



Basingstoke  
and Deane

# **Neighbourhood Planning Screening Report – Silchester Neighbourhood Plan**

Strategic Environmental Impact  
Assessment

and

Habitats Regulations Assessment

**Final version after consideration by  
consultation bodies**

**Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

**October 2024**

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## 1. Non-technical Summary

- 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 parish 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 draft Silchester Neighbourhood Plan against the need for an SEA and/or HRA to be produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. Based on the views of three statutory consultees (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency), it concludes that:

- **A 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 Silchester 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).

### 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 Guidance, 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

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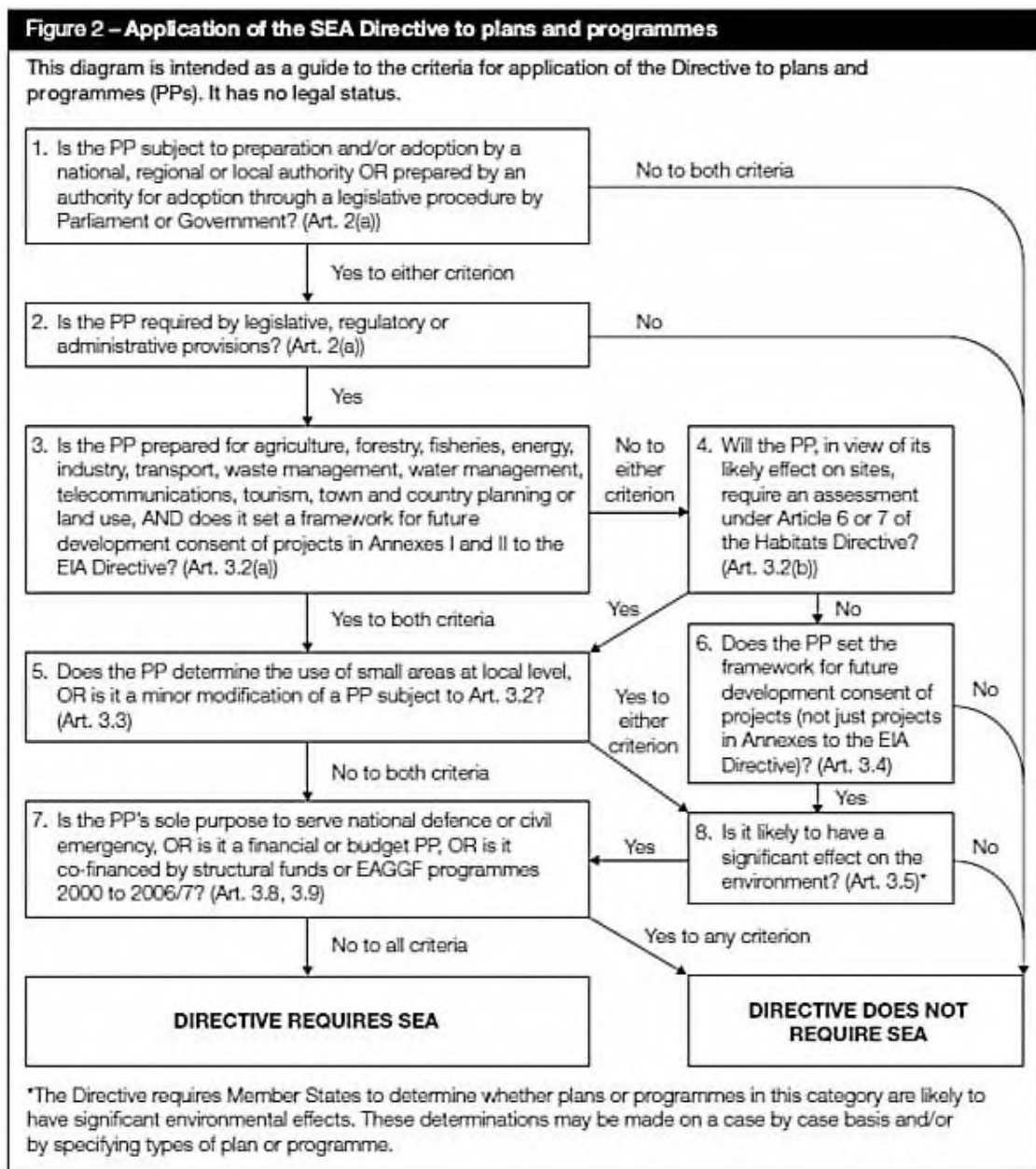
<sup>1</sup> The National Planning Practice Guidance states the following:

A neighbourhood plan may require a [strategic environmental assessment](#) if the draft neighbourhood plan falls within the scope of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This may be the case if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This may be the case, for example, where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development.

A qualifying body is strongly encouraged to consider the environmental implications of its proposals at an early stage, and to seek the advice of the local planning authority on whether the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 are likely to apply. Neighbourhood plans may also require assessment in relation to the Habitats Regulations 2017. A neighbourhood plan proposal must provide sufficient information to enable a competent authority to undertake an appropriate assessment or to screen it to determine whether an appropriate assessment is necessary. If an appropriate assessment is required then this will engage the need for a strategic environmental assessment.

form of an Environmental Report) is required. Figure 2.1 below 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) and Ramsar sites located in The Solent.

