to occur.
[38] Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20140304105654/http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/documents/expert/unit3.3.3.php [Accessed on the 30/01/2025]
[39] Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/*/http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmrb/vol11/section3/ha20707.pdf [Accessed on the 30/01/2025]

Test of Likely Significant Effects

3.58 The following Habitats designated sites are potentially vulnerable to atmospheric pollution resulting from the NMNP either alone or 'in-combination' with other plans and projects, where they lie within 200m[40] of significant journey to work routes (where changes in traffic movements are most likely to arise due to housing and employment growth):

- The New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar site;
- Dorset Heaths SAC;
- Solent Maritime SAC; and
- Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site; and
- Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons.

3.59 Polices NM3, NM5, NM16 and NM24 will also have a likely significant effect 'in combination' with other plans and projects because they will all contribute to increased traffic movements on roads within 200m of the New Forest SAC/SPA (notably the A35, A31 and A337). This is relevant because the SAC is currently exceeding its critical load for nitrogen deposition according to the Air Pollution Information website (www.apis.ac.uk) and a key source of nitrogen deposition on areas within 200m of key roads will be from traffic NOx emissions. The NMNP may make a relatively minor contribution to such pollution, however it will need to be discussed in more detail 'in combination' in an appropriate assessment. This will normally involve reference to traffic and air quality modelling. The modelling undertaken for the District Local Plan (which has been subject to a separate HRA) is suitable to consider effects for the Neighbourhood Plan as housing (potential for at least 250 dwellings within Policy NM5 and 200 dwellings within Policy NM24) within the Plan does not exceed the housing allocated within the District Local Plan for the Parish (490 dwellings).

3.60 Using these data, the impact pathway 'air quality' will be assessed further in Section 5. Appropriate Assessment. For completeness this also discusses impacts on the Dorset Heaths SAC, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site and Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC.

3.61 Overall, AECOM concludes that Likely Significant Effects on The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Dorset Heaths and Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC are screened in for atmospheric pollution as a result of the of the NMNP policies and require appropriate assessment.

[40] 200m being the typical maximum distance by which the road influence on local NOx concentrations ceases to be observed above background concentrations

4. Appropriate Assessment

Recreational Pressure

New Forest SAC, SPA & Ramsar site

4.1 The New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar site is partially located within the Parish of New Milton. The 15 sites listed in Policy NM5 (New Milton Town Centre Regeneration) are situated between 2.9km and 3.6km from the New Forest sites. Policy NM24 (Brownfield sites) identified 9 sites which are situated between 2.9km and 4.1km of these Habitats sites. In addition, an increase in tourism (Policy NM16: Tourism) has the potential to increase the numbers of recreational visitors to this internationally designated site.

4.2 The New Forest SPA & Ramsar site is sensitive to the effects of recreational disturbance. It is considered that the threat of development pressure particularly housing on the neighbouring land and allocations sites within 10km of the Habitats sites, could result in increased recreational use of this site and has the potential to increase disturbance to bird feeding and bird behaviour.

4.3 Table 4-1 below summarises the allocation sites and number of dwellings by policy within 10km of the New Forest SPA & Ramsar.

Table 4-1 Housing numbers within 10km of The New Forest SAC, SPA & Ramsar

Allocation Site Reference	Address	Indicative Dwelling Numbers	Distance from SAC/SPA
NM5 (Sites 1-15)	New Milton Town Centre Regeneration Area	Potential for at least 250 dwellings	2.9 km to 3.6 km
NM24 (Sites 16-24)	Various sites	Potential for at least 200 dwellings	2.9 km to 4.1 km

4.4 Different types of Habitats sites (e.g. heathland, chalk grassland) are subject to different types of recreational pressure and have different vulnerabilities. Studies across a range of species have shown that the effects from recreation can be complex.

4.5 The effects of recreation on heathland sites were described in a series of English Nature Research Reports.[41] Recreational pressure can have a significant adverse effect on the Annex 1 bird species for which the SPAs in this area are designated. Disturbance can have an adverse effect in various ways, with increased nest predation by natural predators as a result of adults being flushed from the nest and deterred from returning to it by the presence of people and dogs likely to be a particular problem. A literature review on the effects of human disturbance on bird breeding found that 36 out of 40 studies reported reduced breeding success as a consequence of disturbance[42]. The main reasons given for the reduction in breeding success were nest abandonment and increased predation of eggs or young. Over years, studies of other

[41] Liley, D. and R.T. Clarke (2002) – Urban development adjacent to heathland sites in Dorset: the effect on the density and settlement patterns of Annex 1 bird species. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 463.
Murison, G. (2002) – The impact of human disturbance on the breeding success of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* on heathlands in south Dorset, England. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 483.
Land Use Consultants (2005) – Going, going, gone? The cumulative impact of land development on biodiversity in England. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 626.
Rose, R.J. and R.T. Clarke (2005) – Urban impacts on Dorset Heathlands: Analysis of the heathland visitor questionnaire survey and heathland fires incidence data sets. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 624.
Tyldesley, D. and associates (2005) – Urban impacts on Dorset heaths: A review of authoritative planning and related decisions. *English Nature Research Reports*, No. 622.
Underhill-Day, J.C. (2005) – A literature review of urban effects on lowland heaths and their wildlife. English Nature Research Reports, No. 623.
[42] Hockin, D., M. Oundsted, M. Gorman, D. Hill, V. Keller and M.A. Barker (1992) – Examination of the effects of disturbance on birds with reference to its importance in ecological assessments. *Journal of Environmental Management*, **36**, 253-286.

species have shown that birds nest at lower densities in disturbed areas, particularly when there is weekday as well as weekend pressure[43].

4.6 A number of studies have shown that birds are affected more by dogs and people with dogs than by people alone, with birds flushing more readily, more frequently, at greater distances and for longer (Underhill-Day, 2005). In addition, dogs, rather than people, tend to be the cause of many management difficulties, notably by worrying grazing animals, and can cause eutrophication near paths. Nutrient-poor habitats such as heathland are particularly sensitive to the fertilising effect of inputs of phosphates, nitrogen and potassium from dog faeces[44].

4.7 Underhill-Day (2005) summarises the results of visitor studies that have collected data on the use of semi-natural habitat by dogs. In surveys where 100 observations or more were reported, the mean percentage of visitors who were accompanied by dogs was 54.0%.

4.8 However, these studies need to be treated with care. For instance, the effect of disturbance is not necessarily correlated with the impact of disturbance, i.e. the most easily disturbed species are not necessarily those that will suffer the greatest impacts. It has been shown that, in some cases, the most easily disturbed birds simply move to other feeding sites, whilst others may remain (possibly due to an absence of alternative sites) and thus suffer greater impacts on their population[45]. A recent literature review undertaken for the RSPB[46] also urges caution when extrapolating the results of one disturbance study because responses differ between species and the response of one species may differ according to local environmental conditions. These facts have to be taken into account when attempting to predict the impacts of future recreational pressure on Habitats sites.

4.9 A study on recreational disturbance effects of breeding golden plover in upland moorland (Finney, Pearce-Higgins and Yalden, 2005[47]) along the Pennine Way recorded that recreational pressure along the Pennine Way when 30% of walkers strayed from the paths would mean that golden plover avoided areas within 200m of the pathway, once the percentage of walkers straying off the path was reduced to 4% through the resurfacing of the Pennine way golden plover were recorded nesting in areas greater than 50m from the pathway. However, Yalden & Yalden (1990)[48] found that there was a greater disturbance effect when people had dogs, incubating birds would flush at greater distance when a dog was present (>10m). This research shows that golden plover are relatively insensitive to walker disturbance when movements are predictable, but are more sensitive to the less predictable nature of dogs, which are more likely to stray from designated pathways.

4.10 It should be emphasised that recreational use is not inevitably a problem. Many Habitats sites are also National Nature Reserves or nature reserves managed by wildlife trusts and the RSPB. At these sites, access is encouraged, and resources are available to ensure that recreational use is managed appropriately.

4.11 The HRA of the Core Strategy for the New Forest District included an Appropriate Assessment in respect of recreational effects on the New Forest SAC, SPA & Ramsar site like to arise from additional housing planned within the Plan area. It was recognised within this Appropriate Assessment that to avoid potential harm to the New Forest SAC/SPA appropriate mitigation measures would need to be implemented.

4.12 The New Forest District Council Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European Sites Supplementary Planning Document (MRINFES) (May 2021)[49] Strategy (June 2014) was therefore created to address this issue. The recreational mitigation requirements for new development are listed as:

[43] Van der Zande, A.N., J.C. Berkhuizen, H.C. van Letesteijn, W.J. ter Keurs and A.J. Poppelaars (1984) – Impact of outdoor recreation on the density of a number of breeding bird species in woods adjacent to urban residential areas. *Biological Conservation,* **30**, 1-39.
[44] Shaw, P.J.A., K. Lankey and S.A. Hollingham (1995) – Impacts of trampling and dog fouling on vegetation and soil conditions on Headley Heath. *The London Naturalist*, **74**, 77-82.
[45] Gill et al. (2001) - Why behavioural responses may not reflect the population consequences of human disturbance. *Biological Conservation,* **97**, 265-268
[46] Woodfield & Langston (2004) - Literature review on the impact on bird population of disturbance due to human access on foot. *RSPB research report* No. 9.
[47] Finney, SK, Pearce-Higgins, JW & Yalden, DW 2005, 'The effect of recreational disturbance on an upland breeding bird, the golden plover Pluvialis apricaria' *Biological Conservation*, vol 121, no. 1, pp. 53-63. DOI: 10.1016/j.biocon.2004.04.009
[48] Yalden, D.W., & Yalden, P.E. 1990. Recreational disturbance of breeding Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricarius. Biolgoical Conservation* 51: 243-262
[49] Available at: https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/2237/Adopted-Mitigation-Strategy/pdf/Mitigation_for_Recreational_Impacts_SPD_May_2021_ADOPTED.pdf?m=1621259387820 Accessed on 28/01/2025

- Provision of new alternative natural recreational greenspaces (ANRG) on new development sites of over 50 dwellings;
- Improvement and enhancement of existing green spaces as recreational mitigation;
- Enhancement of recreational walking routes;
- Access and visitor management measures; and
- Monitoring.

4.13 The MRINFES specifies 8 ha of ARNG per 1000 or population of new residential developments of 50 or more dwellings. This is secured through Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy[50] which requires all new residential development to make provision at a standard of 3.5ha per 1000 population. Policy ENV1 (Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites) of the New Forest District Council Local Plan 2016 to 2036 Part One (NFDCLPP1): Planning Strategy[51] which states that:

For developments of 50 or more net additional residential dwellings:

(a) Direct provision by the developer of at least eight hectares of natural recreational greenspace per 1,000 located on the development site or directly adjoining and well connected to it; and

(b) A financial contribution towards access and visitor management and Monitoring as set out above at i(b) and i(c)

4.14 The Policy NM5 has the potential to deliver at least 250 dwellings over Sites 1 to 15, within the Town Centre Regeneration Area shown on Figure 5. The sites within this area would be required to provide SANG in one of two ways dependent on the number of dwellings developed at each site. For sites with fewer than 50 dwellings the developer would be required to provide financial contributions to strategic SANG provision within the parish at an equivalent SANG provision of 3.5 ha per 1000 population. Should a site develop 50 or more dwellings; to ensure compliance with ENV1 of the NFDCLPP1 the developer would be required to provide SANG at a rate of 8ha per 1000 population within or close to the development. Therefore, considering the lowest estimate of 250 dwellings a SANG requirement of at least 2.1 ha would be required (should all sites develop 49 or fewer dwellings each) and should all sites develop dwellings at a rate of 50 or above the SANG requirement would increase to 4.8 ha. Should the sites develop over 250 dwellings SANG requirements will increase proportionately.

4.15 The Policy NM24 has the potential to deliver at least 200 dwellings over Sites 16 to 24, as shown on Figure 5. The sites within this area would be required to provide SANG in one of two ways dependent on the number of dwellings developed at each site. For sites with fewer than 50 dwellings the developer would be required to provide financial contributions to strategic SANG provision within the parish at an equivalent SANG provision of 3.5 ha per 1000 population. Should a site develop 50 or more dwellings; to ensure compliance with ENV1 of the NFDCLPP1 the developer would be required to provide SANG at a rate of 8ha per 1000 population within or close to the development. Therefore, considering the lowest estimate of 200 dwellings a SANG requirement of at least 1.68 ha would be required (should all sites develop 49 or fewer dwellings each) and should all sites develop dwellings at a rate of 50 or above the SANG requirement would increase to 3.84 ha. Should the sites develop over 200 dwellings SANG requirements will increase proportionately.

