



Basingstoke  
and Deane

## **Neighbourhood Planning Screening Report – Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green**

Strategic Environmental Impact  
Assessment

and

Habitats Regulations Assessment

**Final version following consideration by  
consultation bodies**

**Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

**UPDATED - October 2022**

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## 1. Non-technical Summary

**The council first screened the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan in December 2021. Following consultation with the three consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) it was concluded (in the decision notice dated 8 February 2022) that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) would be required but that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would not be required.**

**The council has now rescreening the plan to ensure its report fully considers the impact of the Plan upon protected nature conservation sites in the Solent. This is because part of the parish being within the catchment of the River Test where advice from Natural England indicates that waste water from new overnight accommodation could have significant effects upon those protected habitats.**

**The new screening report is also based upon a more detailed understanding of what is proposed to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan (as set out in Section 4), though it is noted that this has not significantly changed from that considered in December 2021.**

- 1.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under UK legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.2 The purpose of the SEA is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.3 The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of alternative options and for the evaluation of the potential effects on the environment.
- 1.4 To ascertain if an SEA is required, a “screening” exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals and policies in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect on the environment is likely. The criteria for making the screening assessment are set out in the relevant legislation.

- 1.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on what are termed 'European sites'. In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area the relevant European sites are a number of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) outside of, but within 10km of the borough. New development within the part of the parish within the catchment of the River Test may also impact upon the protected habitats in the Solent which includes European sites as well as Ramsar sites (which are given the same level of protection as European sites under the NPPF)
- 1.6 The initial stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation and the conservation objectives of each European site within a reasonable distance of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The next stage is to consider the potential impact of the proposals within the plan on any European sites which could be affected.
- 1.7 This report details the assessment of the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan against the need for an SEA and/or HRA to be produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. Taking into account the impact upon the habitats in the Solent, in addition to the considerations set out in the original screening report, and the responses provided by the consultation bodies (see Appendix 5), it concludes that:
- **An SEA is considered to be required to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan; and that**
  - **The Neighbourhood Plan would not need to be subject to an HRA.**

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan must comply with UK obligations. An important element of this requirement is that the borough council needs to determine whether the neighbourhood plan should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This is an important legal requirement and a screening process in relation to this legislation should form an integral part of the neighbourhood planning process as early as possible. The main consideration will be whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects (in relation to SEA) or a significant effect on a European site (i.e. a site protected by the Habitats Directive). In light of advice from Natural England regarding Nitrate issues in the Solent, affected Ramsar sites in the Solent will also be screened.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.2 The need for environmental assessment of Neighbourhood Plans stems from the SEA Directive. The SEA Directive applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes (e.g. on land use, transport, energy, waste, agriculture, etc. and includes those at the 'local level'). The SEA Directive 2001 has been transposed into English law via The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (EAPP).
- 2.3 As per the information set out in the National Planning Practice Guide, it will be necessary for the borough council to screen the proposed Neighbourhood Plan in order to determine whether the plans/programmes are likely to have significant environmental effects<sup>1</sup>. The screening procedure is based on criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004. This report assesses the Neighbourhood Plan against those criteria, and on that basis sets out whether an SEA (in the form of an Environmental Report) is required. Figure 2.1 below

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<sup>1</sup> The national practice guide states the following:

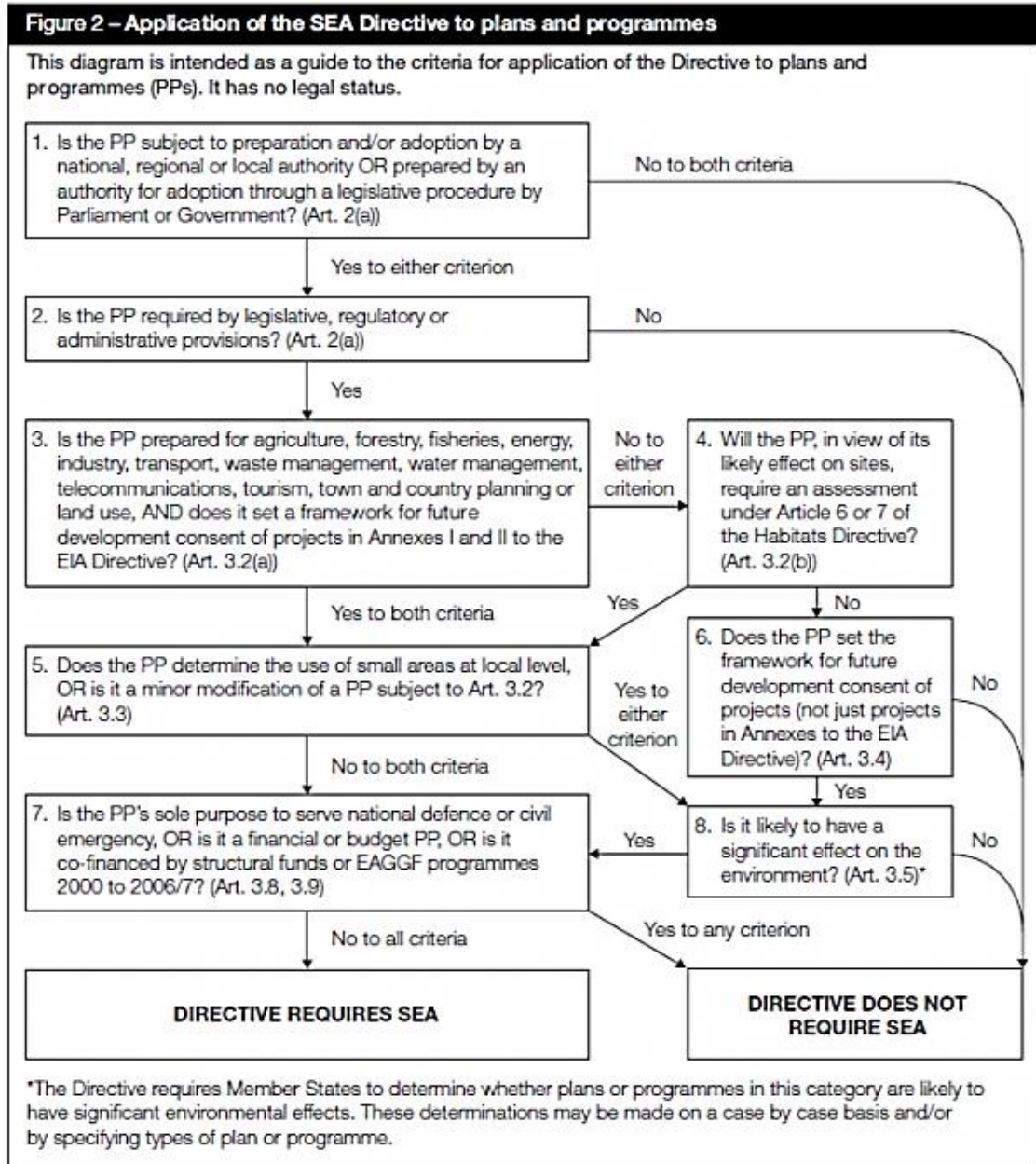
In some limited circumstances, where a [neighbourhood plan](#) is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a "screening" assessment and the requirements are set out in [regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#).

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with [paragraphs \(2\) and \(3\) of regulation 12 of those regulations](#).

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the [independent examiner](#) is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is [compatible with European Union obligations](#) (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

sets out the basic framework for establishing whether an SEA will be required.

Figure 2.1 – Diagram indicating whether an SEA is required for a plan or project



## Habitats Regulations

2.4 In addition to the screening of Neighbourhood Plans in relation to SEA, there is a need to assess the likelihood of proposals or policies within a Neighbourhood Plan having an adverse impact on European sites<sup>2</sup> and where applicable Ramsar Sites. This Habitats Regulations Assessment

<sup>2</sup> In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area, relevant European sites consist of areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

(HRA) is required in certain circumstances by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

- 2.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required depending on the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan and the potential impact of the plan on European sites and Ramsar Sites. A case by case assessment of Neighbourhood Plans will need to be undertaken to see if a full HRA is required.
- 2.6 The approach to assessing the potential impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on a European site, and the need for an HRA, include consideration of the reasons for designation and conservation objectives for each site within a reasonable distance from the Neighbourhood Plan area (which was set at 10km in the borough council's Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment supporting the emerging Local Plan). Where relevant the key environmental conditions that support the site are assessed below against the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

### 3. Generic Screening Assessment of Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.1 In the first instance, in order to establish if a Neighbourhood Plan potentially needs to be accompanied by a full SEA, a generic assessment of Neighbourhood Plans has been undertaken with the results of this assessment being set out below in Figure 3.1. The Assessment criteria set out in Figure 3.1 is derived from the government guidance produced to accompany the EAPP Regulations 2004: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive<sup>3</sup>
- 3.2 The assessment below illustrates that Neighbourhood Plans can be subject to the SEA Directive and concludes that the need for an SEA in respect of any particular Neighbourhood Plan will ultimately come down to whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, Neighbourhood Plans will need to be screened on a case by case basis.

Figure 3.1 - Generic screening assessment of Neighbourhood Plans

		<b>Assessment</b>
	Yes	Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by parish or town councils (as the “qualifying body”) under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Once the Plan has been prepared, and subject to examination and referendum, it will be “made” by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	It is not a requirement for a parish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. However, a Neighbourhood Plan, once “made” does form part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used when making decisions on planning applications.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf)

	?	Given that there are no sites
	Yes	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at the local level.
	Yes	A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and therefore will be used in the decision making process in relation to planning applications. The policies in a Neighbourhood Plan therefore set the framework for future development proposals.
	No	A Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with any of these categories of plan.

8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	?	The impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on the environment will depend on the proposals and policies included. For this reason <b>a case by case assessment of each Neighbourhood Plan will be required.</b>
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3.3 Given that Neighbourhood Plans may be subject to the requirement for an SEA where they are likely to have a significant effect on the environment, the next step is to establish how to determine whether such effects are likely when assessing each plan on a case by case basis. The criteria for making that assessment are set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004. Please see figure 3.2 below for a full list of the relevant criteria.

3.4 The list set out below forms the basis for the full assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan in question, which is set out in section 5 below.

Figure 3.2 - Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment (as per section 9 of the EAPP Regulations 2004, this list is taken from Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004).

**Schedule 1 - criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment**

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to –

(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and

(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to –

(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;

- (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
- (c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;
- (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –
  - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
  - (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
  - (iii) intensive land-use; and
- (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

## **4. Description of the Neighbourhood Plan**

4.1 Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green is a civil parish in Hampshire within the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. The designated Neighbourhood Plan area covers the entire parish and is being prepared by a local group of volunteer residents and the Parish Council as the qualifying body.