(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/Ramsar site, and the need for a HRA, includes 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) and at a catchment level for The Solent. 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

Assessment criteria	y/n	Assessment
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	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)

<p>3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive? (Art 3.2(a))</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Neighbourhood plans will cover town and country planning/land use, and may also cover other issues in the list set out. In addition, it will also set part of the framework for possible future consents covered by Annex II of the EIA Directive. Development under Annex I however, would be excluded development.</p>
<p>4. Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>Given that there are no sites designated under the Habitats Directive in the borough, the only impact on such sites could be on those outside the borough. A case by case assessment should still be carried out and included within the screening report.</p>
<p>5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at the local level.</p>
<p>6. Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF(European Agricultural Guarantee Fund) programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>A Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with any of these categories of plan.</p>
<p>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>The impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on the environment will depend on the proposals and policies included. For this</p>

		reason a case by case assessment of each Neighbourhood Plan will be required.
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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 Silchester is a civil parish in Hampshire within the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. The designated Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the entire Parish of Silchester. The Neighbourhood Plan for the area is currently being prepared by a local group of volunteer residents and the Parish Council as the qualifying body.
- 4.2 Maps showing the extent of the Parish, and its main environmental and heritage constraints are attached as Appendix 1.

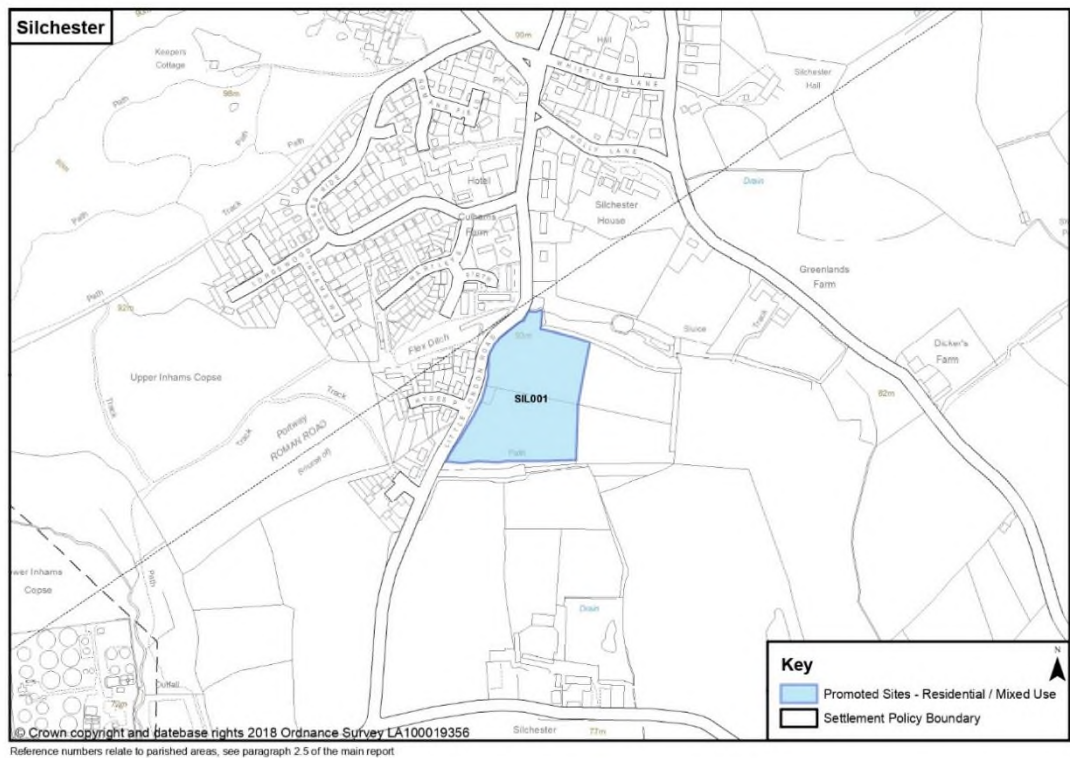
### Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies

- 4.3 The draft neighbourhood plan identifies objectives that relate to landscape and the natural environment, housing and built environment, business and employment, and travel and transport.
- 4.4 In light of the above objectives, the following policies are currently being proposed:
- S1 - Silchester Settlement Boundary – define how proposals in the village and countryside will be assessed.
  - S2 - Design Code and Guidance – ensuring new development reflects the existing look and feel of the village.
  - S3 - Valued Landscapes – identification and protection of vistas and landscapes.
  - S4 - Retrofitting in the Conservation Area – encouragement of modern methods of building materials but ensuring there is no negative visual or heritage impacts.
  - S5 - Addressing the performance gap – supporting homes that are 'zero carbon ready'.
  - S6 - Housing Mix and Type – defining an acceptable housing mix in Silchester.
  - S7 - Affordable Housing – setting out the level and type of affordable housing.
  - S8 - Site Allocation – an allocation of approximately 18 homes is envisioned.
  - S9 - Local Employment – safeguard employment sites in the village.
  - S10 - Connecting the Village – improving walking and cycling routes around Silchester.
  - S11 - Local Heritage Assets – identifying and protecting local heritage assets which are not already listed.
  - S12 - Community Facilities – protect existing local community facilities.