4.16 In addition to the houses allocated within the above Policies, New Milton Council have shown support for the development or redevelopment of tourist accommodation (Policy NM16). Should tourist residential development be bought forward within the Parish, throughout the Plan period, the developments will also have to provide mitigation to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar (and Solent sites if within 5.6km).

4.17 As a minimum any housing allocation providing 49 or fewer dwelling will be required by the New Forest District Local Plan to provide financial contributions towards the provision of recreational mitigation measures as set out in the Mitigation for Recreational Impacts SPD. Should the Parish provide any SANG the minimum requirement for the provision of SANG is 3.5 ha per 1000 population which comprises 0.2 ha per 1000 population of designated play space for children and young people, 1.25 ha of formal recreational space per 1000 population and 2 ha of informal open space per 1000 population. Should number of dwellings per site be 50 dwellings or over the minimum provision becomes a direct provision by the

[50] http://www.newforest.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36579&p=0 [Accessed 16/11/18]
[51] Available at: https://newforest.gov.uk/media/705/Local-Plan-Document-2016-2036/pdf/Local_Plan_2016-2036_Part_One_FINAL.pdf?m=1597322335113 [Accessed 28/01/2025]

developer of at least 8ha of SANG per 1000 population located on the development site or directly adjoining it and a financial contribution towards Access and Visitor Management and Monitoring. It is recommended that the provision of effective, well designed SANG should be secured through planning condition to ensure arrangements are in place for ongoing management and maintenance.

4.18 Policy NM5 and Policy NM24 do not include reference to mitigation for New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar site. However, New Milton Parish Council have included a specific policy, Policy NM11: Mitigating Effects on European Sites, which states: "*Residential schemes will be required to include proposals for mitigating their effects on the European sites. This could be through on-site provision or off-site financial contributions in accordance with the requirements of the development plan, including compliance with the Mitigation Strategy for European Sites (Recreational Pressure from Residential Development) SPD as it applies to New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site, and where necessary financial contributions for ongoing monitoring for the New Forest SAC*." This policy will ensure that any residential development bought forward to planning will be fully considered for its suitability and will only be supported provided it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts upon Habitats sites.

4.19 NFDC LPP2 states that *"In addition to protecting existing open spaces within New Milton and Barton on Sea, new open spaces accessible to the public will be created over the plan period by new public open space provision required as part of a development proposal, including Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) required to mitigate the recreational impacts of new residential development on European nature conservation sites. The Plan allocates land for additional public open space with proposals for an extension to Fernhill Sports Ground (NFDC LPP2 NMT12) and for informal publicly accessible natural green space (SANGS), and south of Lymington Road"*

4.20 The Parish Council have put forward plans to include a 3.44 ha of SANG north of Fernhill Sports Ground to mitigate for any housing to be put forward in Policy NM5 and NM24. The current use of the site is pasture and a small section of woodland. The council are intending to put in a fenced area for dog training, however, should the site be taken forward as SANG it is recommended that further work would need to be done to improve the habitats present within the site to promote the site as an alternative to sites within the New Forest SAC/SPA. In accordance with the minimum standard for SANG provision (3.5 ha per 1000 population), the area provided by the SANG would be sufficient for approximately 400 dwellings at an average occupancy rate of 2.4, should all site allocations be kept below 50 dwellings.

4.21 Should there not be enough available space within New Milton for the appropriate level of SANG, developer contributions to the provision of strategic SANG in the wider New Forest District will be required. It is noted that concerns have been raised concerning the suitability of this site to provide SANG given its total area. Further consultation was therefore undertaken with New Forest District Council (NFDC). The Council has indicated that there is sufficient strategic SANG provision in the District for the growth from this Neighbourhood Plan, and that the funds collected from sites under 50 units (i.e. those allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan) that are brought forward could be attributed to existing SANG provision without the need to provide additional SANGs. This is because a number of sites expected in the New Forest District Local Plan have not in fact been delivered. Therefore, notwithstanding the site identified north of Fernhill Sports Ground, there is sufficient SANG capacity in the District to accommodate the Neighbourhood Plan development without a new SANG.

4.22 Within the Tourism policy the text states that development will only be supported "*provided it can be demonstrated there will be no adverse effect on European sites'* and therefore provides assurances against developmental impact upon Habitats sites.

4.23 Given the requirements for the provision of an appropriate amount of SANG and the presentation of proposals for those SANG, coupled with policy commitment to strategic access management of the New Forest National Park and developer contributions to monitoring it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan has an adequate policy framework to ensure that planned development will not affect the integrity of the Habitats sites either alone or in combination.

Solent Sites

4.24 The Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site are located outside the Parish of New Milton. The 15 sites listed in Policy NM5 (New Milton Town Centre Regeneration) are

situated between 6.2km and 6.5km from the Solent sites. Policy NM24 (Brownfield sites) identified 9 sites which are situated between 5.1km and 7.2km of these Habitats sites. In addition, an increase in tourism (Policy NM16: Tourism) has the potential to increase the numbers of recreational visitors to this internationally designated site.

4.25 The Solent Sites are considered sensitive to the effects of recreational disturbance. It is considered that the threat of development pressure particularly housing on the neighbouring land and allocations sites within 5.6 km of the Habitats sites, could result in increased recreational use of this site and has the potential to increase disturbance to bird feeding and bird behaviour.

4.26 Table 4-2 below provides the allocation sites and number of dwellings per site within 5.6 km of the Solent Sites.

Table 4-2 Housing numbers and distance from Solent Sites

Allocation Site Reference	Address	Indicative Dwelling Numbers	Distance from SAC/SPA
NM5	New Milton Town Centre Regeneration Area	Potential for at least 250 dwellings	6.2 to 6.5 km
NM24	Brownfield sites	Potential for at least 200 dwellings	Site 19: 5.5km Site 20: 5.1km Site 21: 5.2km Site 22: 5.5km Site 23: 5.5km Sites 16, 17, 18, 24 are beyond 5km distant from the habitats sites

4.27 None of the sites 1-15 identified in Policy NM5 are within 5.6 km of the boundaries of the Solent sites at their closest point and are therefore outside of the core recreational pressure zone of influence.

4.28 Sites 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 within Policy NM24 are situated within 5.6km of the boundaries of the Solent sites at their closest point and are therefore within the core recreational pressure zone of influence. All other potential development sites within Policy NM24 are outside of the core recreation pressure zone of influence. The Neighbourhood plan does not allocate a specific quantum of housing for each site, instead it states potential capacity by policy, which is 200 dwellings for Policy NM24.

4.29 Impacts associated with disturbance from recreation can differ between coastal and inland sites. The Solent and particularly its mudflats, shingle and saltmarshes provide essential feeding and roosting grounds for birds wintering on the south coast.

4.30 Disturbance can have several impacts upon the birds, the disturbance may cause the bird to be flushed from foraging or a roost or the birds may just be more alert, resulting in a reduction of the amount of time that is spent foraging for food. If a bird is flushed this will also result in a reduction of the amount of time spent foraging and will also be using more energy by flying away. The ultimate consequence of disturbance to wintering birds is a reduction in the amount of energy the bird will have available to fly back to summer breeding habitats or mortality. If the bird did not have enough energy to complete the return flight this would result in a decrease in the population.

4.31 The limited data within literature[52] does indicate that in some circumstances certain waterfowl (such as Shoveler) can be disturbed by human activity up to 400m away. However, the activity in question was sailing. Due to the erratic movement of the craft and the high visibility of their sails, in addition to the lack of physical barriers between the sailing boats and the waterfowl, this is likely to be one of the more disturbing stimuli in existence. This explains the considerable distance at which disturbance can be caused. By comparison, more recent research into “flushing” distances undertaken by Footprint Ecology[53] on the Solent

[52] Tydeman, C.F. 1978. Gravel Pits as conservation areas for breeding bird communities. PhD thesis. Bedford College.
[53] Liley, D., Stillman, R. & Fearnley, H. (2010). The Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project Phase 2: Results of Bird Disturbance Fieldwork 2009/10. Footprint Ecology / Solent Forum.

designated coast (during 2010) recorded that many species flushed from human activity (primarily walkers) only at distances of 69m or less.

4.32 Further, more extensive research was undertaken during 2009-2013 to assess the impact of recreational activity on wintering birds on the Solent coast. The most popular activities on the Solent coast are walking, jogging and cycling which makes up for 91% of all recreational activity[54]. This research also reported that 47% of all 'major flight' events were caused by dogs off leads. An increase in housing within the core recreation zone could have significant impacts on the integrity of the Habitats sites.

4.33 Although the number of new housing with in the 5.6 km core recreational zone for the Solent sites allocated within New Milton is small and would therefore be unlikely to cause an effect alone, the contribution of this development in combination with other Local Plans within the core recreational zone will cause an adverse effect on the Solent Sites unless mitigation measures are implemented.

4.34 The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and other stakeholders formed the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership (SRMP) to create the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy[55].

4.35 As part of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy all developments within 5.6 km of the Solent sites require developer funding contributions in perpetuity (80 years) to assist with the funding for rangers, communications, marketing and education initiatives, initiatives to encourage responsible dog walking and site-specific visitor management and bird refuge projects delivered by BirdAware Solent. A sliding scale depending on number of bedrooms per dwelling[56] is used from £465 for a one bed dwelling to £1207 for a five (or more) bed dwelling. And the total figure is based on an estimate of the mix of housing that is proposed. The rates are to be reviewed every two years throughout the duration of the strategy. As was discussed for the New Forest Habitats Sites, New Milton Parish Council have included a Policy, Policy NM11 which requires developers to comply with the Mitigation for Habitats Sites SPD which applies to the Solent Habitats sites as well as the New Forest Habitats sites.

4.36 In addition to the quantum of housing potentially deliverable within New Milton Neighbourhood Plan (200 dwellings of which may be within the core recreational zone), the Policy NM16 promotes the development of more tourist accommodation within Barton-on-Sea, which is partially within the 5.6 km core recreational zone. The Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy states that '*New hotels and other holiday/tourist accommodation - defined as both wholly new establishments and extensions of existing ones - is a residential-related use with the potential to generate additional recreational visits to the SPA(s). The need for mitigation for new hotel accommodation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the local planning authority in relation to the 'tests' set out* [in the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy]. *Mitigation is unlikely to be required for new hotel accommodation in a city centre for example, if the guests will predominantly be business people or those visiting the built heritage rather than the coast. On the other hand, mitigation is more likely to be required for new hotel accommodation close to a SPA where guests will probably spend some time walking or pursuing other recreational activities at the coast.*' The clause entered into the Tourism Policy regarding no adverse effect to Habitats sites, will ensure that all tourist accommodation bought forward to planning will be fully considered for its suitability and will only be supported provided it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts upon Habitats sites.

4.37 With the provision of Policy NM11: Mitigating Effects on Habitats Sites and the clause within the Policy NM16 Tourism, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan has an adequate policy framework to ensure that planned development will not affect the integrity of the Habitats sites either alone or in combination.

Water Quality

4.38 The high levels of nitrogen input to the water environment in the Solent catchment is generally currently caused by wastewater from existing housing and agricultural sources. There are a number of mechanisms already in place to reduce the level of nutrient inputs within the river and lake catchments and coastal waterbodies. Within the Solent catchment both the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and partnership funded Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) programmes work with agriculture to reduce diffuse agricultural sources of pollution such as fertiliser and slurry run-off. One of the aims of this work is to deliver environmental benefits from reducing diffuse water pollution. To achieve these goals the

[54] Liley D, Stillman R & Fearnley H (2011) Solent Disturbance & Mitigation Project Phase II Results of bird disturbance fieldwork 2009/10. Paragraph 3.7
[55] https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Solent-Recreation-Mitigation-Strategy-December-2017.pdf [Accessed 28/01/25]
[56] https://birdaware.org/solent/about-us/our-strategy/developer-contributions/ Accessed 28/01/2025]

CSF partnership delivers practical solutions and targeted support which should enable farmers and land managers to take voluntary action to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture to protect water bodies and the environment.

4.39 Any new residential or employment development in New Milton as a result of the NMNP has potential to result in increased levels of nutrients entering the Solent catchment zone. While the level of development in the NMNP is moderate (a minimum of 450 net new dwellings), this could operate 'in combination' with all other existing and future development connected to Pennington Wastewater system.