### **Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies**

4.2 The draft neighbourhood plan identifies objectives relating to environment and heritage, design and development, traffic and movement and leisure and wellbeing and include the following more specific objectives. Although these are still being prepared at time of writing.

4.3 In light of the above the following policies are currently being proposed:

- A policy defining new settlement policy boundaries around Bishops Green and Ecchinswell.
- Site allocations for approximately 15 dwellings at Bishops Green and approximately 5 dwellings at Ecchinswell.
- A policy supporting sustainable windfall development within settlements.
- A policy seeking high quality design, with the use of a Design Code.
- An Employment Policy to support the development of businesses suited and scaled to the rural environment that create local employment opportunities and rural workspace. In addition, the policy provides a supportive framework for development that supports home working.
- Identification and protection of community facilities and local green spaces.
- The identification and protection of a of a green/blue infrastructure network.
- A policy to protect valued landscapes, protect dark skies, and designate key views.
- A climate change policy requiring new development to be 'zero carbon ready' and to aspire to Passivhaus, and requiring carbon sinks with woodland planting on large development sites.
- A policy encouraging active and sustainable travel.

## 5. SEA Screening Assessment

- 5.1 At this stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process it is difficult to know exactly what will be proposed in the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the approximate parameters of the development and policies being proposed for inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in Section 4 of this report, have been used to undertake this screening assessment.
- 5.2 If it is found that an SEA is required in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, any changes to the quantum of development can be assessed for environmental impact through the SEA process. If the conclusion of a screening exercise is that an SEA is required, any changes to the quantum of development and/or policies being proposed should be subject to a further screening assessment to ensure that significant effects are not likely.
- 5.3 Under Criteria 8 of the assessment in Figure 3.1, it was concluded that Neighbourhood Plans may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the specific policies and proposals within it and that a case by case assessment is required. The criteria for undertaking such an assessment are set out in Schedule 1 to the EAPP Regulations 2004 as set out in figure 3.2 above.. Figure 5.1 below outlines the results of this assessment against the Annex II parameters.

### SEA Assessment of neighbourhood plan

Figure 5.1 - Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment

The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The Plan will seek to address environmental, economic and social issues in the neighbourhood area.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Plan is relevant to various aspects of Community legislation, such as environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity.
Characteristics of the effects likely having regard, in particular, to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The Plan will set the local vision, objectives and policies to guide new development in neighbourhood area. It is likely to result in long-term effects associated with changes to land use and physical development of land.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are likely to be some fairly limited local cumulative effects arising from and between the different proposals and policies in the Plan, and those in the adopted Local Plan.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	There will be no transboundary effects (in relation to other EU member states).
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	There are unlikely to be any significant risks to human health, though there is a limited risk of harm to the environment during construction works.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The magnitude of the effects will be regulated by the relatively small number of units likely to be supported by the Plan (20 dwellings), meaning the effects are likely to be largely localised (i.e. within the neighbourhood area). However, there could be limited effects over a moderately larger area in relation to issues such as landscape impact, heritage assets and highways.

(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	

- 5.4 As a result of the analysis undertaken to assess the effects on the environment resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that significant effects on the environmental are likely. The explanation for this assessment is set out in more detail below:

The National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG) states that: *“In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment.”*

- 5.5 The PPG sets out the following matters for consideration when assessing whether an SEA is required in connection with any particular neighbourhood plan:

*“Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:*

- *a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development*

- *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan*
- *the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.*<sup>4</sup>

- 5.6 The following factors are therefore considered to be particularly pertinent in considering whether SEA is required.
- 5.7 Firstly, the neighbourhood plan is likely to establish settlement policy boundaries around its principal settlements and allocate sites for development (approximately 15 units around Bishops Green and 5 units around Ecchinswell). Therefore, this suggests that an SEA is likely to be required.
- 5.8 It is also recognised that there are significant sensitive natural and heritage assets in the Parish that need to be given consideration. Most of the southern half of the neighbourhood plan area, including Sydmonton, is within the North Wessex Downs AONB. There are also a significant number of heritage assets and environmental designations of which some, as shown on the constraints maps (Appendix 1), are in close proximity to the villages of Ecchinswell and Bishops Green.
- 5.9 It is therefore considered that the impacts upon biodiversity, landscape and heritage could be considerable and widespread. The potential significant environmental effects resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan have not already been considered and dealt with through a Sustainability Appraisal of the LPA's Adopted Local Plan.
- 5.10 In relation to nutrient neutrality, as set out above, only a small rural part of the parish is within the catchment of the River Test. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any development sites in this area. Instead, it directs development to within the Settlement Policy Boundaries of Ecchinswell and Bishops Green and seeks to restrict development in the countryside. In addition, the area of land in the river Test Catchment falls in the North Wessex Downs AONB, where both local and national policies impose greater control over new development.
- 5.11 Furthermore, as a result of advice from Natural England, new development would not be permitted in this area unless it can be shown to be nutrient neutral. This is confirmed by the LPA's position statement here. There would be scope for this requirement to also be set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.12 Nutrient neutrality in itself is therefore not a reason for requiring SEA. However, in light of the other matters set out above, it is considered

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 11-046-20150209

that significant effects on the environment are likely and that (in line with the council's original screening opinion published in February 2022), an SEA is required.

## 6. HRA Screening Assessment

- 6.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for what are termed 'European sites'. Such sites consist of areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). There is also an international designation known as RAMSAR sites, which whilst being covered by different legislation should be subject to the same consideration as European sites.
- 6.2 There are no European sites in the borough. However, there are a number of SPAs and SACs located outside of the borough which could be affected by development taking place within the Basingstoke and Deane borough. Therefore, it is still necessary to consider whether there could be any potential impact on European sites stemming from neighbourhood planning.
- 6.3 The relevant legislation dealing with HRAs are the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the Habitats Regulations. The Habitats Regulations sets out the process to assess the potential implications of a Neighbourhood Plan on European sites.
- 6.4 The first stage is to screen the Neighbourhood Plan in order to establish whether it may have a significant effect on a European site. Only if there may be such an effect will it be necessary to undertake a process called 'appropriate assessment'<sup>5</sup> in relation to a European site.
- 6.5 In undertaking the screening to establish whether there will be a significant effect, the 'precautionary principle' will need to be followed. The requirement to adhere to the precautionary approach is established by case law and clarified by European Union and domestic government guidance<sup>6</sup>. The use of the precautionary principle requires that when considering the likelihood of a possible effect on a European site it will be assumed that such impacts will occur if there is insufficient evidence to the contrary.
- 6.6 In carrying out the screening assessment, the borough council has addressed the various requirements set out in the European

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<sup>5</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

**61.**—(1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which—

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

<sup>6</sup> Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee v. Secretary of State for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries (Case C127/02), ECJ 7/9/04

Commission guidance<sup>7</sup>. The guidance sets out various steps which need to be followed:

- i) description of project or plan
- ii) characteristics of the European site
- iii) assessment of significance

The description of the Neighbourhood Plan has been set out in section 4 above. Therefore, this section focuses on the characteristics of any relevant European sites, their significance, and ultimately whether there are likely to be any significant effects.

6.7 The implications of the policies and proposals in the updated Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed against:

- European sites within 10km of the neighbourhood area boundary; and
- European sites (including Ramsar sites) in the Solent.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf)  
Pages 18 - 23

## **Assessments of any European sites with 10km of the neighbourhood area**

6.8 The Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Adopted Local Plan has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment. This contains a detailed assessment of each of the 8 European sites within 10km of the borough boundary. These are set out in Appendix 2 and inform the assessment process documented in this report. Appendix 3 includes maps of these sites, also taken from the Local Plan report.

The Neighbourhood Plan Area is within the 10km buffer zone of three European sites:

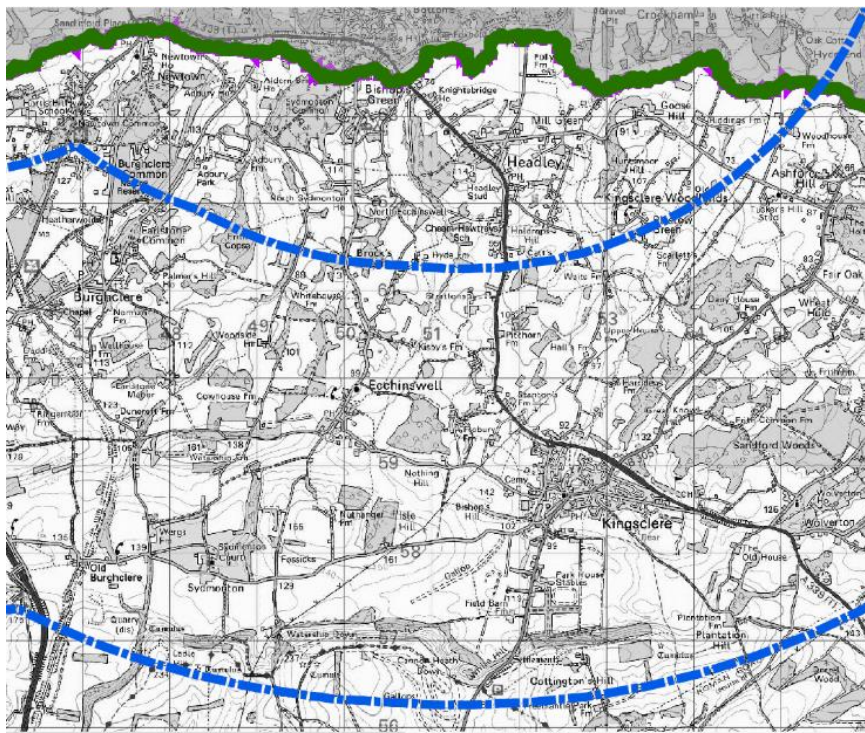
- Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC
- River Lambourne SAC

Accordingly, a screening matrix has been completed in relation to each area. These assessments demonstrate that there will be no significant effects on the relevant European sites.

### **Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC**

6.9 Turning firstly to the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC. This site represents a cluster of sites covering 114.47 hectares in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys.

6.10 However, Ecchinswell Sydmonton and Bishops Green is downstream from the SAC and given that the main vulnerabilities of the SAC are to changes in the water flow and quality, the Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to significantly impact upon the SAC.