- S13 - Education – support expansion of the school and protect it as a community facility.
- S14 - Green Infrastructure – protect the green infrastructure network and encourage its improvement and connectivity.

## Site Allocation

- 4.5 Through the Local Plan update, draft Policy SPS6: Neighbourhood Planning identifies that the village of Silchester needs to allocate 10 homes within or adjacent to the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) ideally through the mechanism of neighbourhood planning. The addition of an SPB would also allow for infill development within the area.
- 4.6 In order to meet this requirement, the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate a site for 18 dwellings. The site can be viewed below.



- 4.7 The draft site allocation policy identifies that the site would provide 18 dwellings and open space. The site specific requirements are yet to be determined at this stage but an indicative layout demonstrates a range of house sizes including bungalows could be achieved on the site.

## 5. SEA Screening Assessment

- 5.1 At this stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process, it is not possible to be certain about what will be included 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 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. If the conclusion of a screening exercise is that an SEA is not 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 Schedule 1 parameters.

### SEA Assessment of neighbourhood plan

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

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
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;	The Neighbourhood Plan will set a framework for various types of projects and activities, and in so doing will influence the size, location and operating conditions of the development in question. The policies in the Plan will also set criteria which will be applied to planning applications.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Though unlikely, the Neighbourhood Plan could inform supplementary planning documents (such as design guidance), development briefs or site specific guidance.

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The Neighbourhood Plan will have regard to the objective of achieving sustainable development in the local area. It will be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029 and have regard to the emerging strategic policies in the draft Local Plan Update (2021 to 2040).
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood Plan will set the local vision, objectives and policies to guide new development in the 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 local cumulative effects arising from and between the different proposals and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and those in the adopted Local Plan. This will also be applicable to the Local Plan Update, which will continue to gain more weight as it moves through the plan-making process.
(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 are likely to be largely localised (i.e. within the neighbourhood area). However, given the proposed site allocation for approximately 18 dwellings, there could be effects over a larger area in relation to issues such as heritage impacts (noting its proximity to archaeological

	remains and scheduled monuments) and highways. <b>(see assessment below)</b>
(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	There are various parts of the Neighbourhood Area which are both highly valued and vulnerable, namely the Silchester Common SSSI, various SINC's, and Ancient Woodland. There are listed buildings that could be affected (including their setting) as well as Silchester Conservation Area, scheduled monuments and archaeological sites. <b>(see assessment below).</b>
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The neighbourhood plan area is not within a National Landscape and the Plan is not allocating development that could affect the importance of the landscape or its setting. <b>(see assessment below).</b>

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 environment are likely. The explanation for this assessment is set out in more detail below.

5.5 The National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG) (paragraph 027 ID: 11-027-20190722) states that: *“In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment.”*

5.6 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 proposal 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 is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and*

*dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the local plan or other strategic policies for the area.”<sup>4</sup>*

- 5.7 In relation to the considerations set out above in the national level planning guidance the following factors are considered to be particularly pertinent.
- 5.8 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to establish a settlement policy boundary around Silchester and is likely to allocate a site for 18 units, as set out in Section 4, which is in line with the emerging Local Plan Update evidence base.
- 5.9 It is also recognised that there are natural environment and heritage asset sensitives within the Parish that need to be given consideration. As set out in Section 4 and illustrated by Appendix 1, the Neighbourhood Plan area includes a range of natural environment designations including Ancient Woodland, Silchester Common SSSI, and a number of SINCs. In terms of heritage, there is a designated Conservation Area within the parish, and there are also a number of Listed Buildings and archaeological sites.
- 5.10 A small part of the northern part of the proposed site allocation is located within the Silchester Conservation Area, which extends to the north of the site. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies an ‘important general view especially of the wider landscape setting’ from within the conservation area looking south-east across the site. There is a Scheduled Monument approximately 20m to the west of the site (Flex Ditch). The site is located within a SSSI Impact Zone therefore there is the potential for development on site to have an ecological impact on the SSSI.
- 5.11 A planning application on the proposed allocation site was previously refused and and subsequent appeal which was dismissed, the inspector identified the key issues to be impacts on the Conservation Area and open countryside.
- 5.12 As the neighbourhood plan is proposing to create a new Settlement Policy Boundary around Silchester and allocate a site for new development it is considered that the impacts upon biodiversity, landscape and heritage could be considerable.
- 5.13 It is therefore considered that the impacts upon the Silchester Conservation Area and heritage could be considerable and widespread and 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. In light of the above an SEA will be required.

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

## 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.

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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

6.6 In carrying out the screening assessment, the borough council has addressed the various requirements set out in the European 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

6.7 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.

6.8 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 hydrologically linked to the Neighbourhood Plan zone of influence.

6.9 There is an existing HRA for the Adopted Local Plan dated (April 2014, as amended May 2015). The existing Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment contains a detailed assessment of each of the 8 European sites within 10km of the borough boundary. Appendix 2 sets out the key features of these sites and Appendix 3 includes maps from the existing Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment.

6.10 A draft HRA report has also been produced to accompany Basingstoke and Deane's Regulation 18 consultation Local Plan Update. This is not a formal screening or appropriate assessment of the emerging Local Plan Update but provides an initial assessment of HRA related issues at an early stage in the plan process.