4.40 Natural England advises that a nutrient budget (TN) can be calculated for new developments and has provided a guidance document to enable this[57]. This guidance is aimed primarily at developers seeking planning consent, but a calculation has been undertaken to inform this Neighbourhood Plan HRA. Such a calculation has been undertaken for this NMNP and is included in Appendix C. The calculation can be used to show that development either avoids harm to protected sites from water quality issues or that it will need to provide mitigation required to ensure that there is no adverse effect with respect to nutrients. It will then be for the applicant to ensure that mitigation is identified before their planning application is submitted.

4.41 It should be noted that for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan the calculations have been performed using a number of assumptions (listed in Appendix C) for the totality of potential development under the NMNP. This is because finalised calculations require detailed design information regarding land use changes that do not exist until a development has been fully planned. Calculations for individual sites will therefore have to be updated by developers as proposals are brought forward, and assumptions replaced with actual data. For this reason, it is not appropriate at the Neighbourhood Plan level for details of mitigation to be confirmed or for mitigation to be secured, as this cannot be done with any accuracy prior to detailed design of the proposed development and updated and precise nutrient neutrality calculations. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the developer (as applicant) and New Forest District Council (as local planning authority) to ensure that mitigation is identified and secured before planning consent is granted. The requirement placed on plans such as the Neighbourhood Plan is to assess '*adverse effects on areas of conservation … to the extent possible on the basis of the precision of the plan. This assessment is to be updated with increasing specificity in subsequent stages of the procedure'* [i.e. planning applications][58].

4.42 Nutrient calculations for the allocation of 450 net new residential dwellings within the proposed development sites indicate that the total annual nitrogen load to mitigate is 424.07kg TN/year when compared to the 'no change' in existing land use scenario. Therefore, based on the assumptions made in this HRA, the Neighbourhood Plan development will generate additional nitrogen, and appropriate mitigation will be required.

4.43 To address nutrient neutrality, developers in New Milton will be required to demonstrate that new developments will not increase nitrogen levels, or they must implement mitigation measures to achieve nutrient neutrality. It is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan or its HRA to secure mitigation for nutrient neutrality, but to confirm that a sufficient policy framework exists to ensure that when an application is submitted mechanisms are in place to ensure adverse effects on integrity can be avoided.

4.44 Within this context, and noting that development must in in according with Local Plan policies, NFDCLPP1 includes policies that are designed to prevent or moderate impacts on receptors due to changes in water quality, and which reflect Natural England guidance; these include the following:

- ENV1 (Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites): This states that "Additionally for residential developments and the provision of overnight visitor accommodation draining or discharging wastewater to the River Avon in relation to phosphate neutrality or to the Solent and Southampton Water in relation to nitrogen neutrality, a financial contribution or other appropriate mechanisms to achieve nutrient-neutral development."
- Policies relating to the development within New Milton also stipulate that "Preparation of a development-specific nutrient budget and nutrient management strategy will be required to

[57] Nutrient Budget Calculator Guidance. Available At: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/assets/attach/16093/Solent-Nutrient-Budget-Calculator-Guidance.pdf [Accessed 30/01/2025]

[58] Opinion of Advocate General Kokott, 9th June 2005, Case C-6/04. Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, paragraph 49.
http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=58359&doclang=EN

demonstrate how the development will achieve nitrogen neutrality in relation to wastewater discharge and drainage run-off, to avoid the potential for adverse impacts on the Solent and Southampton Water international nature conservation sites."

4.45 Moreover, Policy NM11 of the NMNP states that "*Residential schemes will be required to include proposals for mitigating their effects on European [Habitats] sites*."

4.46 The Partnership for South Hampshire Potential Nutrient Mitigations Schemes[59] includes details of potential mitigation schemes as of January 2025 which allow a route for developers to make a financial contribution resulting in nutrient neutrality for a development. This includes schemes in the New Forest area.

4.47 Policy NM11 states that "…all development proposals should have regard to …*water quality and the mitigation of nutrient enrichment so as not to undermine Policy13 of the South Hampshire Strategy October 2012…*"

4.48 With the Policies of the NFDCLPP1 in place, **it can be concluded that a sufficient policy framework exists to ensure that development in the NMNP will not affect the integrity of the Solent Habitats sites in relation to water quality impact pathways either alone or in-combination.**

Atmospheric Pollution

New Forest SAC, SPA & Ramsar

4.49 The HRA[60] for the NFDCLPP1 took into consideration air quality at a district level both alone and in combination with other plans and projects and covers the level of housing allocated within the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that there was the potential for traffic growth and associated increases in air pollution from the NFDCLPP1, which would result in a likely significant effect on the New Forest SAC/SPA.

4.50 New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority jointly commissioned a study[61][62] based on this information to analyse future scenarios more fully.

4.51 The HRA notes: '*The air quality assessment concluded that it is not possible to discount the potential for significant effects in relation to annual mean NOX concentrations, 24-hour NOX concentrations, nutrient nitrogen deposition, and increased ammonia concentrations without further analysis of the sensitivity of designated habitats to these impacts at identified locations. These conclusions were drawn for both the 'Do-Something' scenario of traffic growth from the NFDC and NFNPA Local Plans alone and for an 'In combination' scenario that also considered other changes expected to occur up to 2036*'

4.52 In regard to sensitivities within the New Forest SAC/SPA it concluded that '*the implementation of the NFDC Local Plan part one… is not likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site. In combination effects will result in exceedances for ammonia and acid deposition, although exceedance of critical loads/ levels is also predicted in the absence of Local Plans*'. It is understood that there are limited data on site specific sensitivities currently, and so, in light of this finding the HRA recommended undertaking periodic vegetation monitoring to identify changes for the life of the Plan.

4.53 Within the NFDCLPP1 supporting information for Policy 10: Mitigating Impacts of Development on International Nature Conservation Sites it states:

'*There are uncertainties in the data, but the precautionary principle applies requiring a modest financial contribution from development to ongoing monitoring of the effects of traffic emissions on sensitive locations, to trigger management or mitigation measures and developer contributions to implement them if harmful effects are confirmed in the future.*'

4.54 As the NFDCLPP1 was able to be screened out for air quality effects it is also possible to screen out the New Milton Neighbourhood plan from effects due to this Plan being a contributor to the quantum of growth modelled for the whole District Local Plan. Policy NM11 ensures compliance with Policy 10 of the NFDC

[59] Available at: https://www.push.gov.uk/work/mitigation-schemes-available-to-developers/ [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[60] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/01/HRA_of_New_Forest_NPA_Local_Plan_Reg_19.pdf [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[61] Air Quality Consultants (2018) Air Quality Input for Habitats Regulations Assessment: New Forest – Final Report 29 March 2018
[62] BSG Ecology (2018) Ecological Consultancy Advice on Air Quality Risks – Final Report 19 May 2018

LPP1 with regards to air quality where it states that residential schemes will *"where necessary [provide] financial contributions for ongoing monitoring of the New Forest SAC"*.

4.55 With this Policy in place, **it can be concluded that the NMNP will not affect the integrity of the New Forest Habitats sites in relation to air pollution impact pathways either alone or in-combination.**

Solent Sites

4.56 The most relevant area for air pollution from New Milton commuters for the Solent Maritime SAC is the A35 Totton bypass (SU36911361). This road goes directly over the Solent Maritime SAC. Here the habitats as seen from MAGIC[63] are saltmarsh and mudflat. Saltmarsh has a critical load of 20kg N/ha/yr. The current maximum nitrogen deposition load is 17.22kg N/ha/yr, with an average across the SAC of 11.03kg N/ha/yr. This is below the critical load. New Milton is at its closest boundary over 18km in a straight line and further by vehicle, this is a significant distance. The further you go from the New Milton boundary the number of road options for travelling increases and spreads the commuters across a wide area. Therefore, only a very small fraction of the commuters from New Milton are likely to use the A35 Totton bypass on their daily commute.

4.57 It is also important to note that the experimental studies that underlie conclusions regarding the sensitivity of saltmarsh to nitrogen deposition, and the selection of 20 kgN/ha/yr as the minimum critical load have '… *neither used very realistic N* [nitrogen] *doses nor input methods i.e. they have relied on a single large application more representative of agricultural discharge*'[64], which is far in excess of anything that would be deposited from atmosphere. For coastal saltmarshes such as those for which Solent Maritime SAC is partly designated nitrogen inputs from air are not as important as nitrogen effects from other sources because the effect of any deposition of nitrogen from atmosphere is likely to be dominated by much greater flushes of more readily utilized nitrogen from marine, fluvial or agricultural sources. This is reflected on APIS itself, which states regarding saltmarsh that '*Overall, N deposition* [from atmosphere] *is likely to be of low importance for these systems as the inputs are probably significantly below the large nutrient loadings from river and tidal inputs*'[65]. Moreover, the nature of intertidal saltmarsh in this area means that there is flushing by tidal incursion twice per day. This is likely to further reduce the role of nitrogen from atmosphere in controlling botanical composition.

4.58 Furthermore, as described above for the New Forest Habitats sites the NFDC LPP1 HRA was able to conclude at the District level, the growth over the Local Plan period within the District would not cause an effect alone. Therefore, taking into consideration that New Milton falls within the overall quantum of growth modelled for LPP1, as well as the distance between New Milton and the SAC/SPA/Ramsar and the fact that saltmarsh nitrogen is more heavily controlled by the tides than by vehicle **emissions it is concluded that the NMNP will not cause an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC/SPA/Ramar in relation to air pollution impact pathways either alone or in-combination**.

4.59 In terms of the Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons no major roads (A roads or motorways) run within 200m of the area closest to New Milton which is 6.1 km to the east of New Milton (SZ33299406) (in a straight line). The only road close to the SAC is Nor Mandy Lane which is a circular road facilitating access to several homes and a farm. Therefore, it is unlikely that growth within New Milton would increase the number of journeys passed this section of the SAC. **It can therefore be concluded that the NMNP will not cause an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC in relation to air pollution impact pathways either alone or in-combination.**

Dorset Heaths SAC & Dorset Heathland SPA & Ramsar

4.60 Dorset Heaths SAC is not present within the Parish of New Milton, the closest areas to New Milton are approximately 4km southwest at Hengistbury Head and 7km northwest north of Fairmile. The area of SAC southeast of New Milton is remote from traffic due to the nature of the land formation of Christchurch Harbour. Hengistbury Head is a spit of land with vehicular access passed the SAC (likely to be only residential access) just servicing a few properties and beach huts on Mudford Sandbank. Therefore, the level of vehicular traffic passed the SAC would be insignificant and would not be increased by daily commuter travel. Tourist visitor parking for Hengistbury Head is also located approximately 400m west of the SAC and therefore would not be increased by an increase in tourist vehicles. The A338 goes up through

[63] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[64] UK Air Pollution Information System website Available at: http://www.apis.ac.uk/node/968 [Accessed 30/01/2025]
[65] Ibid

the centre of the Dorset Heaths SAC, but it is unlikely that commuters from New Milton will go west before travelling north; they are more likely to use the A35 and A337 for northward travel, this is also true for tourists travelling east-west or north-south into New Milton.

4.61 In addition to the distance from New Milton Parish and the fact that the SAC is unlikely to be on a major commuting route to Bournemouth and Poole, the NFDC LPP1 HRA concluded that the New Forest District Local Plan would not affect the integrity of European sites. As New Milton falls within the overall quantum of growth modelled for LPP1, it **can also be concluded that the NMNP will not affect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths Habitats Sites in relation to air pollution impact pathways either alone or in-combination.**

In Combination Effects

4.62 It is a requirement of the Regulations that the impacts of any land use plan being assessed are not considered in isolation but in combination with other plans and project that may also be affecting the Habitats site(s) in question.

4.63 With regards to atmospheric pollution, the HRA[66] for the NFDCLPP1 took into consideration air quality at a district level both alone and in combination with other plans and projects and covers the level of housing allocated within the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, increases in atmospheric pollution **can be excluded from Likely Significant Effects when in combination with other plans.**

4.64 With regards to the impact of water quality, each development site will need to be fully mitigated under the conditions of the NFDC LPP1 and therefore these **can be excluded from Likely Significant Effects when in combination with other plans.**

4.65 With regards to recreational pressure, the mitigation in place (to which the developments will contribute) form a site wide mitigation designed to account for all development within the specified zones and therefore these **can be excluded from Likely Significant Effects when in combination with other plans.**

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 This assessment undertook both screening and Appropriate Assessment of the policies and site allocations within the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan.

5.2 The Habitats sites, considered within the Appropriate Assessment for impact pathways that could not be screened out at the screening stage were:

- New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar
- Solent Maritime SAC
- Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC
- Dorset Heaths SAC
- Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar

5.3 Impact pathways passed forward for Appropriate Assessment were recreational pressure, water quality and air pollution.