## Screening Matrix

Name of European site<sup>8</sup>: Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC

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<sup>8</sup> Please see Appendix 2 for details of the European site itself

<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European site by virtue of: size and scale; land-take; distance from the European site or key features; resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction); emissions; excavation requirements; transportation requirements; duration of construction activities.</p>	<p>The development covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in some environmental impacts in the form of limited atmospheric pollution, as well as landscape and highways impacts. There would also be some limited, localised, environmental impacts flowing from construction processes. However, none of these would likely be of a scale which could reasonably be considered to impact significantly on the SAC, given the significant separation distance of up to 5km in some areas, and up to 10km in other area (between the likely development areas around the villages and the SAC).</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: reduction of habitat area; disturbance to key species; habitat or species fragmentation; reduction in species density; changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); climate change.</p>	<p>Given the scale of development proposed, considering the separation distance in relation to the SAC, no development in the Neighbourhood Area is likely to result in the impacts listed opposite.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on the European site as a whole in terms of: interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.</p>	<p>Given the location of the Neighbourhood Area and likely development sites in relation to the SAC, there will be no likely impacts on the European site as a whole.</p>
<p>Provide indicator of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: loss; fragmentation; disruption; disturbance; changes to key elements.</p>	<p>The Plan is likely to facilitate housing development (potentially approximately 20 units) the effects of which will be largely restricted to within the neighbourhood area (with the likely exception of highways implications and some visual impacts). Therefore, having regard to the European Commission report concerning the assessment of the effects on Natura 2000 sites<sup>9</sup>, it is considered that there is likely to be a negligible impact on the significance of the European site, as there will be</p>

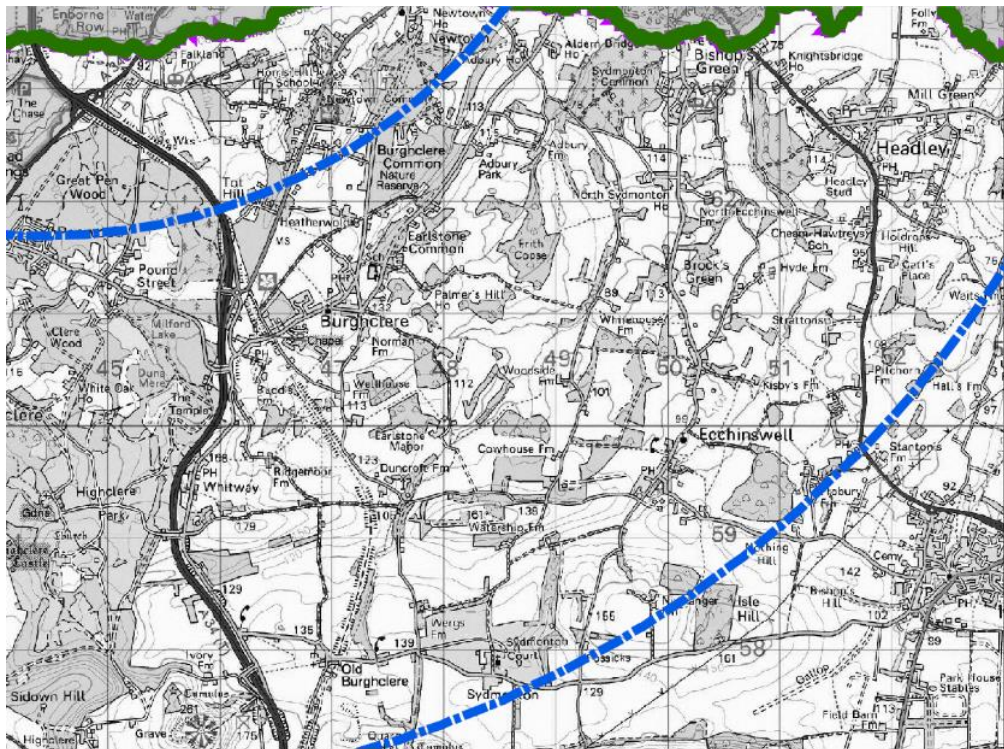
<sup>9</sup> Page 20, paragraph 3.1.5

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf)

	no loss, fragmentation or disturbance of habitat areas which form part of the European site (which is located up to 5km away in parts of the parish but up to 10km in other areas, from the likely development sites).
Describe from the above those elements of the plan where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	Given the likely location of the development to be allocated in the Plan relative to the SAC, combined with the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered there will be no significant impact on the SAC.
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>No significant effects on the SAC are considered to be likely.</b>

## Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC

- 6.1 Regarding the Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC, the conservation interest of the site is critically dependent upon maintenance of constantly high groundwater levels. There are, however, no known threats to groundwater levels. The site is subject to low levels of intervention and natural processes are allowed to prevail to a large extent. A WGS scheme is in place which favours the maintenance of the characteristic Alder woodland composition.
- 6.2 Although a large part of the Parish lies within the 10km buffer, the only tributary of the Kennet within the borough is the River Enborne which joins the Kennet well downstream of the SAC. Therefore, it is considered that any development covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to significantly impact on this SAC.



## Screening Matrix

Name of European site<sup>10</sup>: Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC

<p>Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plan or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.</p>	<p>Physical development within the Neighbourhood Area (in the form of the development of housing sites and small scale employment development) will have an impact on the localised environment. However, given the likely distance between such development and the SAC, which is over 5km, combined with the geographical relationship referred to in 6.9 above, there will be no direct or significant impact on the European site.</p>
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European site by virtue of: size and scale; land-take; distance from the European site or key features; resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction); emissions; excavation requirements; transportation requirements; duration of construction activities.</p>	<p>The development covered by the Plan is likely to result in some environmental impacts in the form of limited atmospheric pollution, as well as landscape and highways impacts. There would also be some limited, localised, environmental impacts flowing from construction processes. However, none of these would be of a scale which could reasonably be considered to impact significantly on the SAC, given the significant separation distance of over 5km between the likely development areas and the SAC.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: reduction of habitat area; disturbance to key species; habitat or species fragmentation; reduction in species density; changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); climate change.</p>	<p>Given the scale of development proposed, considering the separation distance in relation to the SAC, no development in the Neighbourhood Area is likely to result in the impacts listed opposite.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on the European site as a whole in terms of: interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.</p>	<p>Given the location of the neighbourhood area and likely development sites (which it is assumed will be in or adjacent to the village in the neighbourhood area) in relation to the SAC, there will be no likely impacts on the European site as a whole.</p>

<sup>10</sup> Please see Appendix 2 for details of the European site itself

<p>Provide indicator of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: loss; fragmentation; disruption; disturbance; changes to key elements.</p>	<p>The Plan is likely to predominantly facilitate housing development (for potentially approximately 20 units) and small scale employment development, the effects of which will be largely restricted to within the neighbourhood area (with the likely exception of highways implications and some visual impacts). Therefore, having regard to the European Commission report concerning the assessment of the effects on Natura 2000 sites<sup>11</sup>, it is considered that there is likely to be a negligible impact on the significance of the European site, as there will be no loss, fragmentation or disturbance of habitat areas which form part of the European site (which is located over 5km from the likely development sites).</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><b>No significant effects on the SAC are considered to be likely.</b></p>

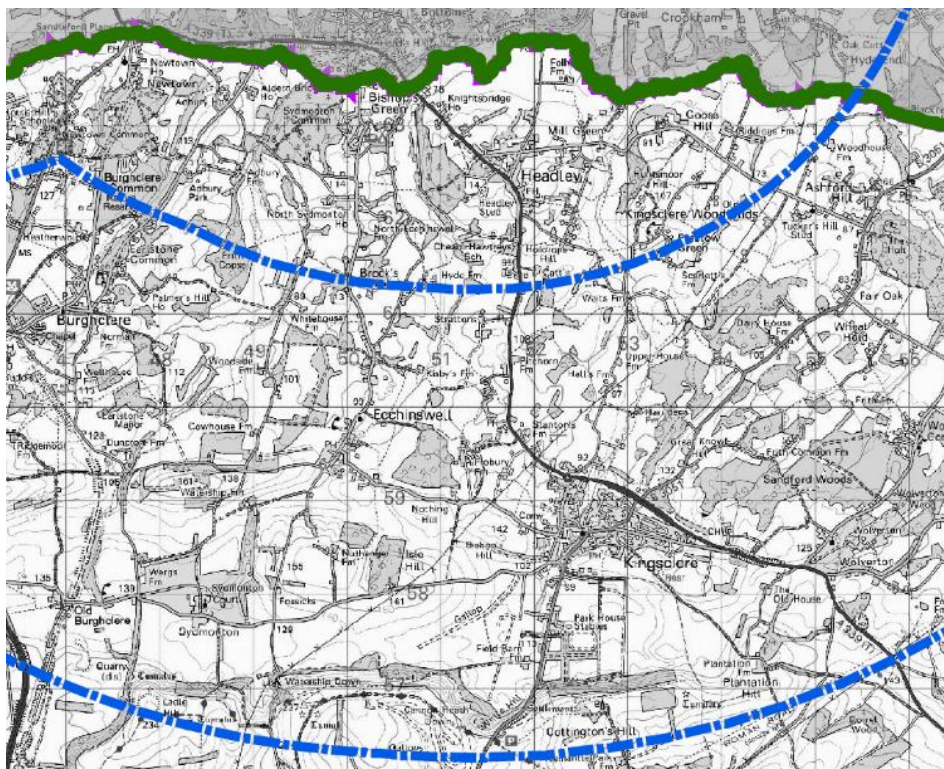
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<sup>11</sup> Page 20, paragraph 3.1.5

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf)

## River Lambourne SAC

- 6.3 The River Lambourne SAC consists of the River Lambourne water body over an area of 27 hectares. The River Lambourne rises in the chalk of the Berkshire Downs, is 26km long, and flows through the Kennet Valley to Newbury where it joins the River Kennet. The River Lambourne has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems have been associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.
- 6.4 A very small part of the Neighbourhood Area is within 5km of the SAC, which includes Bishops Green, and the majority of the rest of the Neighbourhood Area, is located within the 10km buffer zone. The River Lambourne is a tributary of the River Kennet and drains south-eastwards from the Berkshire Downs. Its catchment area lies to the north-west of Newbury and therefore shouldn't be affected by the approximate parameters of the likely development and policies proposed within the Neighbourhood Area. Accordingly, no significant impact on the SAC is considered likely.