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

6.11 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

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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)  
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inform the assessment process documented in this report. Appendix 3 includes maps of these sites, also taken from the Local Plan report. The implications of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed against each of the European sites within 10km of the neighbourhood area boundary in order to establish the likelihood of a significant effect on the reason for designation of the European site in question. This assessment has been undertaken having regard to the results and information in the HRA screening assessment prepared for the emerging Local Plan for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, and in the light of the relevant European Commission guidance (as referred to above), which forms the basis for the assessment criteria set out below.

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

- Thames Basin Heath SPA

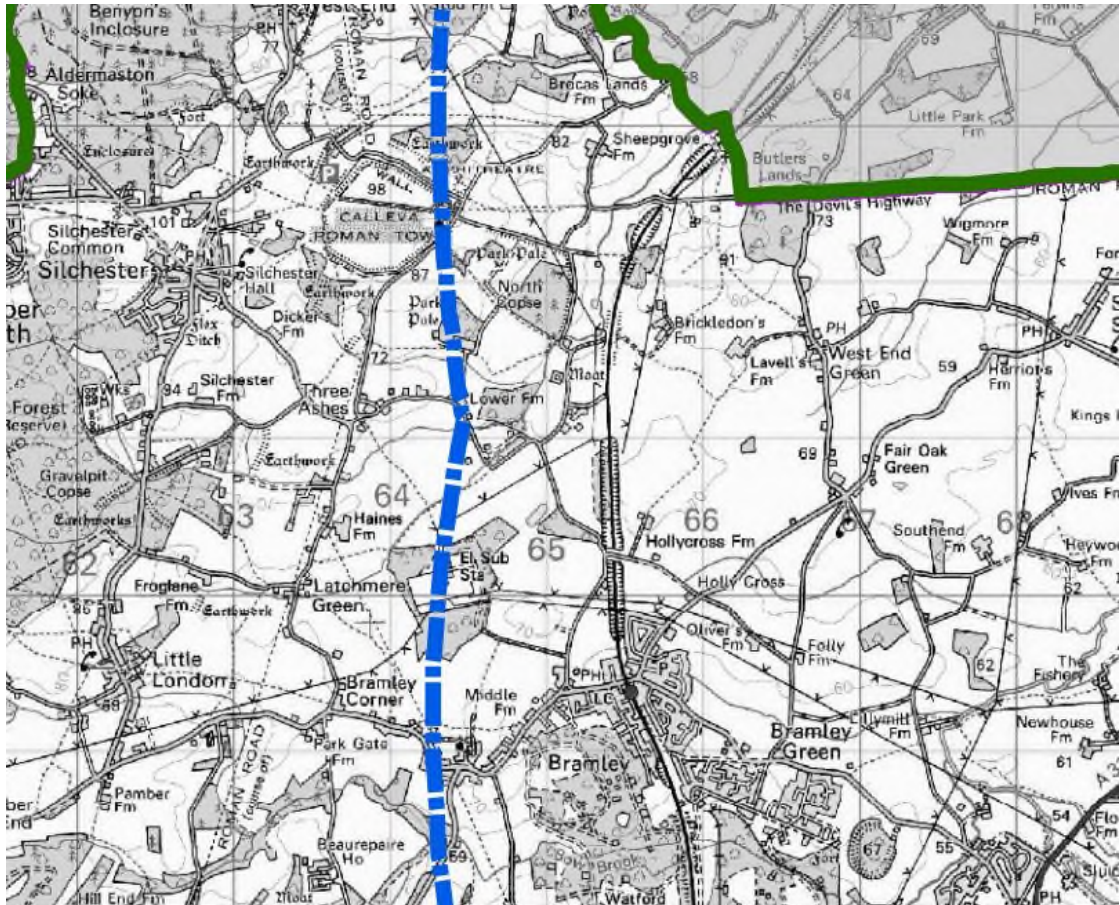
6.12 Accordingly, a screening matrix has been completed in relation to this area. The assessments demonstrate that there will be no significant effects on the relevant European sites. Accordingly, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

#### **Thames Basin Heath SPA**

6.13 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).

6.14 Silchester Neighbourhood Planning Area (which follows the parish boundary) falls within the 10km buffer zone on the SPA and development in this part of the area may have an impact on the SPA. However, it should be noted that, the village of Silchester is not within the 7km buffer zone and the plan proposed to focus development within or adjacent to the village.

6.15 The map below illustrates the 10km buffer zone which intersects the neighbourhood planning area. The full map can be found in Appendix 3.