5.4 The conclusions and recommendations of the appropriate assessment are discussed below:

5.5 It has been concluded that the NMNP will not affect the integrity of Habitats sites in relation to recreational pressure due to provisions in the Neighbourhood Plan itself e.g. Policy NM11: Mitigating Effects on Habitats Sites, and over-arching provisions in the NFDCLPP1 and Mitigation Strategy for Habitats Sites, with which all net new housing in the NMNP will need to comply. These strategies have been put into Local Plan policy

[66] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2018/01/HRA_of_New_Forest_NPA_Local_Plan_Reg_19.pdf [Accessed 30/01/2025]

including Policy CS7 of the LPP1 and DM3 of the New Forest District Council Local Plan 2016 to 2036 Part Two (NFDC LPP2): Planning Strategy[67] of the New Forest District Local Plan.

5.6 It has been concluded that the NMNP does not affect the integrity of Habitats sites in relation to air quality. This conclusion was reached through the evidence which includes that:

- The NFDC LPP1 HRA found that the traffic modelling data provided uncertainties with regards to the New Forest SAC especially in areas that were not shielded by woodland.
- The NFDC LPP1 includes a section within Policy 10 to ensure that precautionary principles are adhered to and this involves a small developer contribution to the periodic monitoring of vegetation within the New Forest SAC. The contributions for which will also go towards mitigation if the monitoring highlights an effect in the future.
- Policy NM11 ensures compliance with Policy 10 of the NFDC LPP1 with regards to air quality where it states that residential schemes will *"where necessary [provide] financial contributions for ongoing monitoring of the New Forest SAC"*.

5.7 For the Solent sites it was concluded that the distance between the Habitats sites and New Milton would create a dispersal effect in terms of options for travel increasing with greater distance. This would mean that the number of journeys being made passed the Habitats sites due to the growth in New Milton would likely be limited and therefore a contribution that would be insignificant. This coupled with the fact that the areas around the nearest section of SAC to be affected are likely to be controlled more heavily in terms of nitrogen concentrations by the washing of the tide, rather than by vehicular movements.

5.8 For the Dorset sites, the area closest to New Milton is located on Hengistbury Head, this is a remote location with limited vehicular access (visitor car park is located 400m west of the SAC). The area of SAC which is north of Fairmile is approximately 7km west of the New Milton Parish boundary, at this distance the traffic dispersal will increase as well as the SAC being remote from any large east-west commuting routes.

5.9 It has been concluded that the NMNP does not affect the integrity of Habitats sites within the Solent in relation to water quality. This conclusion was reached as the NFDCLPP1 states that the council will proportionally support the agencies in the development of strategic solutions to reducing nutrient input into the Solent. The NMNP also includes a clause within Policy NM11 which supports the PUSH Policy 13 regarding wastewater treatment as well as including provision to ensure that development within the Parish over the Plan period will keep pace with treatment capacity and infrastructure so as not affect the integrity of the Solent sites.

5.10 It can be concluded that the Plan document will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any Habitats sites either alone or in combination.

[67] Available at: https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1463/Local-Plan-Part-2-Sites-and-Development-Management [Accessed 28/01/2025]

Appendix A Habitats Sites

A.1 Dorset Heathlands SPA

Introduction

The Dorset Heathlands SPA lies within the Dorset Heaths Natural Character Area, covering an extensive and one of the best developed heathland complex in the UK. The site encompasses transitions between a range of habitats, including dry heath, wet heath and acid mire habitats, as well as a range of associated habitats (e.g. acid grassland, fen-meadow and bog woodland).

A range of qualifying bird species are supported by the SPA, including Dartford warbler, nightjar, woodlark (all breeding species), hen harrier and merlin (both overwintering species). Disturbance by human activity, especially in proximity to the conurbations of Poole and Bournemouth, has been a long-standing issue in the SPA, with particular significance for ground-nesting woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler (the latter primarily nesting low in gorse bushes). Frequent human disturbance can lead to changes in bird behaviour, including increased energy expenditure, reduced chick provisioning and abandonment of preferred feeding areas / nests.

Qualifying Features[68]

Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1):

During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports

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

During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*
- Merlin *Falco columbianus*

[68] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5808199001178112 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

Conservation Objectives[69]

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;

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[70]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Dorset Heathlands SPA are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Inappropriate scrub control
- Public access / disturbance
- Undergrazing
- Forestry and woodland management
- Drainage
- Water pollution
- Invasive species
- Habitat fragmentation

[69] Ibid
[70] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5181909839642624 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Conflicting conservation objectives
- Wildfire / arson
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Deer

A.2 Dorset Heathlands Ramsar

Introduction

The Dorset Heathlands Ramsar is an extensive and fragmented site, which is centred around the estuary of Poole Harbour and near the growth centres of Bournemouth and Poole. Among the habitats within the site are several examples of wet heath and acid valley mire, generally restricted to the Atlantic fringe of Europe. Transitions to coastal wetland and fen are also found. The wetland flora and fauna includes a diverse array of nationally rare and scarce species (e.g. invertebrates).

The high degree of fragmentation within the site is largely due to historic losses of heathland, estimated at 75% during the 20th century, due to development, agriculture and afforestation. Generally, areas of wet heath are concentrated in areas of impeded drainage and less steeply-sloping ground.

Qualifying Features[71]

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

Ramsar criterion 1

Contains particularly good examples of (i) northern Atlantic wet heaths with cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* and (ii) acid mire with *Rhynchosporion*.

Contains largest example in Britain of southern Atlantic wet heaths with Dorset heath *Erica ciliaris* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*.

Ramsar criterion 2

Supports 1 nationally rare and 13 nationally scarce wetland plant species, and at least 28 nationally rare wetland invertebrate species.

Ramsar criterion 3

Has a high species richness and high ecological diversity of wetland habitat types and transitions, and lies in one of the most biologically-rich wetland areas of lowland Britain, being continuous with three other Ramsar sites: Poole Harbour, Avon Valley and The New Forest.

[71] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11021.pdf [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

Threats and Pressures[72]

Natural England does not publish SIPs for Ramsars, but past and present factors affecting the ecological character of the site are listed in the Information Sheet on Ramsar wetlands:

- Acid rain
- Aquatic pollution – unspecified

A.3 Dorset Heaths SAC

Introduction

The Dorset Heaths SAC is a 5,719.54ha large site that comprises a range of habitats, including heath / scrub (86%), bogs / marshes (8%), inland water bodies (1%), dry grassland / steppes (1%), humid grassland (1%), broad-leaved deciduous woodland (1%), coniferous woodland (1%) and mixed woodland (1%). The site is important in sustaining and range of rare / scarce habitats and species.

Dry heath habitat typically occurs on infertile soils and is dominated by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bell heather *Erica cinerea*, gorse *Ulex europaeus*, dwarf gorse *U. minor* and western gorse *U. gallii*. While the floral diversity in these habitats is not high, nationally scarce plants may occur, including mossy stonecrop *Crassula tillaea* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. The dry heathland mosaic supports important and diverse faunal assemblages, such as grasshoppers (Orthoptera), bees and wasps (Hymenoptera), spiders (Arachnida) and all six British native reptile species.

Wet heaths develop over areas of less permeable soils and on gentler sloping ground (e.g. valley bottoms). These are dominated by cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, purple moor-grass *Molinia* spp. and the bog-moss *Sphagnum compactum*. Furthermore, Dorset heath *Erica ciliaris* here has its principal location in the UK, often occurring in abundance. Wet heath often grades into acid mire communities (*Rhynchosporion* associated with depressions on peat).

Acid mire communities within the SAC support small pockets of wet woodland (e.g. downy birch *Betula pubescens*, greater tussock sedge *Carex paniculate* and purple moor-grass *Molinia* spp). Heathland wetlands support a range of invertebrate species, such as red damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum*, southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*, large marsh grasshopper *Stethophyma grossum* and great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus*.

Qualifying Features[73]

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

- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*

[72] Ibid
[73] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0019857 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- European dry heaths
- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*

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

- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)
- Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* (* priority feature)
- Alkaline fens
- Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains

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

- Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*

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

- Great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

Conservation Objectives[74]

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;

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,

[74] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5711678738006016 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[75]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Dorset Heaths SAC are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Inappropriate scrub control
- Public access / disturbance
- Undergrazing
- Forestry and woodland management
- Drainage
- Water pollution
- Invasive species
- Habitat fragmentation
- Conflicting conservation objectives
- Wildfire / arson
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Deer

A.4 Avon Valley SPA

Introduction

The Avon Valley SPA stretches on a north-south axis along the border between Dorset and Hampshire, largely encompassing the lower reaches of the River Avon and its floodplain. It comprises a wide, flat valley bottom of derelict water meadows, pasture and arable land surrounding a meandering river. The valley sits predominantly on alluvial soils with subordinate deposits of sand. Much of the valley is open grassland fields with boundary ditches, small woodland parcels, fen areas and old gravel pits. Two species of designated overwintering birds

[75] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5181909839642624 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

occur within the site, including Bewick'swan and gadwall. Overall, the floodplain grassland and gravel pits support internationally and nationally important populations of five waterfowl species.

Bewick's swan are much smaller than both mute and whooper swan and have faster wingbeats. They undertake annual winter migrations between Siberia and the UK. The abundance of Bewick's swan has decreased markedly from 156 individuals (between 1988/89 to 1992/93) to a maximum of 1 individual (between 2014/15 and 2017/18). In two of the recent winters no Bewick's swans were recorded within the SPA. Bewick's swan rely on short, open wet grassland for foraging and open water and flooded grassland for roosting. The historic foraging utilisation within the SPA has been uneven, with some areas (grassland around Harbridge) used much more frequently than others.

Gadwall are medium-sized dabbling ducks, the abundance and distribution of which has increased markedly over the past 40 years. At classification, the SPA supported 667 individuals (five-year average between 1988/89 and 1992/93). The latest five-year average (2012/13 to 2017/18) indicates that the population abundance has increased to 829 individuals. Gadwall utilise freshwater lakes, gravel pits and reservoirs for foraging all year round. Feeding on water weeds, they require nutrient-rich waters. In the Avon Valley winter use mainly centres around Blashford Lakes.

Qualifying Features[76]

Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1):

During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*

Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.2):

During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Gadwall *Anas strepera*

Conservation Objectives[77]

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;

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

[76] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5741820348727296 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[77] Ibid

- 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[78]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Avon Valley SPA are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Physical modification
- Siltation
- Water pollution
- Water abstraction
- Changes in species distributions
- Invasive species
- Public access / disturbance
- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate weed control
- Change in land management
- Habitat fragmentation

[78] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6133502894407680 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

A.5 Avon Valley Ramsar

Introduction

The Avon Valley Ramsar encompasses the lower reaches of the River Avon and its associated floodplain between Bickton and Christchurch. It displays wide fluctuations in water levels with part of the site being regularly flooded in winter. The Ramsar supports a greater range of habitats, flora and fauna than any other chalk river in Britain. Of particular importance are its large expanses of unimproved floodplain grassland with large sections being managed as hay meadows.

The Information Sheet for the Avon Valley Ramsar lists an extensive list of habitat types for the site, including seasonally flooded mesotrophic grassland, dry acid grassland, standing freshwater and gravel pits.

Qualifying Features[79]

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

Ramsar criterion 1

The site shows a greater range of habitats than any other chalk river in Britain, including fen, mire, lowland wet grassland and small areas of woodland.

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports a diverse assemblage of wetland flora and fauna including several nationally-rare species.

Ramsar criterion 6

Species / populations occurring at levels of international importance:

Species with peak counts in winter (as identified at designation)

- Gadwall *Anas strepera strepera*; 537 individuals, representing an average of 3.1% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter (identified subsequent to designation for future possible consideration under criterion 6)

- Northern pintail *Anas acuta*; 715 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)
- Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*; 1,142 individuals, representing an average of 3.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/99 – 2002/03)

[79] Available at: https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK11005.pdf [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

Threats and Pressures[80]

Natural England does not publish SIPs for Ramsars, but past and present factors affecting the ecological character of the site are listed in the Information Sheet on Ramsar wetlands:

- Disturbance to vegetation through cutting / clearing
- Vegetation succession
- Drainage / land claim for agriculture
- Sedimentation / siltation
- Introduction / invasion of non-native plant species
- Pollution – domestic sewage and agricultural fertilisers
- Recreational / tourism disturbance
- Reservoir / barrage / dam impact: Flow regime

A.6 River Avon SAC

Introduction

The River Avon SAC is a 416.57ha large designated site, comprising inland water bodies (95%, i.e. the river feature itself), bogs / marshes (2%), heath / scrub (2%) and broad-leaved deciduous woodland (1%). The River Avon and its tributaries (R. Nadder, Wylye and Bourne) are chalk freshwater bodies converging in the cathedral city of Salisbury. Beyond the convergence of these rivers, the R. Avon becomes more strongly anastomosed and branching. It flows through a landscape of rolling chalk grassland, ancient woodland, chalk escarpment and downland hillsides. The R. Avon and its tributaries are included in the SAC designation due to their importance for water crowfoot, starwort, Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, brook lamprey, bullhead and Desmoulin's whorl snail.