## Screening Matrix

Name of European site<sup>12</sup>: The River Lambourn SAC

<p>Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plan or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.</p>	<p>Physical development within the neighbourhood area (in the form of the development of housing sites and small scale employment development) will have an impact on the localised environment. However, given the distance between such development and the SAC, which is up to 5km in the northern part of the neighbourhood area but up to 10km the southern part of the area, combined with the geographical relationship referred to in 6.9 above, there will be no direct or significant impact on the European site.</p>
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European site by virtue of: size and scale; land-take; distance from the European site or key features; resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction); emissions; excavation requirements; transportation requirements; duration of construction activities.</p>	<p>The neighbourhood plan is likely to result in some environmental impacts in the form of limited atmospheric pollution, as well as landscape and highways impacts. There would also be some limited, localised, environmental impacts flowing from construction processes. However, none of these would be of a scale which could reasonably be considered to impact significantly on the SAC, given the significant separation distance of up to 5km in some parts of the neighbourhood area but up to 10km in other parts (between the likely development areas and the SAC).</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: reduction of habitat area; disturbance to key species; habitat or species fragmentation; reduction in species density; changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); climate change.</p>	<p>Given the scale of development proposed, considering the separation distance in relation to the SAC, no development in the Neighbourhood Area is likely to result in the impacts listed opposite.</p>

<sup>12</sup> Please see Appendix 2 for details of the European site itself

	Given the likely location of the
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>No significant effects on the SAC are considered to be likely.</b>

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<sup>13</sup> Page 20, paragraph 3.1.5  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf)

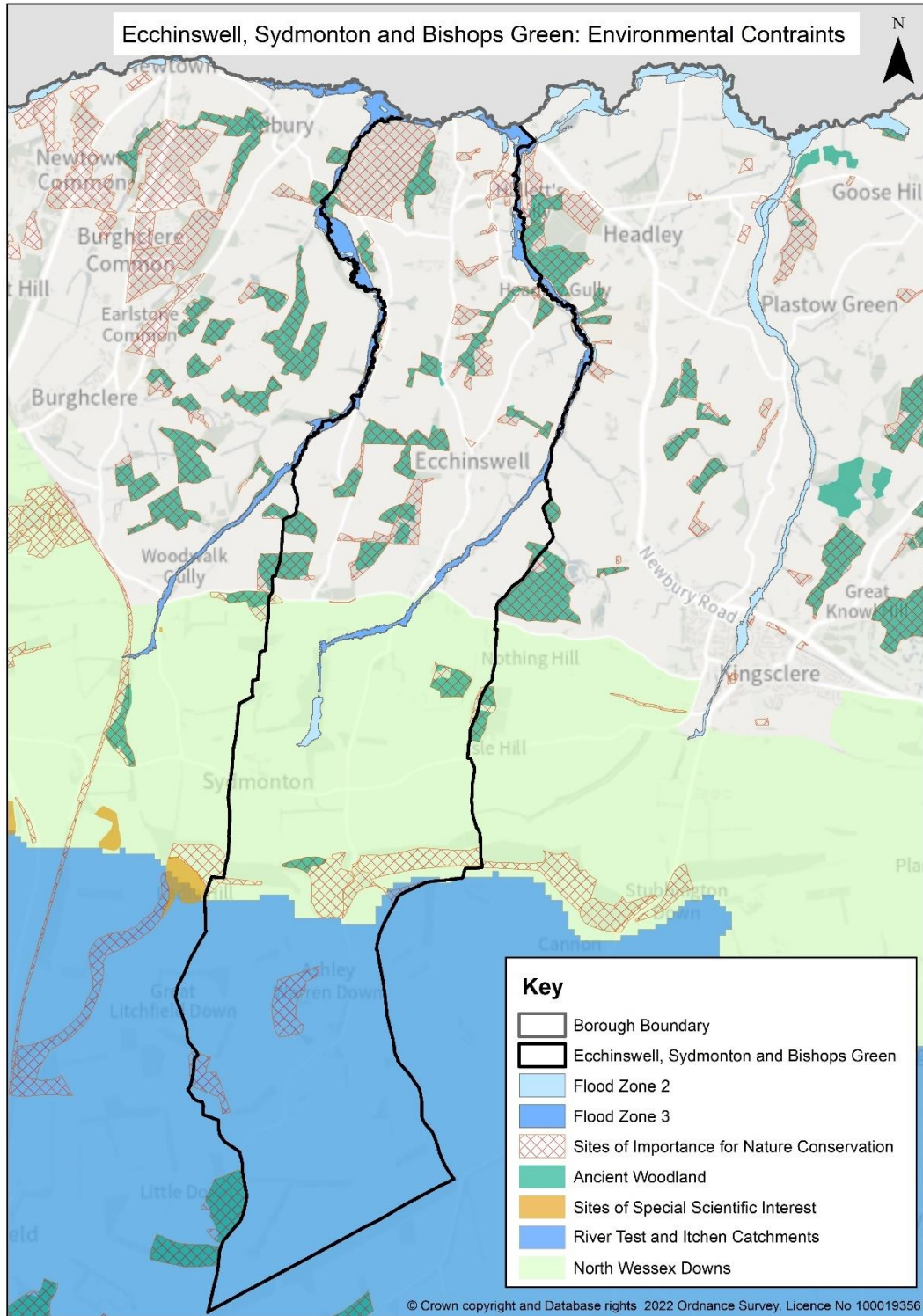
## Assessments of Solent Sites

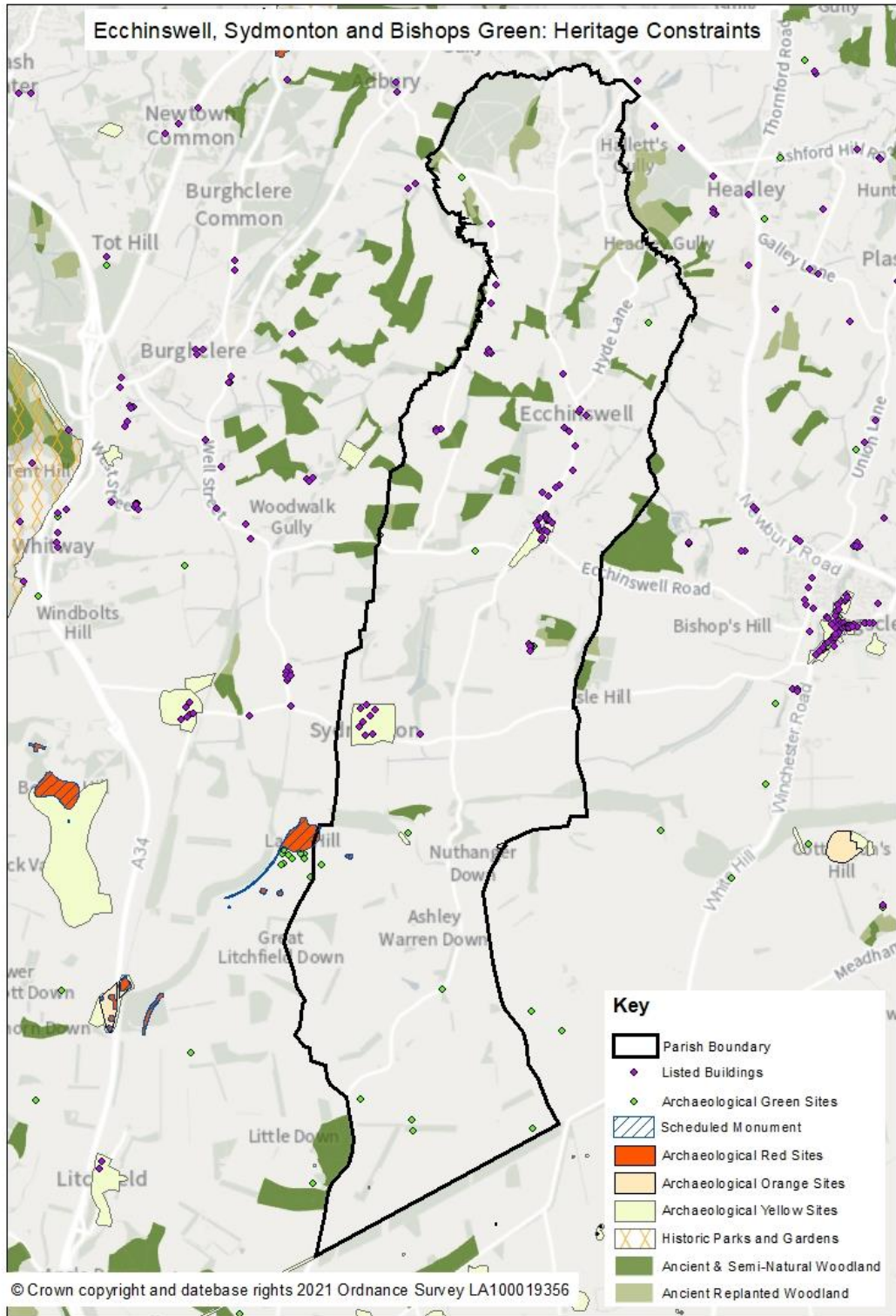
- 6.5 Since the adoption of the Local Plan, new habitats considerations have come to light in relation to the impact of residential development in the catchment of the Rivers Test and Itchen, as part of the wider catchment of the Solent. Natural England has advised that development in this area could have significant effects on:
- Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site,
  - Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC),
  - Solent and Dorset Coast Special Protection Area, and
  - Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Protection Area.
- 6.6 Natural England's guidance on the matter and the council's position statement, can be viewed [here](#). In summary, any new overnight accommodation that discharges wastewater to the River Test and Itchen catchment could have potential significant effects on these protected Habitats Sites and such development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in order to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on the nature conservation sites. The sites that need to be considered are set out in detail in Appendix 4.
- 6.6 A small part of the parish is within the catchment of the River Test. New development would not be permitted in the area unless it can be shown to be nutrient neutral, and in accordance with policy EM4 of the Adopted Local Plan which protected European designated sites. This is confirmed by the LPA's position statement [here](#).
- 6.7 The draft plan is not proposing to allocate any development sites within the affected area, and the plan includes policies to restrict new residential development in the countryside and protect the natural environment. There is also scope for this requirement to be set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.8 Therefore, it is considered that there are not likely to be significant effects on any European sites (or Ramsar sites) flowing from Ecchinswell Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, an appropriate assessment is not required.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This report contains the assessment as to whether the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to the requirement for the submission of a Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by the EAPP Regulations 2004 and/or Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations 2017.
- 7.2 The assessment for both of these requirements has been undertaken on the basis of proposals and policies outlined in Section 4 of this report and within the strategic framework established by the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 7.3 The Local Authority's conclusion, with comments from the statutory consultees, is that based on the above assessment, **a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required** and **the plan would not be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment.**

## Appendix 1 – Environmental & Heritage Constraints





## **Appendix 2 – Details of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

### **Thames Basin Heaths SPA**

#### **Introduction**

The Thames Basin Heaths cover an area of 8,400 hectares and comprise a rare example of lowland heathland across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire. The heaths support significant populations of 3 important bird species and consist of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Hazeley Heath SSSI is the nearest part of the SPA to the borough (located within 5km of the borough boundary).

Due to the size, location and nature of this site and the surrounding development pressure, English Nature published a draft Delivery Plan for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in May 2006. This was updated by the „Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework“ published in January 2009 (Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board). The document sets out a strategic approach for development by providing a consistent method through which local authorities can meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations through avoidance and mitigation measures.

#### **Features of European Interest**

Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I:

- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (nightjar)
- *Lullula arborea* (woodlark)
- *Sylvia undata* (Dartford warbler)

#### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The mosaic of habitats which form the internationally important lowland heathland are dependent on active heathland management. Lack of grazing and other traditional management practices therefore pose a threat.