## Screening Matrix

Name of European site<sup>8</sup>: **Thames Basin Heath SPA**

<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>Small scale residential development within the neighbourhood area, will have a limited impact on the localised environment. In addition, the distance between the village of Silchester, where development would be primarily focused, and the SPA, which is over 7km away, 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 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 SPA, given the significant separation distance of up more than 10km (between the likely development areas focussed around the village and the SPA).</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, development and that it will be primarily focussed on the village and considering the separation distance in relation to the SPA, 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 that likely development sites will be focussed on the village, there will be no likely impacts on the European site as a whole.</p>

<sup>8</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 facilitate housing development (potentially approximately 18 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 no loss, fragmentation or disturbance of habitat areas which form part of the European site (which is located over 10km away from the likely development locations).</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Given the likely location of the development to be allocated in the Plan relative to the SPA, combined with the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered there will be no significant impact on the SPA.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><b>No significant effects on the SPA are considered to be likely.</b></p>

6.16 Approximately 30-40% of the eastern side of the neighbourhood area lies within 10km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. This part of the neighbourhood area is rural in nature and located on the opposite side to the village of Silchester. Given the nature of the development which is likely to be facilitated by the neighbourhood plan, which is small scale residential development in or around the settlement of Silchester, it is considered that the impacts of the plan are likely to be fairly localised, and would not impact on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Therefore, it is considered that there are not likely to be significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA flowing from Silchester Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, an appropriate assessment is not required.

<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)

## Assessments of Solent Sites

6.17 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.

6.18 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.

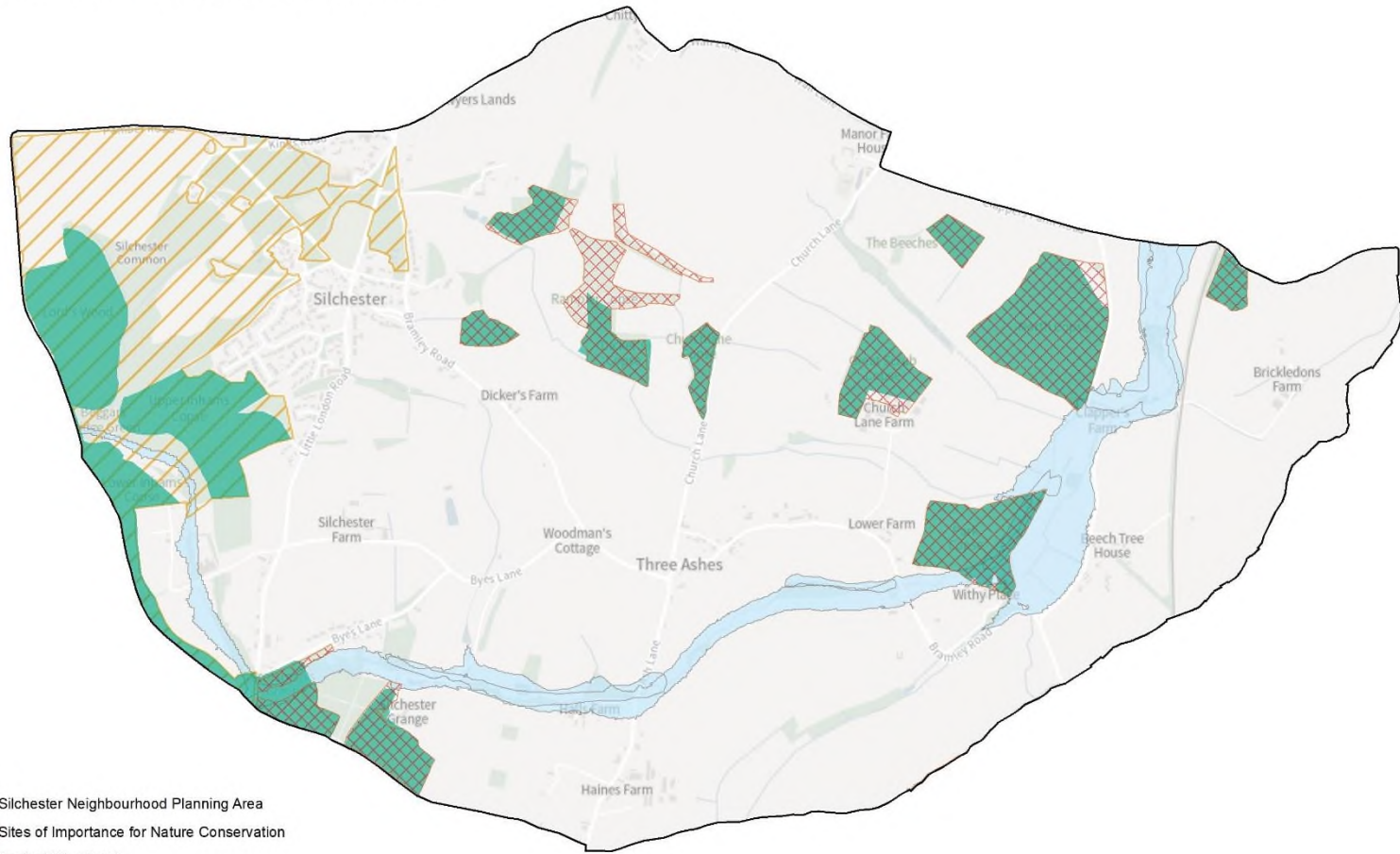
6.19 The parish lies outside of the catchment of the River Test. Therefore, it is considered that there are not likely to be significant effects on the Solent European sites (or Ramsar sites) flowing from Silchester Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, an appropriate assessment is not required.