The SAC supports over 180 species of plants (including the water crowfoot and starworts that grow in clumps on the river bed), which in turn sustain a diverse assemblage of invertebrates (e.g. mayflies and snails), fish and birds. The Desmoulin's whorl snail is found in the associated floodplain wetlands. While some broadleaved woodland along the river corridor remains, large tracts of riparian woody vegetation have been lost in recent times. Both the R. Avon and the R. Bourne are highly managed and constrained in urban areas.

Recreational fishing is a very popular activity along the entire river corridor, including salmon and coarse fishing in the lower reaches, as well as fishing for trout and grayling in the upper reaches. The hydrology in the river is sustained by productive aquifers (e.g. Upper Greensand, Limestone and Chalk), which result in stable river flow regimes (79-90% groundwater fed). Notably, these aquifers are also exploited for public water supply and some large non-consumptive water abstractions downstream from Salisbury. The Upper Greensand geology

[80] Ibid

underlying the upper reaches of the SAC contributes to high baseline phosphorus levels in the rivers. While substantial improvements in water quality have been achieved over recent years (particularly due to technological improvements in Wastewater Treatment Works), the SAC is still impacted by effects from nutrient enrichment from diffuse and point sources.

Qualifying Features[81]

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

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

- Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*
- Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*
- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*

Conservation Objectives[82]

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;

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,

[81] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0013016 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[82] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6048472272732160 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Threats / Pressures to Site Integrity[83]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the River Avon SAC are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Physical modification
- Siltation
- Water pollution
- Water abstraction
- Changes in species distributions
- Invasive species
- Public access / disturbance
- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate weed control
- Change in land management
- Habitat fragmentation

A.7 New Forest SPA

Introduction

The New Forest SPA is a 27,997.59ha large site that sits within the New Forest National Character Area and the New Forest National Park. It comprises the largest area of unsown vegetation in lowland England and mosaic of habitats shaped by an interplay of geology and traditional communing grazing system. The SPA sits in a dip of the surrounding chalk and is characterised by acid, nutrient-poor soils that have low permeability.

[83] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6133502894407680 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

The great variation in soils is reflected in the New Forest's distinctive vegetation, which includes lowland heath, valley mire, ancient pasture woodland and several types of grassland. In turn the site supports an exceptionally rich bird fauna, including internationally important breeding and overwintering populations. During the breeding season, the SPA supports internationally important populations of Dartford warbler, nightjar, woodlark, honey buzzard, hobby and wood warbler. Hen harrier are supported in the overwintering period.

Given the site's proximity to two major urban areas, the National Park Authority estimates that it receives over 15 million annual day visits, making it an extremely attractive recreational resource. This recreational use places pressure on the designated bird species, particularly from dog walkers.

Qualifying Features[84]

Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1):

During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*
- Honey buzzard *Pernis apivorus*
- Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*
- Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

During the non-breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.2):

During the breeding season the SPA regularly supports

- Hobby *Falco Subbuteo*
- Wood warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Conservation Objectives[85]

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;

[84] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5816333400801280 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[85] Ibid

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[86]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the New Forest SPA are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Drainage
- Inappropriate scrub control
- Fish stocking
- Deer
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Public access / disturbance
- Change in land management
- Changes in species distributions
- Water pollution
- Forestry and woodland management
- Inappropriate ditch management

[86] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5174614971908096 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Invasive species
- Vehicles
- Inappropriate cutting / mowing
- Direct impact from 3rd party

A.8 New Forest Ramsar

Introduction

The New Forest Ramsar is an area of semi-natural vegetation that encompasses a range of habitats, including valley mires, fens and wet heaths. Due to the largely uncultivated and undeveloped nature of their aquatic catchments, these habitats display high ecological quality (especially the suite of mires). Other wetland habitats include several ephemeral ponds of varying water chemistry. The plant communities in the valleys and seepage mires show considerable diversity, being fed primarily by nutrients from groundwater. In most nutrient-poor zones, dominant plants include *Sphagnum* bog-mosses, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel and common cottongrass. More nutrient-rich areas support fen-like communities.

Qualifying Features[87]

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

Ramsar criterion 1

Valley mires and wet heaths are found throughout the site and are of outstanding scientific interest. The mires and heaths are within catchments whose uncultivated and undeveloped state buffer the mires against adverse ecological change. This is the largest concentration of intact valley mires of their type in Britain.

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports a diverse assemblage of wetland plants and animals including several nationally rare species. Seven species of nationally rare plants are found on the site, as are at least 65 British Red Data Book species of invertebrate.

The higher plants *Cicendia filiformis*, *Illecebrum verticillatum* and *Myosurus minimus* are considered vulnerable by the GB Red Book; while *Mentha pulegium* and *Ranunculus tripartitus* are included as endangered; and *Pulicaria vulgaris* as critically endangered. The dark guest ant *Anergates atratulus* is also considered vulnerable by the IUCN Red List.

Ramsar criterion 3

[87] Available at: https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB622RIS.pdf?language=en [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

The mire habitats are of high ecological quality and diversity and have undisturbed transition zones. The invertebrate fauna of the site is important due to the concentration of rare and scarce wetland species. The whole site complex, with its examples of semi-natural habitats is essential to the genetic and ecological diversity of southern England. The site contains a rich invertebrate fauna.

Threats and Pressures[88]

Natural England does not publish SIPs for Ramsars, but past and present factors affecting the ecological character of the site are listed in the Information Sheet on Ramsar wetlands:

- Commercial scale forest exploitation
- Drainage / reclamation
- Introduction / invasion of exotic plant species
- Recreational / tourism disturbance

A.9 The New Forest SAC

Introduction

The New Forest SAC is a 29,213.57ha large site comprising a range of habitats, including heath / scrub (34%), broad-leaved deciduous woodland (29%), coniferous woodland (17%), dry grassland / steppes (10%), bogs / marshes (7%) and humid grassland (3%). It falls within the New Forest National Character Area and encompasses the largest area of unplanted vegetation in lowland England. Notable habitats include lowland heath, valley and seepage step mires, ancient pasture woodland and various types of grassland. Outstanding examples of thirteen habitats of European interest are present together with two priority habitat types. In turn, this complex habitat mosaic supports high diversity of fauna and flora. Traditional management techniques (grazing, heathland burning and cutting) maintain high structural diversity and niche availability.

One of the scarcest habitats within the SAC are oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals (as occurs in one of the ponds at Hatchet Pond). Oligotrophic waterbodies are usually very clear and have moderate acidity. The destruction of lowland heathland, land drainage and nutrient enrichment have contributed to the rarity of this habitat type. These habitats are characterised by the presence of water lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna*, shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* and quillwort *Isoetes lacustris*.

Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* are another important qualifying habitat of the New Forest SAC. Their vegetation tends to be very open and is characterised by abundant white beak-sedge *Rhynchospora alba*, algal mats, the bog moss *Sphagnum denticulatum*, round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and brown mosses (the latter occurring where flushing with mineral-rich waters is present). The New Forest holds the largest aggregation of depressions on peat substrates in England, primarily in natural bog pools, flushes on the margins of valley mires and areas disturbed by peat-digging, trampling, tracks and ditches. The mosaics in which this habitat occurs are an important location for bog orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*.

[88] Ibid

Qualifying Features[89]

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

- Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*)
- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletalia uniflorae* and / or of the *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea*
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)
- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*
- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*)
- *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests
- Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains
- Bog woodland (* priority feature)
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) (* priority feature)

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

- Transition mires and quaking bogs
- Alkaline fens

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

- Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercurial*
- Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*

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

[89] Available at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0012557 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Great-crested newt *Triturus cristatus*

Conservation Objectives[90]

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;

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[91]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of The New Forest SAC are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Drainage
- Inappropriate scrub control
- Fish stocking
- Deer
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Public access / disturbance
- Change in land management

[90] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5727577884852224 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[91] Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5174614971908096 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Changes in species distributions
- Water pollution
- Forestry and woodland management
- Inappropriate ditch management
- Invasive species
- Vehicles
- Inappropriate cutting / mowing
- Direct impact from 3rd party

A.10 Solent and Southampton Water SPA

Introduction

The Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) is located on the south English coast. The 54 km² area extends from Hurst Spit to Hill Head along the south coast of Hampshire, and from Yarmouth to Whitecliff Bay along the north coast of the Isle of Wight. The site comprises a series of estuaries and harbours with extensive mudflats and saltmarshes together with adjacent coastal habitats including saline lagoons and shingle beaches, reedbeds, damp woodland and grazing marsh. The mudflats support beds of Enteromorpha spp. and Zostera spp. and have a rich invertebrate fauna that forms the food resource for the estuarine birds. In summer, the site is of importance for breeding seabirds, including gulls and four species of terns. In winter, the SPA holds a large and diverse assemblage of waterbirds.

Qualifying Features[92]

Qualifying individual species listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.1) (Breeding):

- Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus)*
- Sandwich tern (*sterna sandvicensis*)
- Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*)
- Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*)

[92] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6224743971684352 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Roseate tern (*Sterna dougali*)

Qualifying individual species not listed in Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive (Article 4.2) (Non-breeding):

- Dark bellied-brent geese (*Branta bernicla bernicla)*
- Teal (*Anas crecca*)
- Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)
- Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

Conservation Objectives[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;

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 and Pressures[94]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Solent Maritime SAC are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate pest control

[93] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5932771361161216 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[94] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Extraction: non-living resources
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Public access / disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Direct land take from development
- Fisheries: Commercial and estuarine
- Change in land management
- Changes in species distributions
- Water pollution
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Biological resource use

A.11 Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar

Introduction

The site is comprised of estuaries and adjacent coastal habitats including intertidal flats, saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reefs, saltmarsh, and reedbeds, damp woodland, and grazing marsh. The site exhibits an "unusual strong double tidal flow" and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It supports internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl (51,361 over the winter), important breeding gull and tern populations, and an impressive assemblage of rare invertebrates and plants. Human activities include tourism, recreation, fishing, marine aquaculture, and hunting.

Qualifying Features[95]

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

Ramsar criterion 1

The site is one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland in European waters, exhibiting an unusual strong double tidal flow and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the biogeographic region: saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reedbeds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs.

Ramsar criterion 2

The site supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. At least 33 British Red Data Book invertebrates and at least eight British Red Data Book plants are represented on site.

The higher plants Orobanche purpurea and Spartina maritima are considered vulnerable and endangered, respectively, in the GB Red Book.

The Mediterranean gull (*Larus melanocephalus*) is included in CITES Appendix I

Ramsar criterion 5

Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 51,343 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar criterion 6

Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter.

- Black-tailed godwit, (*Limosa limosa islandica*) 1,240 individuals
- Dark-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*) 6,456 individuals,
- Eurasian teal (*Anas crecca*) 5,514 individuals.

Threats and Pressures[96]

Natural England does not publish SIPs for Ramsars, but past and present factors adversely affecting the ecological character of the site are listed in the Information Sheet on Ramsar wetlands:

[95] Available at: https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/RISrep/GB965RIS.pdf [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[96] Ibid

- Erosion

Estuaries within the Ramsar site are used for a wide range of leisure and recreational activities, particularly water-based recreation:

- Dog walking
- Bait digging
- Water sports
- Egg collection

A.12 Solent Maritime SAC

Introduction

The Solent encompasses a major estuarine system on the south coast of England with four coastal plain estuaries (Yar, Medina, King's Quay Shore, Hamble) and four bar-built estuaries (Newtown Harbour, Beaulieu, Langstone Harbour, Chichester Harbour). The site is the only one in the series to contain more than one physiographic sub-type of estuary and is the only cluster site. The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their hydrographic regime of four tides each day, and for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present within the area. Sediment habitats within the estuaries include extensive estuarine flats, often with intertidal areas supporting eelgrass Zostera spp. and green algae, sand and shingle spits, and natural shoreline transitions. The mudflats range from low and variable salinity in the upper reaches of the estuaries to very sheltered almost fully marine muds in Chichester and Langstone Harbours. Unusual features include the presence of very rare sponges in the Yar estuary and a sandy 'reef' of the polychaete *Sabellaria spinulosa* on the steep eastern side of the entrance to Chichester Harbour.