Development pressure on neighbouring land, urbanisation issues and the cumulative and indirect effects of neighbouring developments also pose a potential long-term problem. A strategic approach to accommodating development whilst ensuring compatibility with the Habitats Regulations is being addressed through the Thames Basin Heaths Area Based Delivery Project. This seeks to address the detrimental impacts of recreational pressure, particularly dog walking, on ground nesting bird populations.

## Wealden Heaths phase II SPA

### Introduction

The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA is located across the counties of Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex and comprises 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, namely Woolmer Forest SSSI and SAC, Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI, Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI and Devil's Punchbowl SSSI. A small area to the south east of the borough is located within 10km of the SPA.

### Features of European Interest

Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I:

- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (nightjar)
- *Lullula arborea* (woodlark)
- *Sylvia undata* (Dartford warbler)

### Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The heathland habitats of the Special Protection Area are very dependent upon grazing and other traditional management practices. The SPA is vulnerable to urbanisation issues, fly tipping and heathland fires and there is increasing pressure for development associated with military training activities. Formal and informal recreation activities are a potential threat to the breeding success of Annex 1 birds. The heaths are also dependent on high water tables to maintain their features of interest, and are therefore sensitive to any potential lowering of water levels due to water abstraction. In the most recent condition assessment process, parts of the heathland were not in favourable condition, with concerns about inappropriate vegetation species, vehicle damage and invasive species.

## East Hampshire Hangers SAC

### Introduction

The East Hampshire Hangers SAC is a large complex of predominantly broadleaved deciduous woodland comprising seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Upper Greensand Hangers: Wyck to Wheatley
- Wick Wood and Worldham Hangers
- Coombe Wood and The Lythe
- Selborne Common
- Noar Hill
- Wealden Edge Hangers
- Upper Greensand Hangers: Empshott to Hawkley

### Features of European Interest

The East Hampshire Hangers qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites: Noar Hill in particular, has an outstanding assemblage of orchids, including one of the largest UK populations of the nationally scarce musk orchid *Herminium monorchis*;
- Beech forests on neutral to rich soils: the site is extremely rich in terms of vascular plants;
- Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes: along with Rook Clift SAC, in the south-east of England, this habitat is only represented here;
- Dry grasslands or scrublands on chalk or limestone (though not a primary reason for site selection);
- Yew-dominated woodland (though not a primary reason for site selection).

Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species early gentian *Gentianella anglica* and *Triturus cristatus* (great crested newt).

The key environmental conditions that have been defined for this site are:

- Maintenance of grazing;
- Absence of direct fertilisation; and
- Low nutrient runoff from surrounding land although the Hanger woodlands are vulnerable to nutrient run-off leading to eutrophication;
- Minimal air pollution – nitrogen deposition may cause reduction in diversity, sulphur deposition can cause acidification;
- Well-drained soils.

### **Key environmental conditions / vulnerability of the site**

Being steep and narrow, the Hanger woodlands are vulnerable to nutrient runoff from adjacent agricultural land, leading to eutrophication and growth of ruderal vegetation when, for example neglected coppice is cut. Within the Hangers over-maturity and outbreaks of beech disease have been observed. Management is hampered by sparse mast years, few seed trees, the presence of deep litter layers and difficulties in extracting felled timber due to the steep slopes present.

Natural England will be exploring mechanisms that can be put in place to curtail damaging agricultural activities in the vicinity of the site. Natural England is liaising closely with the Forestry Commission regarding positive management of these woodlands through Woodland Grant Schemes and, for example, the Challenge Fund.

## **Kennet & Lambourne Floodplain SAC**

### **Introduction**

The Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC is a composite site of approximately 114 hectares located within West Berkshire and Wiltshire. The site has the general character of 59% bogs, marshes and water fringed vegetation, 40% humid and Mesophile grassland, and 1% standing or running water.

The cluster of sites selected in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys support one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) in the UK. The conservation objective related to the sites' designation is to maintain in favourable condition, the habitat for the population of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*).

### **Features of European Interest**

The Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- Cottus gobio* (bullhead)

### **Key environmental conditions / vulnerability of the site**

The River Lambourn has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are at present associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

## **Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC**

### **Introduction**

The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC consists of two sites of approximately 56 hectares in total located within West Berkshire in the Kennet floodplain. Its general site characteristic is of broad leaved deciduous woodland. The woodlands are the largest remaining fragments of damp, ash-alder woodland in the Kennet floodplain area. The conservation of the site is dependent upon maintaining a constantly high groundwater level.

### **Features of European Interest**

The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC qualify as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno- Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The conservation interest of the site is critically dependent upon maintenance of constantly high groundwater levels. However, there are no known threats to groundwater levels. The site is subject to low levels of intervention and natural processes are allowed to prevail to a large extent. A Woodland Grant Scheme is in place which favours the maintenance of the characteristic alder woodland composition.

## River Itchen SAC

### Introduction

The River Itchen is a chalk river that rises from the chalk aquifer of the Hampshire Downs (near Alresford) and flows through Winchester to join the Solent at Southampton. It hosts a number of habitats which support nationally and internationally important plants and animals. These require certain water levels with little variation over the course of a year, and fast flow rates. The whole river, including its three headwater tributaries, are designated as a SSSI.

### Features of European Interest

The River Itchen SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's whorl snail)
- *Coenagrion mercuriale* (Southern damselfly)
- *Austropotamobius pallipes* (white-clawed crayfish)
- *Petromyzon marinus*
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- *Salmo salar* (atlantic salmon)
- *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)
- *Lutra lutra* (otter)

### Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The river's ecology depends on maintaining a uniform, fast flow of water. A principal threat to the habitats within this SAC is considered to be the decrease in flow velocities and increase in siltation, in turn affecting macrophyte cover. Recent surveys have shown declines in *Ranunculus* cover since 1990, attributable to increased abstractions in the upper catchment,

coupled with a series of years with below-average rainfall. Low flows interact with nutrient inputs from point sources to produce localised increases in filamentous algae and nutrient-tolerant macrophytes at the expense of *Ranunculus*.

The Environment Agency is initiating a major study of the river's macrophytes, from which a predictive model will be developed which will aid decisions on whether to reduce water abstraction at critical times. Efforts are currently being made to increase the viability of the southern damselfly population through population studies and a Species Action Plan.

## River Lambourn SAC

### Introduction

The River Lambourn SAC consists of the River Lambourn water body over an area of 27 hectares. The River Lambourn rises in the chalk of the Berkshire Downs, is 26 km long, and flows through the Kennet Valley to Newbury where it joins the River Kennet. It has one important tributary, the Winterbourne stream, which flows into the Lambourn from the north-east, just upstream of Newbury. It is also a designated SSSI.

### Features of European Interest

The River Lambourn SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachium* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)

### Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The River Lambourn has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are at present associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

## **Shortheath Common SAC**

### **Introduction**

Shortheath Common is a heathland site located on the western Weald. It comprises a single SSSI which covers approximately 58 hectares. The site was historically grazed but now is recovering from the encroachment of scrub.

### **Features of European Interest**

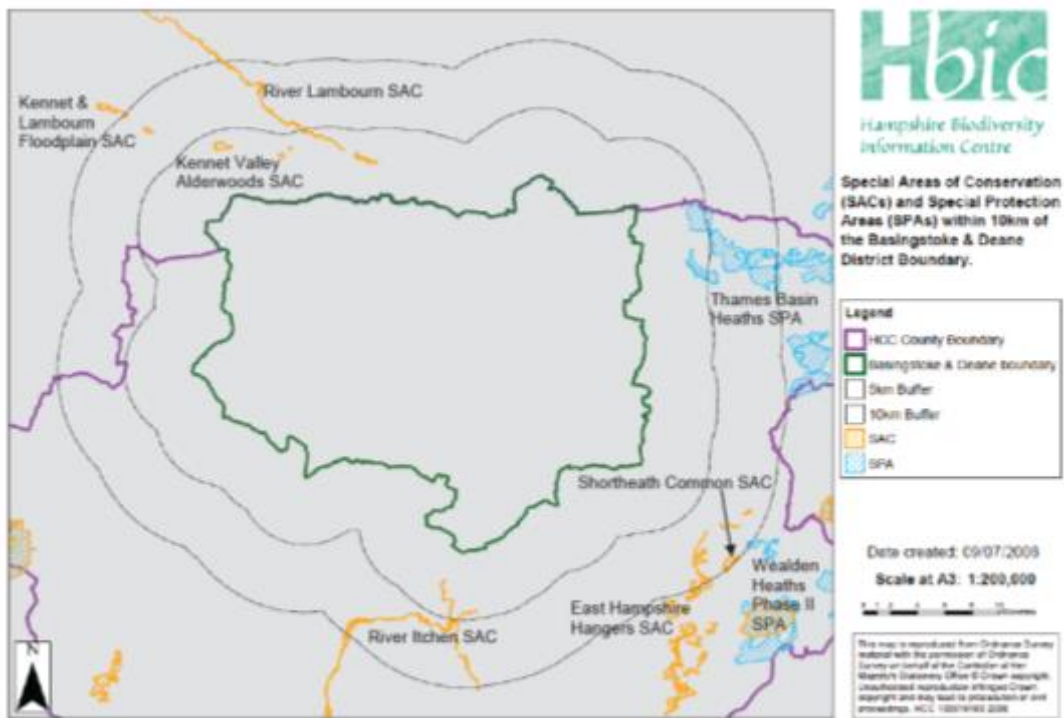
The Shortheath Common SAC qualifies as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- Transition mires and quaking bogs
- Bog woodland