## 7. Conclusions







- 7.1 This report contains an assessment as to whether the draft Silchester 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 and having regard to the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan Update 2021-2040.
- 7.3 The Local Authority's provisional conclusion, subject to comments from the statutory consultees, is that based on the above assessment.
- **A SEA is required to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan; and**
  - **The Neighbourhood Plan would not need to be subject to an HRA.**
- 7.4 Accordingly, Regulation 2(4) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 requires that environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan when it is submitted to the Local Planning Authority at Regulation 15 stage.

## **Appendix 1 – Environmental & Heritage Constraints**

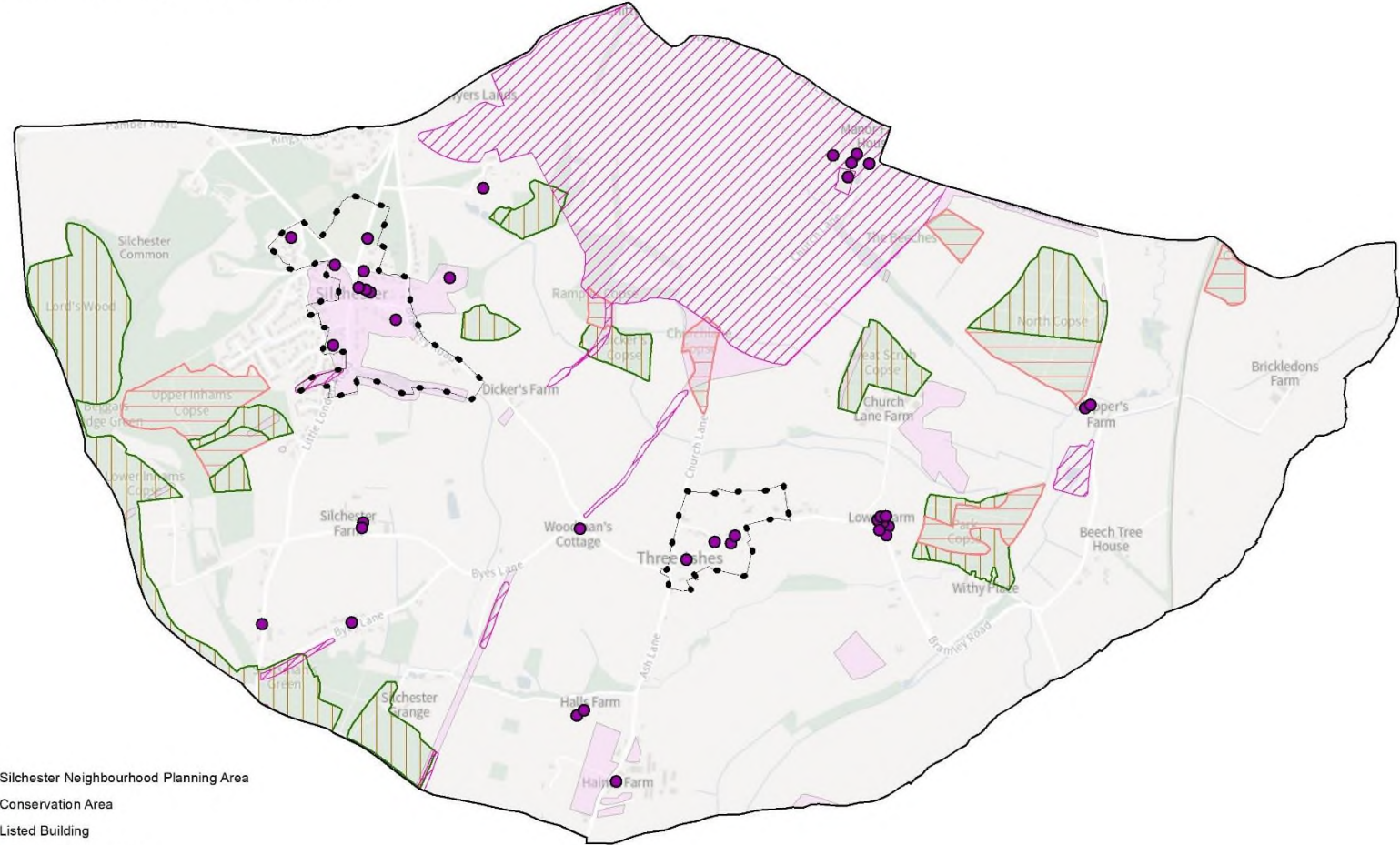
# Silchester: Environmental Constraints






**Key**

-  Silchester Neighbourhood Planning Area
-  Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
-  Flood Zone 2
-  Flood Zone 3

# Silchester: Heritage Constraints



- Key**
-  Silchester Neighbourhood Planning Area
  -  Conservation Area
  -  Listed Building
  -  Scheduled Monuments
  -  Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
  -  Ancient Replanted Woodland
  -  Archaeological Sites

## **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 southeast 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 Cliff 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 *critatus* (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 *Ranunculion 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**