Solent Maritime is the only site for smooth cord-grass *Spartina alterniflora* in the UK and is one of only two sites where significant amounts of small cord-grass *S. maritima* are found. It is also one of the few remaining sites for Townsend's cord-grass *S. x townsendii* and holds extensive areas of common cord-grass *Spartina anglica*, all four taxa thus occurring here in close proximity. It has additional historical and scientific interest as the site where *S. alterniflora* was first recorded in the UK (1829) and where *S. x townsendii* and, later, *S. anglica* first occurred.

The Solent contains the second-largest aggregation of Atlantic salt meadows in south and south-west England. Solent Maritime is a composite site composed of a large number of separate areas of saltmarsh. In contrast to the Severn estuary, the salt meadows at this site are notable as being representative of the ungrazed type and support a different range of communities dominated by sea-purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*, common sea-lavender *Limonium vulgare* and thrift *Armeria maritima*. As a whole the site is less truncated by man-made features than other parts of the south coast and shows rare and unusual transitions to freshwater reedswamp and alluvial woodland as well as coastal grassland. Typical Atlantic salt meadow is still widespread in this site, despite a long history of colonisation by cord-grass Spartina spp.

Qualifying Features[97]

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

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

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
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks
- Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand
- "Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (""white dunes"")"

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

- Desmoulin's whorl snail Vertigo moulinsiana

Conservation Objectives[98]

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;

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;

[97] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5064469629632512 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[98] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5336347464433664 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- 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[99]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Solent Maritime SAC are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate pest control
- Direct impact from 3rd party
- Extraction: non-living resources
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Public access / disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Direct land take from development
- Fisheries: Commercial and estuarine
- Change in land management
- Changes in species distributions
- Water pollution

[99] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Biological resource use

A.13 Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC

Introduction

The Solent on the south coast of England encompasses a series of Coastal lagoons, including percolation, isolated and sluiced lagoons. The site includes a number of lagoons in the marshes in the Keyhaven – Pennington area, at Farlington Marshes in Chichester Harbour, behind the sea-wall at Bembridge Harbour and at Gilkicker, near Gosport. The lagoons show a range of salinities and substrates, ranging from soft mud to muddy sand with a high proportion of shingle, which support a diverse fauna including large populations of three notable species: the nationally rare foxtail stonewort (*Lamprothamnium papulosum*), the nationally scarce lagoon sand shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*), and the nationally scarce starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*). The lagoons in Keyhaven – Pennington Marshes are part of a network of ditches and ponds within the saltmarsh behind a sea-wall. Farlington Marshes is an isolated lagoon in marsh pasture that, although separated from the sea by a sea-wall, receives sea water during spring tides. The lagoon holds a well-developed low-medium salinity insect-dominated fauna. Gilkicker Lagoon is a sluiced lagoon with marked seasonal salinity fluctuation and supports a high species diversity. The lagoons at Bembridge Harbour have formed in a depression behind the sea-wall and sea water enters by percolation. Species diversity in these lagoons is high and the fauna includes very high densities of *N. vectensis*.

Qualifying Features[100]

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

- Coastal lagoons

Conservation Objectives[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;

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;

[100] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5821200185950208 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]
[101] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5612650092560384 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

- 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[102]

The following threats and pressures to the integrity of the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC are specified in Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP):

- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate weed control
- Coastal squeeze
- Invasive species
- Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

[102] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5670639268528128 [Accessed on the 16/12/2024]

Appendix B LSEs Screening

Table B-1 Policy and Site Allocation Screening Table

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
Policy NM1 A Spatial Plan for New Milton	The Neighbourhood Plan directs all significant residential, employment, commercial and cultural development to the town of New Milton, as shown on the Policies Map. Barton-on-Sea, as shown on the Policies Map, is mainly suited to small scale, infill residential and tourism development, as opportunities arise. Development outside New Milton town and Barton-on-Sea will only be supported if it accords with the development plan policies relating to the Green Belt or the New Forest National Park, as relevant.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy is an overall spatial management policy which does not provide a quantum of development merely directs development the appropriate areas of the Parish.
Policy NM2 Diversifying Housing	Proposals for all residential development should seek to include in their housing mix a type and tenure suitable for first time buyers or those looking to rent their first home. A. Housing development of 11 or more dwellings must deliver 50% affordable housing on site. B. Affordable housing must be delivered in the form of: • 30% affordable homeownership • 70% affordable rent and social rent, with the mix to be determined on a site-by-site basis at the planning stage C. Proposals for residential development will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to address the nature of local needs and contribute to the objective of creating a mixed and balanced community. To achieve this objective, provision should be made for smaller dwellings (1&2 bedrooms), which should compromise 60% or more of the total in schemes of five or more dwellings. D. All development proposals should be delivered as accessible and adaptable dwellings in accordance with Building Regulations M4(2), unless evidence can be provided to demonstrate that such provision would be impracticable or render the scheme unviable. The provision of homes constructed to Building Regulations Part M4(3) for wheelchair accessible homes will also be supported.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy does not provide for a quantum of housing, it is a development management policy ensuing a diversity of housing within residential developments.
Policy NM3 Land at Caird Avenue	The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land east of Caird Avenue, as shown on the Policies Map, for a mixed-use development comprising business and/or health care facilities and green infrastructure.	This policy provides for 1,800m^2 of class E (c-g) employment floor space in addition to health care facilities and green infrastructure.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	Development proposals should have full regard to the following principles and the retail scheme subject to an appropriate sequential test to prevent inappropriate Class E development in this out-of-town centre location. a. The employment scheme shall comprise land to deliver 1,800 sqm. GEA of class E(c), E(e) or E(g) floor space to be accessed from the southern access road only; b. Any class E(c) or E(g) Business Innovation Hub shall comprise flexible, affordable office accommodation to serve start-up businesses will be supported to assist in the diversification of the local economy and should included access to ultra-fast broadband and providing a support hub for local businesses including training and seminar facilities. c. Any class E€ Health and Wellbeing Hub development proposals will be supported for the co-location of health and wellbeing services and for an expanded facility to serve a larger and more diverse local community. d. The green infrastructure scheme shall comprise: i. an effective landscape buffer to screen the adjoining minerals operations, the employment land from residential development and to screen Carrick Way Woodland a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation; ii. the retention of existing trees on the southern boundary and retention of the existing shelter belt of mature trees/hedgerow and green verges on the western boundary to maintain the green setting of Caird Avenue; and, iii. any measures that are required to satisfy the Habitat Regulations and the adopted New Forest Special Protection Area Mitigation Strategy or future requirements; e. The layout of the schemes allows for, and does not compromise, the continuing minerals operations adjoining the site boundary; and f. The infrastructure scheme shall comprise: i. A comprehensive package of on and off-site transport and movement measures that link to the movement network defined in Policy NM14 to satisfactorily mitigate the effect of the comprehensive scheme on local roads and to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport; and ii. The delivery and maintenance of an effective sustainable drainage system including the protection of the Danes Stream and the retention of at least an 8m buffer zone.	**The following are potential impact pathways that could link this policy to Habitats sites.** - Air Quality; and - Water Quality. The centroid grid reference for this allocation is: SZ25489454 and is within 10km of: - New Forest SAC, Ramsar, SPA (3.6km N) - Solent & Southampton Water Ramsar, SPA (4.4km SE) - Solent Maritime SAC (4.8km SE) - Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC (6.9km W) - Dorset Heathlands SPA, Ramsar (8km SW) - Dorset Heaths SAC (8km SE) - Avon Valley SPA, Ramsar (9.1km W) - River Avon SAC (9.2km W) **Therefore, the policy is screened in for Appropriate Assessment.**

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	g. The layout of the site is planned to ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing processes.	
Policy NM4: Design Quality	All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed to reflect the distinctive character of the town, as described in the New Milton Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document, and of the settlements within the New Forest National Park. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development also has full regard to the New Milton Design Code and the following guidance. i. Is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and well-connected greenspace integrated with existing landscape features; ii. Contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open space to provide natural surveillance; iii. Creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape; iv. Contributes to local distinctiveness and where possible should enhance local character and heritage including the special character of the New Forest National Park. v. Protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area; vi. Does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight; vii. Creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible; viii. Incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment and consideration should be given to availability of electric vehicle charging points in communal parking areas; ix. Positively addresses climate change through early consideration of layout and building design, and through passive design, energy efficiency and renewable energy measures; x. Takes the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a focus of community; and xi. Optimises the potential of the site deliver housing typologies suited to younger people and families in accordance with other policies of the development plan; and,	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a development management policy based on design principles which are reflected in the New Milton Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document. This policy does not allocate a quantum of residential development and therefore no impact pathways have been identified for this policy.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	xii. Optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development. In addition to the above requirements all development proposals must ensure the protection of local biodiversity assets and should seek to provide additional habitat resources for wildlife and green spaces for the community that result in a biodiversity 'net' gain for the town. Larger developments of over 50 dwellings should include areas which will provide a community focus and amenities such as communal gardens. New and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community subject to other policies in the development plan.	
Policy NM5 New Milton Town Centre Regeneration area	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the New Milton Town Centre sites 1-15 shown on the Policies Inset Map and listed below, for the purpose of supporting regeneration opportunities to deliver at least 250 homes and retail, cultural, health and business investment. 1. Memorial Centre (.32ha) 2. Station Road(1.08ha) 3. Station Road East (.41ha) 4. Manor Road North (.18ha) 5. Manor Road South (0.34ha) 6. Osborne Road Car Park (.24ha) 7. Spencer Road (GP & Car Park) (.28ha) 8. Spencer Road (Morrisons Car Park) (.20ha) 9. Spencer Road (Tek Exchange) (.15ha) 10. Spencer Road Car Park (.7ha) 11. Shops East of Bradbeers Dept Store (0.228ha) 12. Bradbeers Dept Store (0.12ha) 13. Elm Avenue Car Park (.59ha) 14. Crossmead Avenue Car Park (.40ha) 15. Gore Road Library (.214ha) A. Proposals for redevelopment will be supported provided they demonstrate how they will contribute to the Town Centre Masterplan and accord with relevant policies of the Development Plan.	This policy supports residential development within all areas of the Town Centre (A-F on the policies map). The policy states that at least 250 dwellings will be directed towards the regeneration area. **The following are potential impact pathways that could link this policy to Habitats sites.** - Recreational Pressure; - Air Quality; and - Water Quality. The centroid grid reference of the Town Centre Regeneration Area is: SZ24349500 and is within 10km of: - New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar (2.9 km N) - Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Ramsar (5.4 km SE) - Solent Maritime SAC (5.8 km SE) - Dorset Heathlands SPA (7.0 km SW) - Dorset Heaths SAC (7.0 km SW) - Avon Valley SPA, Ramsar (7.8 km W) - River Avon SAC (7.9 km W) - Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons (8.4 km E) - Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (9.0 km W) **Therefore, the policy is screened in for Appropriate Assessment.**