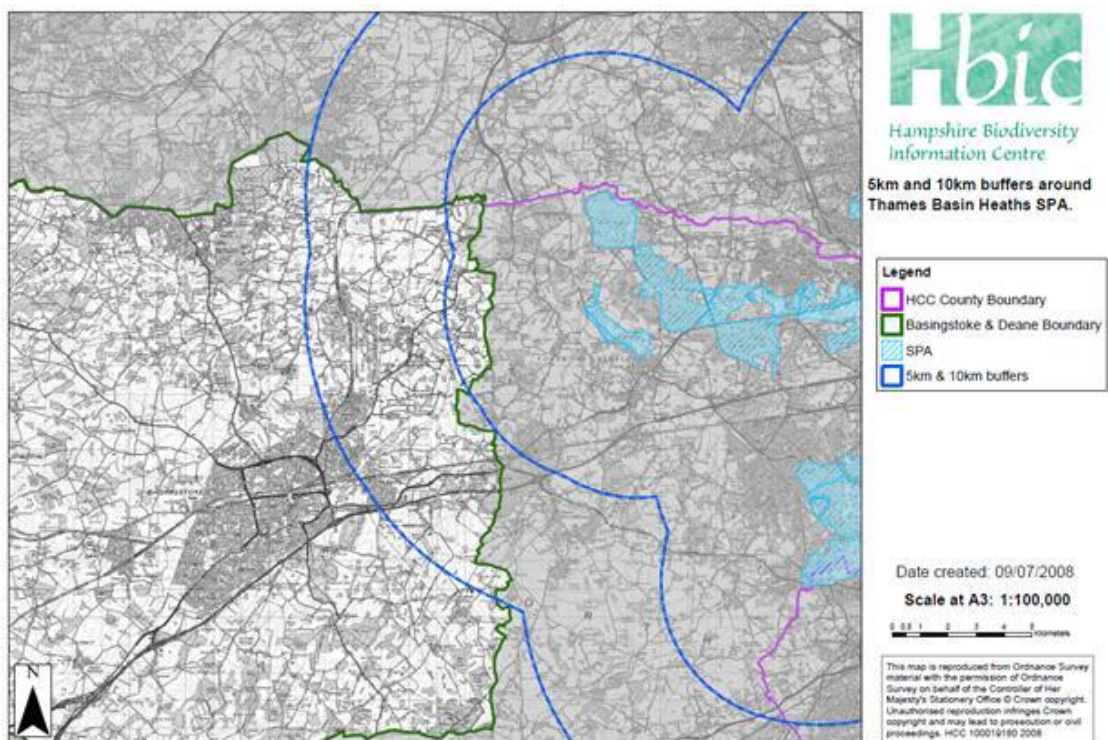
### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The site is vulnerable to encroachment of invasive scrub and trees due to cessation of traditional grazing management. Erosional risk and fire are also threats. A Natural England Wildlife Enhancement Scheme agreement has been entered into in an attempt to address the ecological deterioration. The heaths are also dependent on high water tables to maintain their features of interest, and are therefore sensitive to any potential lowering of water levels due to water abstraction. Protection of the site therefore relies on careful management of water levels and recreational activities and good air quality.

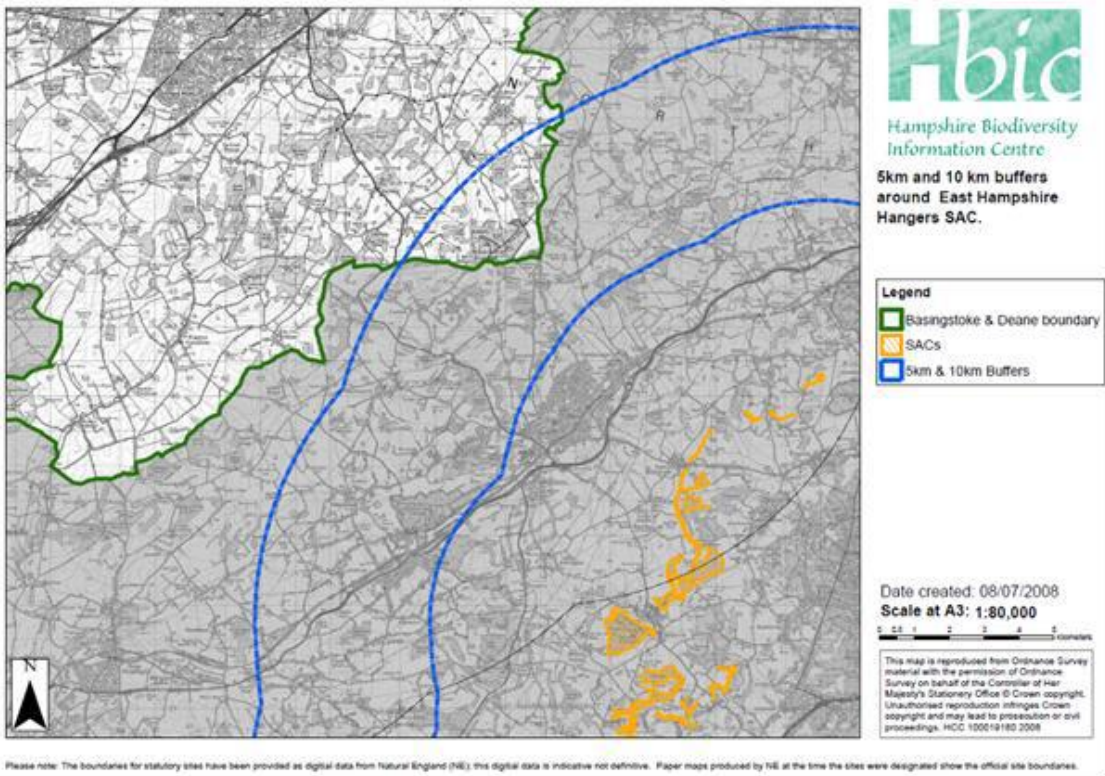
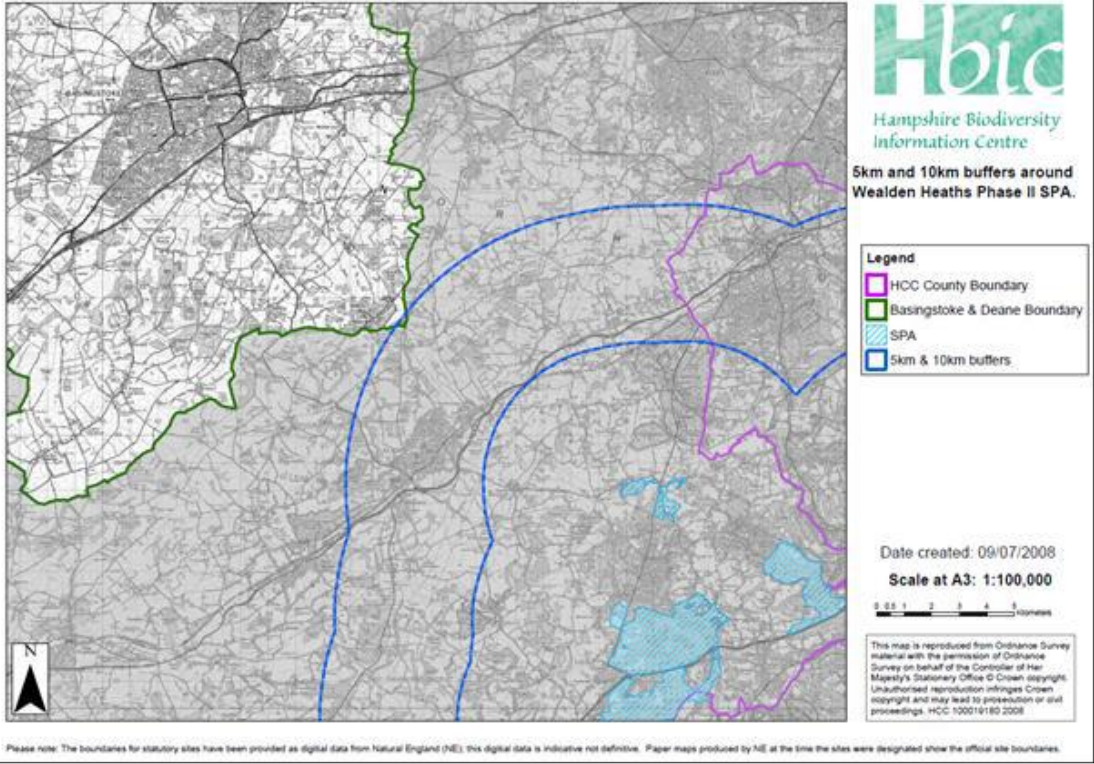
## Appendix 3 - Maps of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough

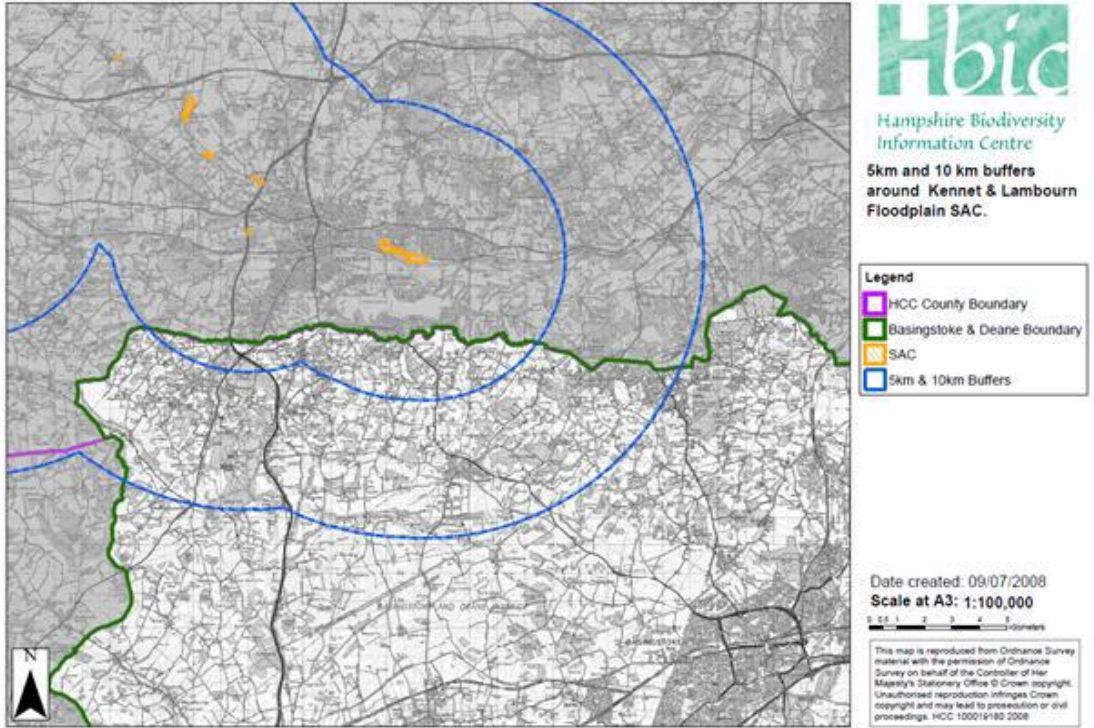


Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.