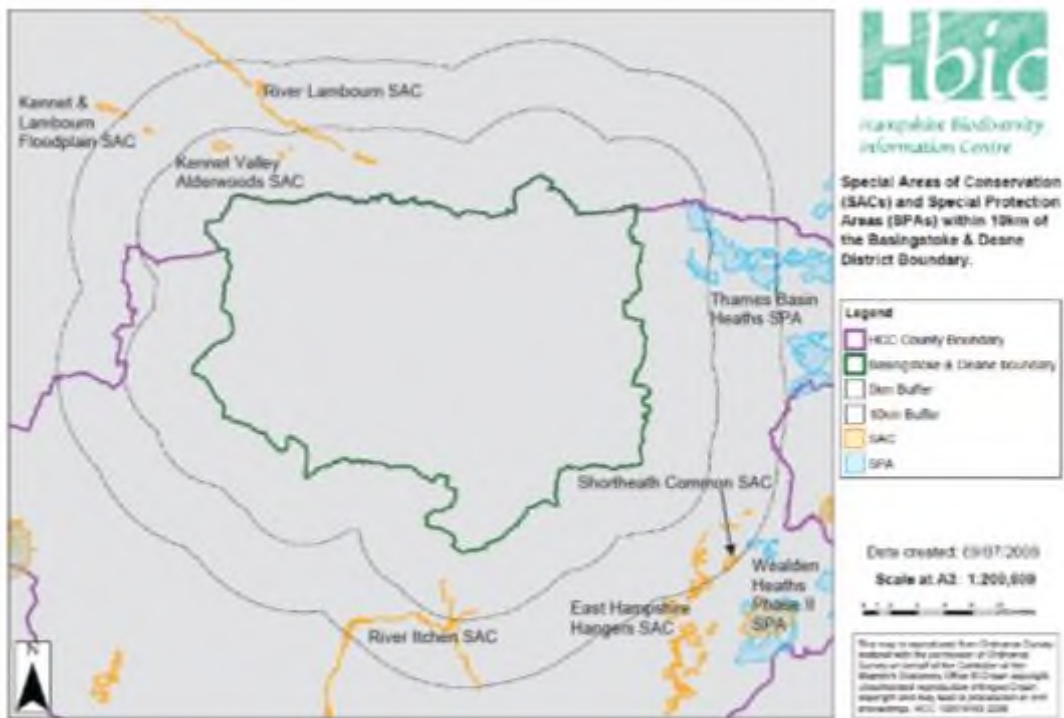
The Shortheath Common SAC qualifies as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

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

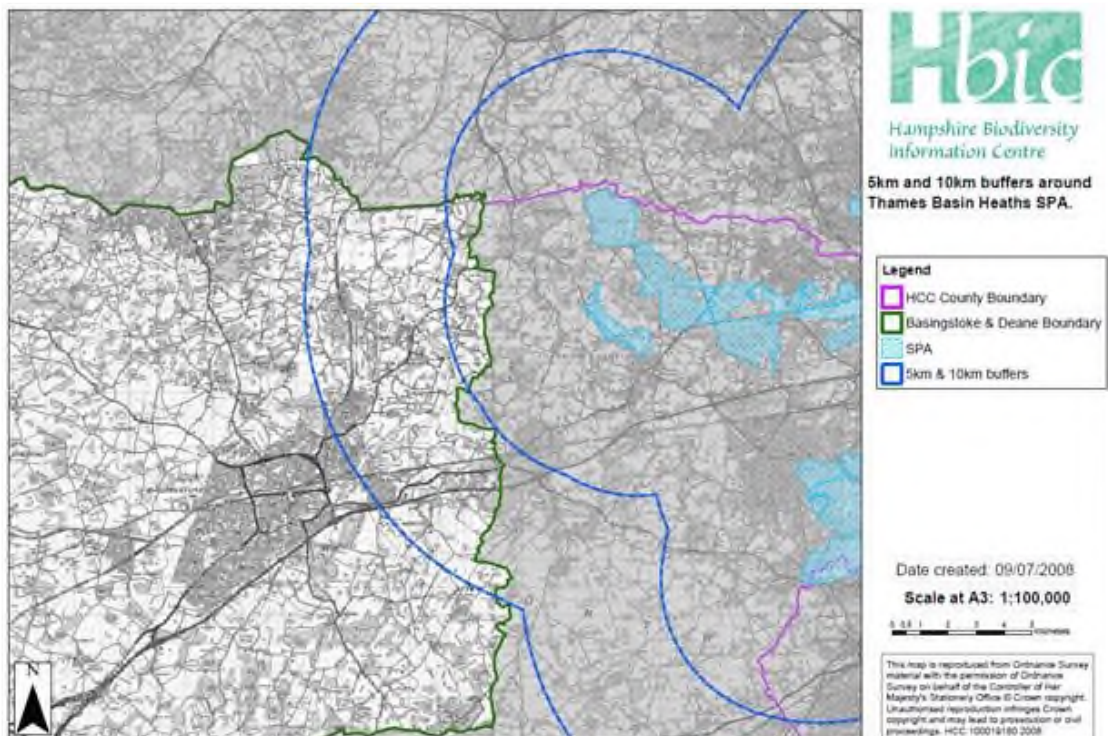
### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

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.