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	B. Development proposals, where adjoining a proposed route defined in Policy NM11, must ensure that the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are fully taken into account and that commercial uses can continue to be serviced. C. Proposals to create livelier and more active street frontages and an improved public realm along Station Road and Old Milton Road, will be supported. Such proposals might include widened footpaths, attractive pedestrian and cycle crossings, the introduction of areas of shared space, street planting and junction improvements.	
Policy NM6 Heritage and Information Centre	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies New Milton Station, as shown on the Policies Inset Map, as a Town Centre redevelopment scheme. Development proposals will be supported for the conversion of the Station Masters house to aheritage/information centre.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy supports the conversion of the Station Masters house to a heritage and information centre. This policy does not provide for a quantum of housing or tourist accommodation.
Policy NM7 Cultural/Arts Hub	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the provision of a Cultural/ Art Hub, as shown on the Policies Map, as a Town Centre redevelopment scheme, Development proposals will be supported for the redevelopment of the current community and ancillary buildings to create new multi-purpose cultural facility for the town and the improvement of the War Memorial Recreation Ground as the main town park. The proposals must include the provision of a footpath link with the site to improve connectivity between Old Milton Road and Gore Road to Station Road and Whitefield Road.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment. There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy supports the redevelopment of current buildings on site to create a multi-purpose cultural facility and supports improvements to the War Memorial Recreation Ground. The policy does not allocate a quantum of housing or employment space.
Policy NM8 Health and Wellbeing Centre	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Health and Wellbeing Centre, as shown on the Policies Map, as a town Centre redevelopment scheme. Development proposals will be supported for the co-location of health and well-being services and for an expanded facility to serve a larger and more diverse local community.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy relates to supporting improvements for health and well-being services. This policy does not allocate a quantum of housing or employment space.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
Policy NM9 Innovation and Business Centre	This Policy has been deleted	This Policy has been deleted
Policy NM10: Buildings of Local Heritage and Townscape Value	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following buildings and structures, as shown on the policies map, as having local heritage and townscape value: i. Lloyds Bank building, 47 Station Road ii. New Milton Station buildings, platforms and canopies – both sides iii. The former Milton Hall iv. Nos 25-27 Station Road v. Post Office Sorting Office, Station Road Development proposals that will result in the loss or substantial harm to a Building of Local Heritage & Townscape Value will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweigh the significance of the asset.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a heritage protection policy and works to ensure that development of the town does not result in the loss or substantial harm to any heritage assets.
Policy NM11: Mitigating Effects on European Sites	Residential schemes will be required to include proposals for mitigating their effects on European sites. This could be through on-site provision or off-site financial contributions in accordance with the requirements of the development plan, including compliance with the Mitigation Strategy for European Sites (Recreational Pressure from Residential Development) SPD as it applies to New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar site. Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site, and where necessary financial contributions for ongoing monitoring for the New Forest SAC. In addition to the above requirements, all development proposals should have regard to: i. water quality and the mitigation of nutrient enrichment so as not to undermine Policy 13 of the South Hampshire Strategy October 2012: and, ii. treatment and infrastructure capacity to avoid water quality impacts on the integrity of European site within the Solent.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is an environment protection policy and works to ensure that the integrity of Habitats sites are not adversely affected. This is a positive environmental policy.
Policy NM12 Promoting Walking and Cycling	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a walking/cycling network, as shown on the Policies Map, with the purpose of supporting healthy and safe active travel opportunities. Proposals which create opportunities to improve this network including new walking and cycling routes to connect the existing and new residential areas of the parish with the Town Centre will be supported.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy is promoting walking and cycling as sustainable transport. The development which is supported within this policy will be subject to other policies within the neighbourhood plan to ensure no effect on Habitats sites, the policy here is solely to ensure financial contributions to improve

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	Development proposals on land that lies within proximity of the 'Green Loop' will be supported where they: i. Demonstrate how they sustain or enhance the collective function of the network; ii. In proximity to Danes Stream and Becton Bunny opportunities are taken to open up culverts and create habitat enhancements while maintaining at least an 8m buffer from any works; and iii. Have regard to how their landscape schemes, layouts, access and public open space provision and other amenity requirements may contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the network, while avoiding having an urbanising effect on any existing Public Rights of Way. Development proposals requiring the preparation and agreement of travel plans as planning conditions or obligations, are required to prioritise in their travel interventions the making of financial contributions to footpath and cycleway improvement projects connecting their schemes with the town centre, including the strategic allocations in the current NFDC Local Plan (2016-2036 or subsequent version). Development proposals that will result on the unnecessary loss or obstruction of a section of cycleway or footway, that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated will be resisted.	pathways and cycle routes are provided by development in proximity to the "Green Loop".
Policy NM13: Barton-on-Sea	In line with the role for new development at Barton-on -Sea as set out in Policy NM1, development proposals will be supported, provided they have demonstrated regard to the New Milton Design Guidance and Codes as they relate to Barton-on-Sea design characteristics as follows: Barton Seafront i. Openness of frontage, spaciousness, views and skyline ii. Consistent building lines iii. Consistent boundary heights iv. Consistent eaves and ridge heights v. Consistent forms of building mass, height and the building line vi. Deep fronted garden margin vii. Wide green verge, uninterrupted by cars viii. Variety of architecture ix. Open grassed cliff-top plateau and grass verge x. Shoreline scrub and characteristic wind pruned trees xi. Occasional landmark trees	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a development management policy focusing on keeping new development in line with the current characteristics of the seafront town of Barton-on-Sea. This policy does not provide a quantum of housing merely relates to the façade and garden characteristic of development put forward in this location.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	Barton Gardens xii. Consistent and set back creating a margin of garden to almost every street xiii. Well sticked and maintained front gardens xiv. Low frontage enclosure xv. Mown grass road verges xvi. Occasional pine trees xvii. Consistency of street rhythms, building lines, gaps between buildings, eaves heights and roof forms in bungalow area – predominantly uninterrupted hipped simple roofs and simple building forms xviii. Peaceful green internal spaces to the blocks xix. Consistent urban grain of separate units of similar footprint laid out in a clear perimeter; block structure xx. Underlying retained lanes xxi. Occasional special buildings xxii. Lane edges of trees, occasional field hedge remnants, banks and informal verges xxiii. Avenues xxiv. Garden 'islands' where strips of trees and larger shrubs and hedges are created especially in longer garden areas xxv. Deep margins of front garden space xxvi. Mown grass road verges xxvii. Occasional pine trees Becton Bunny All development proposals in proximity to Long Meadow should seek opportunities to enhance Becton Bunny and wherever possible provide additional flood capacity and habitat improvements.	
Policy NM14: The Rural Areas in the National Park	Development proposals in that part of the designated Neighbourhood Area that lies in the New Forest National Park will only be supported if they are consistent with the adopted development plan policies for that area.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy relates to development proposals for areas within the New Forest National Park Authority boundary and ensures that the proposals

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	Proposals for rural exception housing schemes that meet the development plan definition will be supported within or adjoining the rural settlement of Bashley, as indicted on the Policies map. Proposals which would result in the visual coalescence of Bashley with New Milton will not be supported. Proposals which would result in the visual coalescence of Bashley (New Forest National Park) with New Milton will not be supported.	are compliant with adopted development plan policies for that area. The policy does not allocate a quantum of housing and therefore no impact pathways have been identified.
Policy NM15: Employment	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies land in established employment use as shown on the Polices Map at: Gore Road Industrial Estate Williams Industrial Park Hamilton Business Park New Milton Business Centre Wick One Wick Two Queensway / Stern Lane Industrial Estate Double H Nurseries These sites are of strategic economic value to the town and fundamental to its spatial strategy. A. Proposals for the intensification of employment uses on, or to extend, a site of new Class E(g) and B2 uses, will be supported, provided they will not cause significant harm to the amenity of adjoining residential areas. B. Proposals that require planning permission for the change of use of land or premises on a site to a non-Class E or -Class B use will not be supported in any circumstance. C. Development proposals that will result in the loss of existing employment land elsewhere in the parish will only be supported if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the land is no longer in a competitive location to support a continuation of an employment use.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy relates to the changing of employment land to land of other land uses if the land is no longer able to support employment land. This policy does not allocate a quantum of housing or employment land and therefore no impact pathways have been identified.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
Policy NM16: Tourism	Proposals for the development of new visitor accommodation in New Milton and Barton-on-Sea, or for a change of use to such accommodation will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated there will be no adverse effect on European sites.	This policy is encouraging the development of tourist accommodation within the areas of New Milton and Barton-on-Sea. Although this policy does not provide for a quantum of development. The policy has the potential to increase the population and therefore increase the demand for water resources as well as water quality from increased effluent. The policy also has the potential to increase tourism to the area which may therefore increase recreational pressure on nearby Habitats site such as the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar site. **The following are potential impact pathways that could link this policy to Habitats sites.** - Recreational Pressure; - Air Quality; and - Water Quality. **Therefore, the policy is screened into Appropriate Assessment.**
Policy NM17: Early Years Facilities	Proposals to develop new day nursery or similar forms of early years education, or to change the use of other buildings for this purpose, will be supported in New Milton, provided they will not cause harm to the amenities of adjoining residential areas that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This proposal is to develop new day nurseries or to change the use of existing buildings for this purpose. This policy does not provide in itself for an increase in population within the Parish, rather supports those already present.
Policy NM18: Education	Proposals to extend, improve and introduce new school place capacity will be supported provided: i. The scale of the buildings and structures minimise the effect of the scheme on local residential amenity by way of traffic, on-street car parking and outdoor noise and lighting pollution. ii. There is adequate provision to encourage walking and/or cycling to and from the school.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** The central grid reference for the Eaglewood School is: SZ23509460. This policy is to extend, improve and introduced higher school place capacity to the Eaglewood School. This policy does not introduce a higher population through residential development merely provides services for those children which are present within the area.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
Policy NM19: Connecting the Town	Development proposals to provide access to an ultra -fast broadband network and to improve the speed of existing services, will be supported, provided the location and design of any above-ground network installations reflect the character of the local area. Proposals for housing and employment schemes must provide appropriate ducting suited to fibre communications technologies that is either connected to the public highway; through satellite broadband; a community led local access network; or to another location that can be justified. Proposals should demonstrate how any development will contribute to and be compatible with local fibre or internet connectivity. This should be through a 'Connectivity Statement' provided with relevant planning applications. Such statements should include details of: i. The intended land use and the anticipated connectivity requirements of the development. ii. Known nearby data networks and their anticipated speed (fixed copper, 3G, 4G, 5G, fibre, satellite, microwave, etc.). iii. Realistic viability and delivery assessments of connection potential or contribution to any such networks. iv. Measures taken by the applicants to work with Telecom providers to ensure that Ultrafast Broadband is available at the point of occupation.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy is focused on the provision of ultra-fast speed broadband for the town rather than a quantum of development and therefore no impact pathways have been identified for this policy.
Policy NM20: Biodiversity	The Neighbourhood Plan designates a Green Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of promoting ecological connectivity, outdoor recreation and sustainable movement through the town and into its surrounding countryside and of helping mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Network comprises assets of nature conservation value including ancient woodland, trees and hedgerows, water bodies and assets of biodiversity value, and of recreation and amenity value including children's play areas, allotments recreational playing fields, and off-street footways, cycleways and bridleways in and around New Milton. In most cases assets have multi-functional, nature conservation and recreational and amenity value. A. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required to have full regard to creating, maintaining and improving the functionality of the network in the design of their layouts. Proposals that will harm the functionality or connectivity of the Network will not be supported. B. Proposals for new development requiring the provision of on-site open space is integral to the scheme and is effectively connected to any adjoining green infrastructure assets. Proposals for smaller infill schemes should also create opportunities to connect their landscape schemes with adjoining green infrastructure assets. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to enter	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This policy is focused on the protection of existing greenspace and is likely to have a positive impact on the environment.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	into a planning obligation to secure satisfactory arrangements for the long-term management of this open space. C. New development will also be required to retain trees and hedgerows and to secure opportunities to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Where they are unavoidable lost, replacement trees and hedgerows using indigenous species must be planted (two trees must be planted for everyone lost). All proposals for development in the Plan area must ensure that any potential impacts upon rare and threatened species are fully assessed, and that, where necessary, mitigation measures are incorporated to safeguard and protect those species. D. Save for householder applications, development proposals on sites outside the Town Centre as defined on the Policies Map, and 0.5 ha or more, are required as a minimum to achieve a future canopy cover of 20% of the site area, principally through the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees. Where it can be demonstrated that this is impracticable, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs and walls) can be used where they are capable of offering similar benefits to trees. E. Development proposals in the Town Centre as defined on the Policies Map, and on sites below 0.5 Ha, are required to maximise the opportunities available for canopy cover, including tree retention and planting or the provision of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs, walls and rain gardens).	
Policy NM21: Addressing the performance gap	A. All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation Report to the Local Planning Authority within a specified period, unless exempted by Clause B. Where the Report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective B. All Buildings proposed to be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m2/year will not be subject to the provisions of Clause A. C. All development should be 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon. D. A Sustainability Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy (except for householder applications). Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a management policy designed to ensure the sustainability of developments and to minimize the carbon footprint of developments by intelligent design and meeting minimum standards of efficiency. on the protection of existing greenspace and is likely to have a positive impact on the environment.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	E. All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.	
Policy NM22: Maintaining and enhancing the conservation area	Suggested draft policy wording: A. Proposals within the Conservation Area or its setting which demonstrate that they preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the area, complying with the New Milton Design Code and the Old Milton Green Character Statement, as relevant to location, nature and scale of the scheme, will be supported. B. Proposals which would result in considerable improvements to energy efficiency, carbon emissions and/or general suitability, condition and longevity of existing buildings in the Conservation Area (as shown in the Policies map) will be supported, with significant weight attributed to those benefits. Where exterior building alteration is required, the proposals must demonstrate that heritage preservation has been balanced with energy efficiency to avoid adverse visual impact on the surrounding conservation area.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a management policy designed to ensure that design codes are adhered to and the architecture and features of historic interest are maintained. The policy supports developments which make improvements to sustainability and lower carbon emissions which is likely t have a positive impact on habitats sites.
Policy NM23: Local shops	Suggested raft policy wording: The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following local shopping frontages and dispersed local shops as shown on the Policies Map as follows: Ashley Parade Bashley (post office, shop and garage) Bashley Local shop (Holiday Park) Beechwood Avenue (local shop) Ferndale Road. Lymington Road Supermarket Marine Drive Local Shops & Cafes Naish Local Shop (Holiday Park) Old Milton Parade Station Road (local supermarket) Winston Parade Sea Road (local supermarket) A. In each location, proposals comprising of Class E, or any other everyday community need, will be supported in principle where it complies with §97 of the NPPF. B. Proposals defined in Clause A may be delivered as ground floor units in a scheme with housing on upper floors if designed to manage any potential for conflicts in amenity between those uses.	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a management policy designed to retain the retail capacity of specified areas, it does not itself lead to any development.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	C. Proposals that will result in the partial or total loss of a local shopping frontage or dispersed local shop will be resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that: i. all reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for its existing use and no other potential occupier can be found; ii. all reasonable efforts have been made to improve the operation and management of the business or facility; iii. the land is no longer a suitable location for retail uses and suitable alternative shops exist to meet the needs of the local community.	
Policy NM24 Brownfield sites	The Neighbourhood Plan identifies 9 previously developed ('brownfield') locations, listed below and identified as sites 16-24 on the Polices Map that are considered suitable in principle to a change of use to residential or residential-led development, for at least 200 homes. Redevelopment proposals on the land will be supported provided they can show that their social and environmental benefits will outweigh any economic cost. 16. Garages/Open Space Off Davis Field 17. Travis Perkins West of Church Lane 18. Bathroom Tile West of Church Lane 19. Motor Repairs North of Ashley Lane 20. Open Spaces/Garages Off Thornham Road 21. Garages near Andrew Lane 22. Tesco car park West of Caird Avenue 23. S&B Offices West of Caird Avenue 24. Arts Centre East of Old Milton Road	This policy supports residential development within previously developed brownfield sites for residential or residential-led development for at least 200 homes which will lead to an increase in population within the Parish and which could therefore have an impact on Habitats sites. **The following are potential impact pathways that could link this policy to Habitats sites.** - Recreational Pressure; - Air Quality; and - Water Quality. **Therefore, the policy is screened in for Appropriate Assessment.**
Policy NM25: Area of Special Character	The New Milton Neighbourhood Plan designates an Area of Special Character, at Station Road, as shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals located within the Area of Special Character should demonstrate that they have had full regard to the characteristics that contribute to the significance of its local architectural and historic interest as evident in the • The survival of the road layout and buildings of the new early 20C settlement	**There are no impact pathways that link this policy to Habitats sites. Therefore, the policy is screened out from Appropriate Assessment.** This is a management policy designed to retain the character of Station Road; it does not in itself lead to any development.