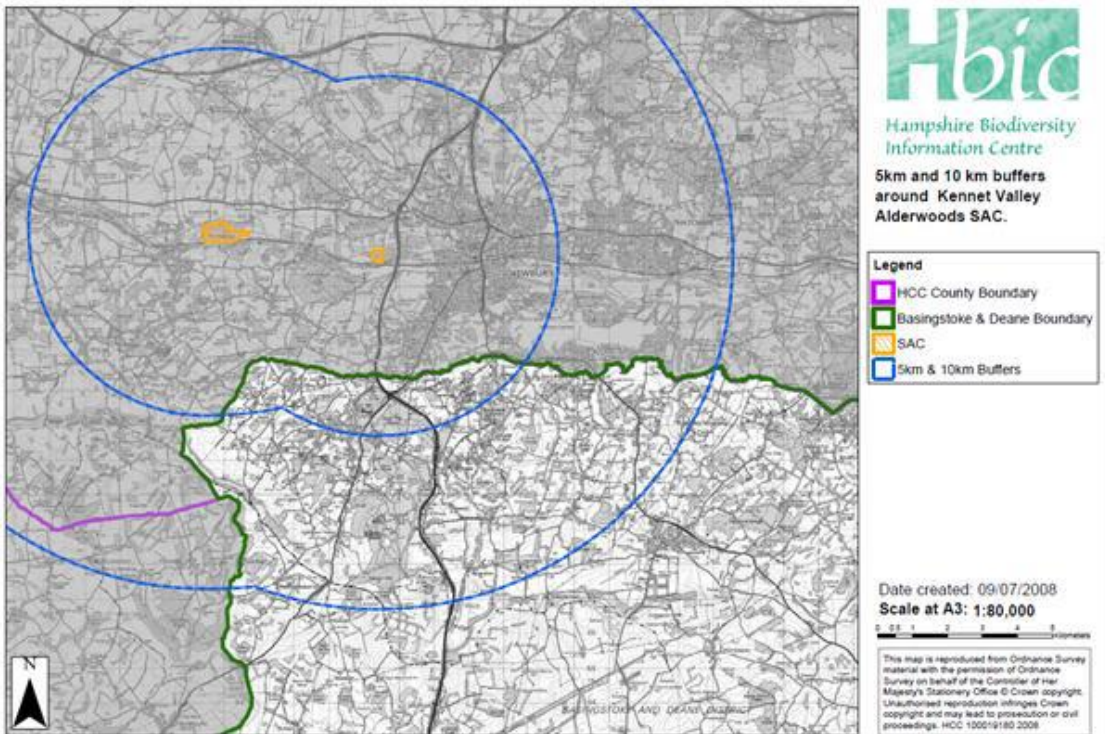


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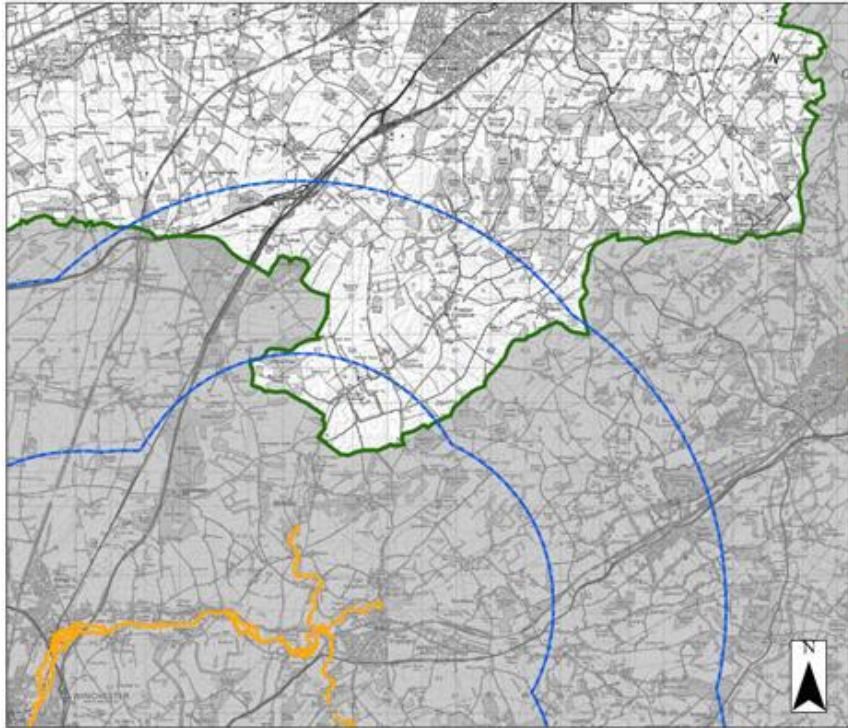




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**Hbic**  
 Hampshire Biodiversity  
 Information Centre

**5km and 10 km buffers  
 around River Itchen  
 SAC.**

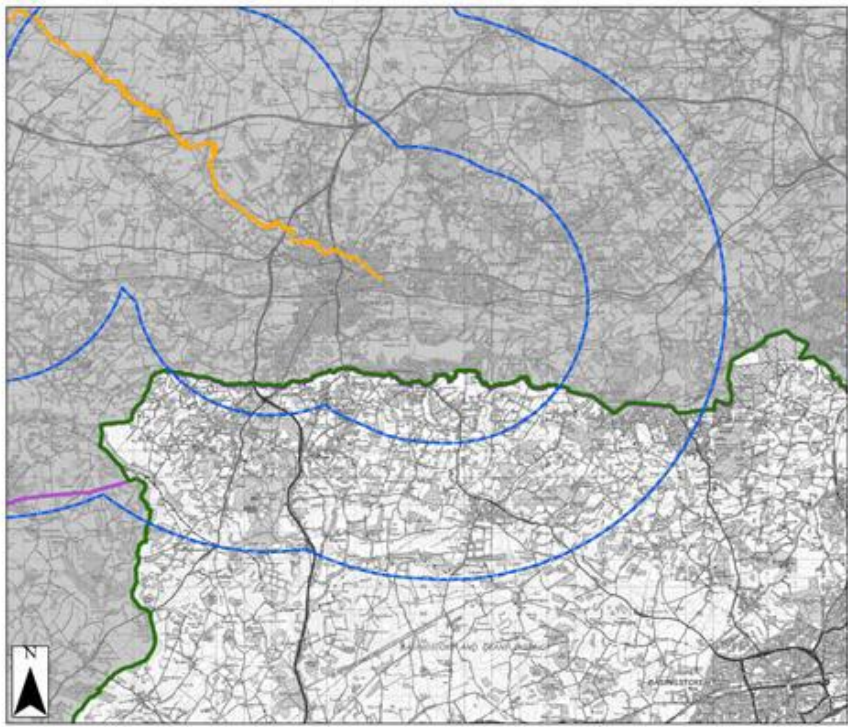
- Legend**
- Basingstoke & Deane Boundary
  - SAC
  - 5km & 10km Buffers

Date created: 09/07/2008  
 Scale at A3: 1:80,000



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Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.

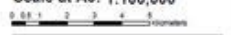


**Hbic**  
 Hampshire Biodiversity  
 Information Centre

**5km and 10 km buffers  
 around River Lambourn  
 SAC.**

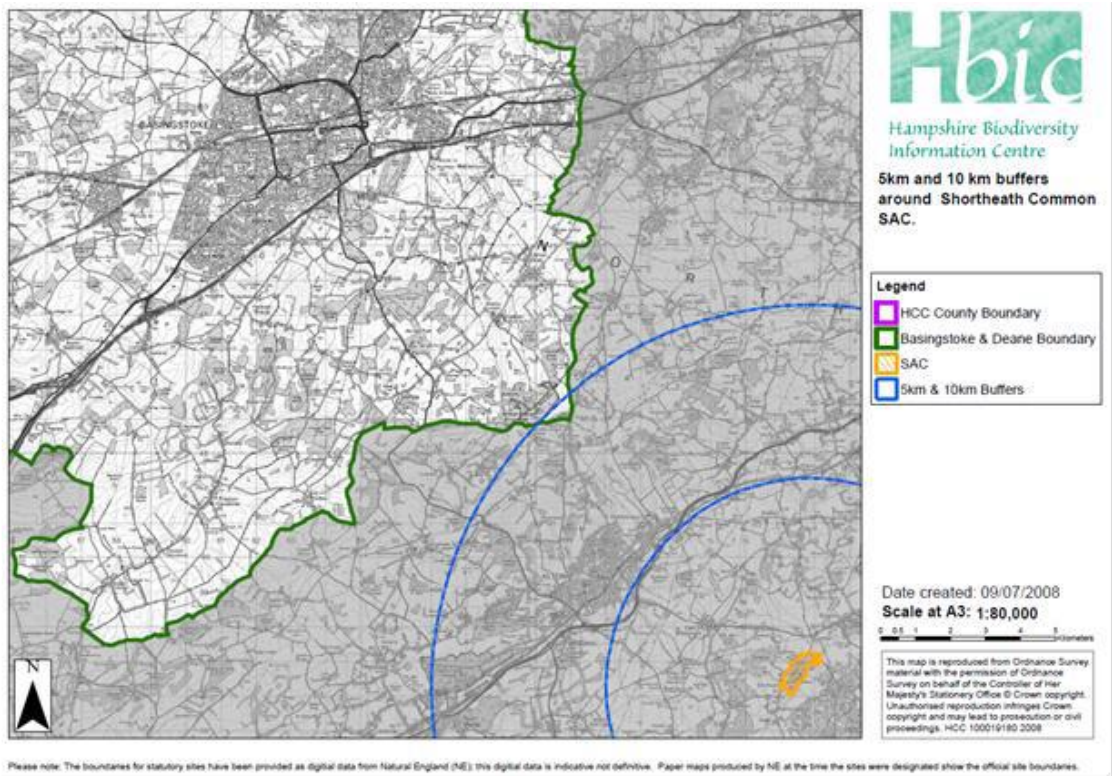
- Legend**
- HCC County Boundary
  - Basingstoke & Deane boundary
  - SAC
  - 5km & 10km Buffers

Date created: 09/07/2008  
 Scale at A3: 1:100,000



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(Source for all: Basingstoke and Deane Pre-Submission Local Plan Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment)

## Appendix 4 - Solent European Sites

The Solent European sites of greatest relevance to increased nutrient inputs from residential development in Basingstoke & Deane are:

Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site;  
Solent Maritime SAC;  
Solent & Dorset Coast SPA; and  
Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation

### Solent and Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar

#### Introduction

The Solent and Southampton Water are located on the south English coast. The area covered 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 mud-flats and saltmarshes together with adjacent coastal habitats including saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reedbeds, damp woodland and grazing marsh. The mud-flats 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, including geese, ducks and waders. Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta b. bernicla* also feed in surrounding areas of agricultural land outside the SPA.

#### Conservation Objectives<sup>14</sup>

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.

#### Qualifying Features<sup>15</sup>

The following features are reasons for designation as an SPA:

This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

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<sup>14</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6567218288525312>

<sup>15</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2037>

During the breeding season;

- Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, 267 pairs representing at least 2.2% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)
- Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*, 49 pairs representing at least 2.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)
- Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*, 2 pairs representing at least 20.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1994-1998)
- Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*, 2 pairs representing at least 3.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)
- Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, 231 pairs representing at least 1.7% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)

This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:

Over winter;

- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, 1,125 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)
- Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 7,506 individuals representing at least 2.5% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)
- Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, 552 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)
- Teal *Anas crecca*, 4,400 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)

Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.

The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.

Over winter, the area regularly supports 53,948 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) including: Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Pintail *Anas acuta*, Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*.