Policy	Summary of Policy	Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) Screening Outcome
	• The presence of the original late 19C railway buildings that founded the settlement around it and the role it plays in bolstering the sense of arrival. • The survival and prominence of Milton Hall together with Nos 29, 31 and 35 Station Road alongside it in terminating the view from the Station, both arriving from across the bridge around the slight bend in the road and from the westbound platform up the incline to Station Road • The survival of Nos 25-27 Station Road, which as the home to the first post office which gave the town its name has important local historical value, and its prominence in the streetscene in views into the town centre from the north • The prominence of the Water Tower in views from the station and in glimpse views along Osborne Road and between buildings in other locations inside and into the ASC • The prominence of the tall, octagonal turrets at Nos 12 and 47 Station Road to enhance the entrance to the ASC from along Station Road to the south and in punctuating views into the ASC along Whitefield Road and Osborne Road, with the slight offset in the arrangement of buildings around the Station Road, Osborne Road and Whitefield Road junction that makes the Lloyds building and Nos 14-16 Station Road more prominent in punctuating views into the space. • The strong building lines on Station Road and on Whitefield Road. • The regular rhythm of the roofscape from Lloyds to Milton Hall and of Nos 4-10 and Nos 14-20 Station Road formed by the full gabled dormers as well as the large gabled roofs of the Hall and No.35	

Appendix C Neutrality Calculations

The following calculations have been undertaken on the calculator designed for nutrient budgets in the catchment of the Solent[103].

Calculations are for Policy NM5 (New Milton Town Centre Regeneration) and NM24 (Brownfield Sites) and based on the following assumptions:

- The total area of sites 1-15 (NM5) is 5.452ha.
- The total area of sires 16-24 (NM24) is 3.126
- Current usage of sites is 75% commercial and 25% residential
- Future usage of sites will be 20% commercial and 80% residential
- 450 new dwellings will be created

C.1 Stage 1 – Nutrients from Wastewater

Water infrastructure information	
Description of required information	**Data entry column - user inputs required**
Date of first occupancy (dd/mm/yyyy):	
Average occupancy rate (people/dwelling or people/unit):	2.40
Water usage (litres/person/day):	120
Development proposal (dwellings/units):	250
Include deductible acceptable loading?	Yes
Wastewater treatment works:	Pennington WwTW
Current wastewater treatment works N permit (mg TN/litre):	**7.50**
Not applicable	**Not applicable**
Not applicable	**Not applicable**
Final calculation of nutrient load from wastewater	
Description of values generated	**Values generated**
Wastewater nutrient loading	
Additional population (people):	**600.00**
Wastewater by development (litres/day):	**72000.00**
Annual wastewater TN load (kg TN/yr):	**177.51**
Not applicable	
Not applicable	**Not applicable**
Not applicable	
Not applicable	**Not applicable**

C.2 Stage 2 – Current Land-use

[103] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/solent-nutrient-neutrality-calculator [Accessed 30/01/2025]

Current land use information			
Description of required information	**Data entry column - user inputs required**		
Operational catchment:	New Forest - Lymington and Beaulieu		
Soil drainage type:	Freely draining		
Annual average rainfall (mm):	800.1 - 850		
Within nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ):	Yes		
Current land uses			
Existing land use type(s) - user inputs required	**Area (ha) - user inputs required**	**Annual nitrogen nutrient export (kg TN/yr)**	**Notes on data**
Commercial/industrial urban land	6.43	**52.74**	Not applicable
Residential urban land	2.14	**32.91**	Not applicable

C.3 Stage 3 – Future Land-use

Future land uses		
New land use type(s) - user inputs required	**Area (ha) - user inputs required**	**Annual nitrogen nutrient export (kg TN/yr)**
Commercial/industrial urban land	1.71	**14.02**
Residential urban land	6.86	**105.49**
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
Totals:	**8.57**	**119.51**

C.4 Stage – Final Nutrient Budgets

Total nutrient budget calculations	
Description of values generated	**Values generated**
Wastewater TN load (kg TN/year):	**319.52**
Net land use TN change (kg TN/year):	**33.87**
TN budget:	**353.39**
TN budget + 20% buffer:	**424.07**
Annual nutrient budget	
The total annual nitrogen load to mitigate is (kg TN/yr):	**424.07**
Not applicable	
Not applicable	**Not applicable**
Not applicable	
Not applicable	**Not applicable**

Appendix D Figures

Figure 4 Designated Sites in Relation to New Milton NP Area

Figure 5 Site Allocations within the New Milton NP Area

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

LEGEND

- New Milton Parish
- New Milton Parish - 10km Buffer
- Ramsar
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)

POOLE to Cherbourg 5 hrs

POOLE to Guernsey 3 hrs
Jersey 4 hrs

2 0 2 4 6 8 10 km

N

Purpose of Issue: DRAFT

Client: LOCALITY

Project Title: NEW MILTON HRA

Drawing Title: EUROPEAN DESIGNATED SITES

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
TD	JW	AK	26/11/2018

AECOM Internal Project No.: 60571087
Scale @ A3: 1:105,000

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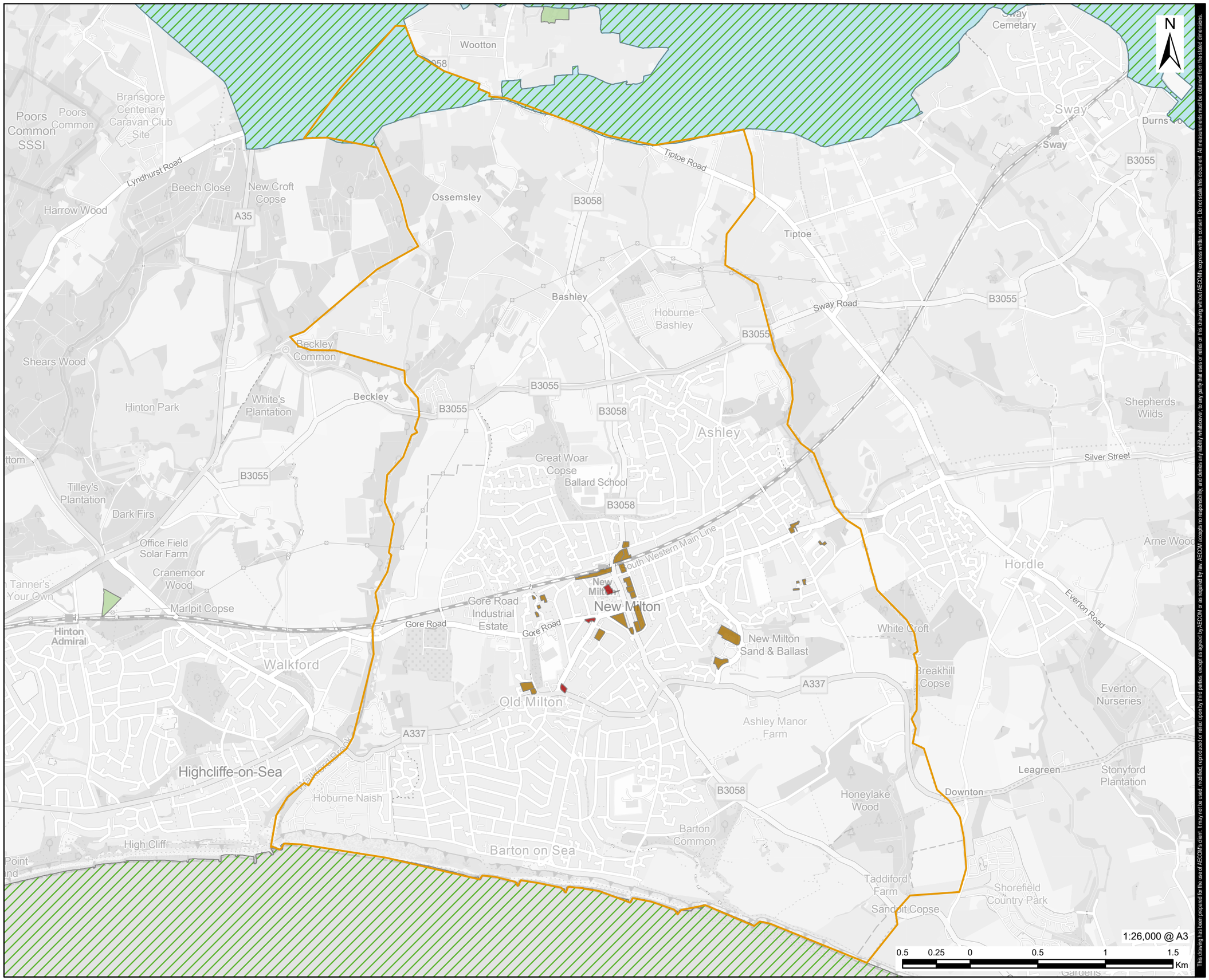
Drawing Number: FIGURE 1

Rev:

File Name:I:\5004 - Information Systems\60571087_Neighbourhood_Plan_CRB_2018_2022\02_Maps\New Milton\Figure 1 - Designated Sites.mxd

Revision: 0 Drawn: JA Checked: KH Approved: XX Date: 2025-05-14

Filename: L:\Legacy\UKBR1FP0011\VOL1\BE\Projects\Environmental\General\GIS\Projects_HRA\New Milton HRA\02_Maps\New_Milton_HRA.aprx



AECOM

PROJECT

New Milton HRA

CLIENT

Locality

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LEGEND

- New Milton Parish
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Ramsar
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Allocations

- Community Use Brownfield Land
- Brownfield Sites

NOTES

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ISSUE PURPOSE

FINAL

PROJECT NUMBER

60571087

FIGURE TITLE

Brownfield Sites, Community Land Use Sites and Non-Housing Development Sites

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 3

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