The following features are reasons for designation as a Ramsar:

### **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 al 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.

### **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. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

- Ringed plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*, Europe/Northwest Africa 397 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

- Dark-bellied Brent goose, *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 6456 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
- Eurasian teal, *Anas crecca*, NW Europe 5514 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
- Black-tailed godwit, *Limosa limosa islandica*, Iceland/W Europe 1240 individuals, representing an average of 3.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

### **Environmental Vulnerabilities**

- Public access/disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Biological resource use
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate pest control
- Air pollution
- Direct impact from third party

## Solent Maritime SAC

### Introduction

The Solent Maritime SAC 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.

### Conservation Objectives<sup>16</sup>

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.

### Qualifying Features<sup>17</sup>

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

- Estuaries
- Cord-grass swards
- Atlantic salt meadows

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

- Subtidal sandbanks
- Intertidal mudflats and sandflats
- Coastal lagoons (\*Priority Feature)

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<sup>16</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5762436174970880>

<sup>17</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030059>

- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Coastal shingle vegetation outside of the reach of waves
- Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- Shifting dunes with marram

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

- Desmoulin's whorl snail.

### **Environmental Vulnerabilities<sup>18</sup>**

The threats and pressures likely to affect the SPA, SAC and Ramsar are listed below:

- Public access/disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Change in site conditions
- Invasive species
- Direct land-take from development
- Change in land management
- Air pollution
- Hydrological changes
- Direct impact from third party
- Extraction: non-living resources
- 

## **Solent and Dorset Coast SPA**

### **Introduction**

The Solent and Dorset Coast SPA was proposed to protect important marine foraging areas for three species of tern (common tern, sandwich tern, little tern). The site is located on the south coast of England in the British Channel, extending from the Isle of Purbeck in the west to Bognor Regis in the east.

The main rationale underpinning the potential designation is that the four breeding tern species have recorded mean foraging ranges between 4.5km and 12.2km from their nesting sites, with maximum distances of 15.2km and 49km respectively. Given that the ranges identified for little terns (which underpin many of the SPA site boundaries on the south coast of England) are unlikely to be representative for the larger tern species, boat-tracking studies of individual foraging birds were undertaken. The results fed into habitat usage models for each tern species, accounting for the maximum identified foraging range around tern colonies.

Since its identification as a pSPA, Natural England has confirmed the recommendation of the Solent and Dorset Coast pSPA to be classified on the basis of the available scientific evidence. The Solent and Dorset Coast SPA was formally designated on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

### **Qualifying Features<sup>19</sup>**

<sup>18</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752>

<sup>19</sup> <https://sac.incc.gov.uk/site/UK0030138>

Species listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive:

- Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*; 441 pairs representing 4.01% of the GB breeding population (count between 2008 – 2014)
- Common tern *Sterna hirundo*; 492 pairs representing 4.77% of the GB breeding population (count between 2009 – 2014)
- Little tern *Sternula albifrons*; 63 pairs representing 3.31% of the GB breeding population (count between 2009 – 2014)

### **Conservation Objectives<sup>20</sup>**

*'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.'*

### **Environmental Vulnerabilities<sup>21</sup>**

Natural England is yet to publish a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent and Dorset Coast. However, the threats and pressures to site integrity are likely to be similar than for other European sites designated for terns. Potential issues include:

- Public access / disturbance
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Changes to site conditions
- Biological resource use
- Air pollution: Risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Hydrological changes
- Extraction: Non-living resources.

## **Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation**

The Solent 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 Langstone Harbour, behind the sea-wall at Bembridge Harbour and at Gilkicker, near Gosport.

The water quality target for the coastal lagoon features is to maintain nutrient levels at which biological indicators of eutrophication (opportunistic macroalgal and phytoplankton blooms) do not affect the integrity of the site and features, avoiding deterioration from existing levels. Surveys in 2013, noted several lagoons had high pH levels likely due to photosynthetic activity, however there were no records of opportunistic macroalgae or phytoplankton blooms and most lagoons (except for Butts Lagoon and Shut Lake) continue to support good lagoonal communities. The sediment in Butts Lagoon has remained anoxic in surveys in 2013, although this represents similar conditions to that present in baseline surveys. Therefore, available

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<sup>20</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5294923917033472>

<sup>21</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5623422855938048>

evidence does not indicate that eutrophication is affecting site integrity at any of the lagoons within the SAC, except for Butts Lagoon<sup>22</sup>.

### **Qualifying Features<sup>23</sup>**

Priority Habitats listed under Annex I of the Habitats Directive:

- Coastal lagoons

### **Conservation Objectives<sup>24</sup>**

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

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

### **Environmental Vulnerabilities<sup>25</sup>**

As set out in the Site improvement Plan, the priorities issues for the site are:

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

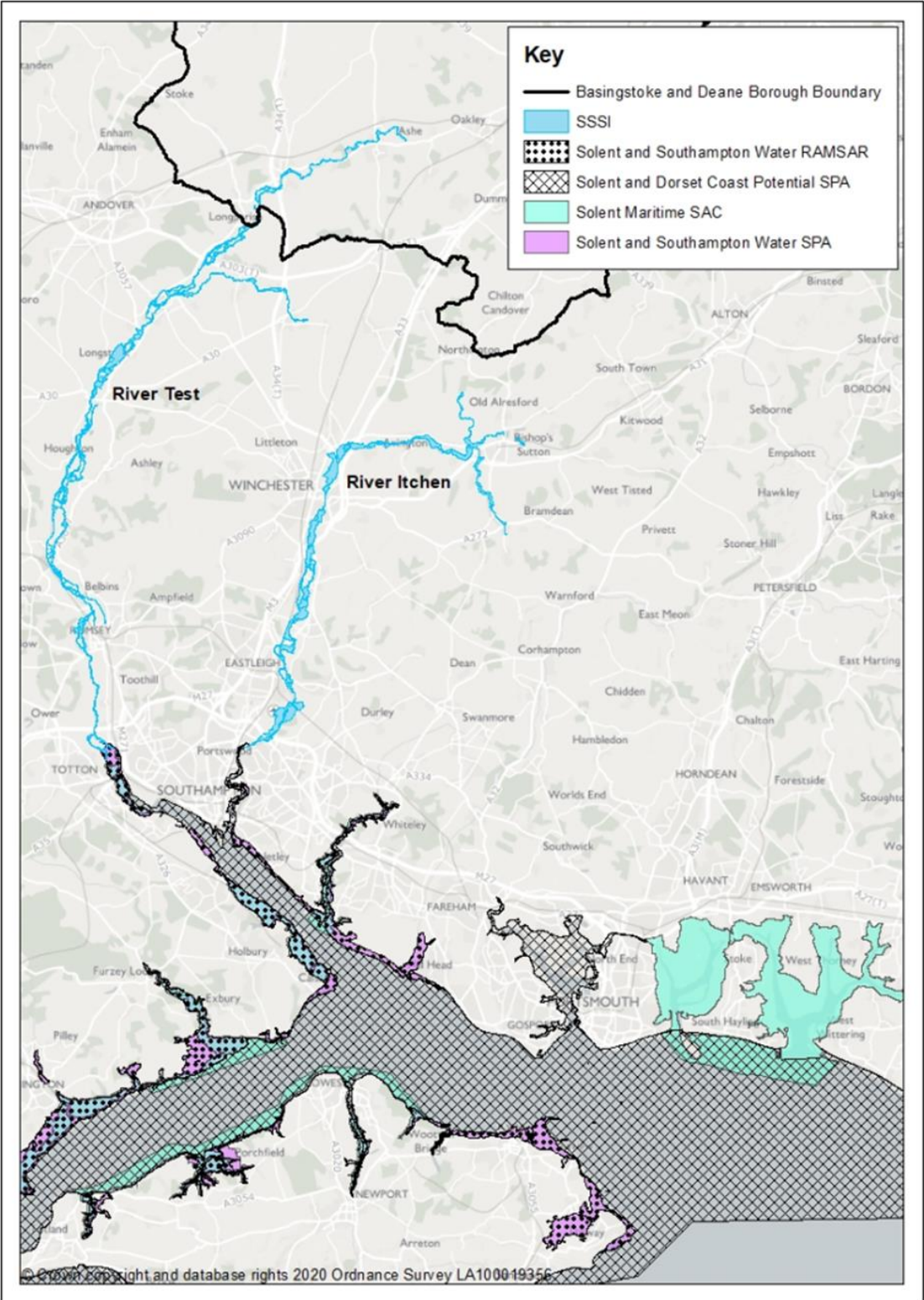
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<sup>22</sup> [Solent Nutrients - V5 June 2020 \(basingstoke.gov.uk\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

<sup>23</sup> [European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC - UK0017073 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

<sup>24</sup> [European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC - UK0017073 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

<sup>25</sup> [Site Improvement Plan: Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons - SIP270 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)



## Appendix 5 – Responses from Consultation bodies

Natural England

Date: 15 September 2022  
Our ref: 403609  
Your ref: Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan



Jessica Wells  
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Jessica

### **Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 10 August 2022

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

#### **Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment**

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

#### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening**

It is noted that part of the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the Test catchment, which drains to the Solent. Residential development that drains to the Solent should demonstrate nutrient neutrality and be accompanied by an Appropriate Assessment.

The Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any development within the Test catchment area, instead directing development to within the Settlement Policy Boundaries of Ecchinswell and Bishops Green. Residential development within the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan therefore does not need to demonstrate nutrient neutrality and on this basis we concur that no Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is needed.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact [louise.wyatt@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:louise.wyatt@naturalengland.org.uk). For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Louise Wyatt  
Sustainable Development Lead Adviser  
Thames Solent Team

**Jessica Wells**

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**From:** Planning\_THM <Planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 10 August 2022 13:55  
**To:** Jessica Wells  
**Subject:** Thank you for your email

\*\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE: This message has originated from a source external to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, and has been scanned for viruses. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council reserves the right to store and monitor e-mails \*\*\*\*

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**Notice Update: May 2022**

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we are experiencing a significant increase in the number of consultations and enquiries that we receive. Additionally with recent changes within the team and department we are currently working at 60% of our normal capacity within this team.

**Consequently we are experiencing delays in both planning advisory agreements and statutory consultation response timeframes. Temporary measures are in place to prioritise the highest risk cases. This is likely to result in some responses being significantly delayed.**

Since our last update, some recruitment has been completed and new colleagues have recently joined us and are embedding into their roles. Further recruitment is planned over the next few months.

Despite our best effort many customers are still experiencing significant delays for the reasons noted above. However, we are continuing to address the issues and hope to resume normal service in the coming months.

This notice only applies to Thames Area and relates only to planning advice.

**Many of our temporary measures will remain in place until 30 September 2022. We are regularly reviewing these measures and will provide further updates as appropriate. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time and we apologise for the disruption this may cause.**

**Please note we are unable to receive post until further notice.** Where possible, please send all documents via email (max attachment size of 9MB) or via file sharing services.

Kind regards,

Thames Sustainable Places Team  
Environment Agency

Historic England

No response received.