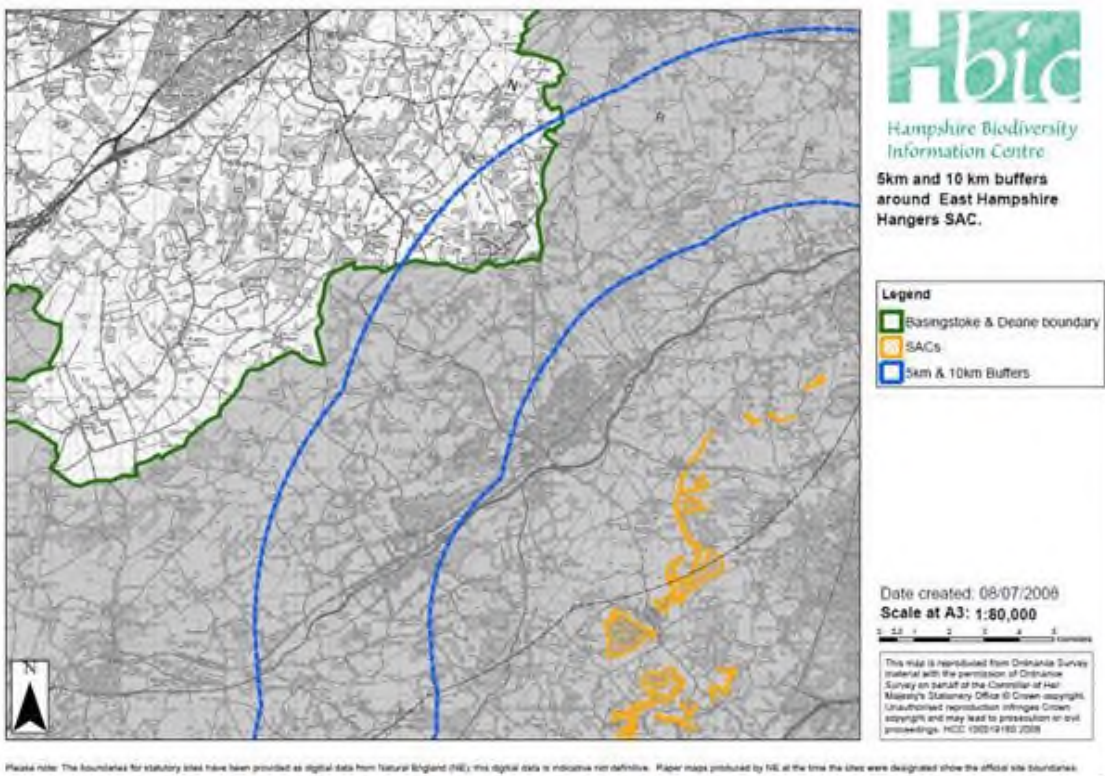
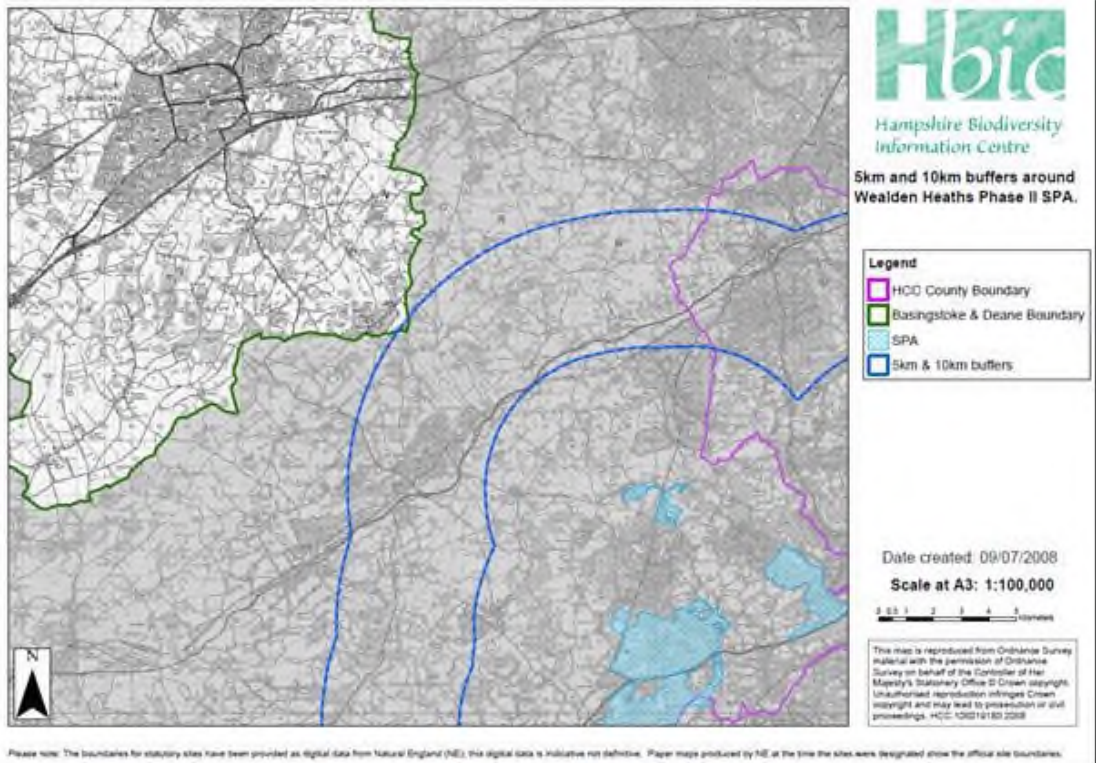
## Appendix 3 - Maps of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough

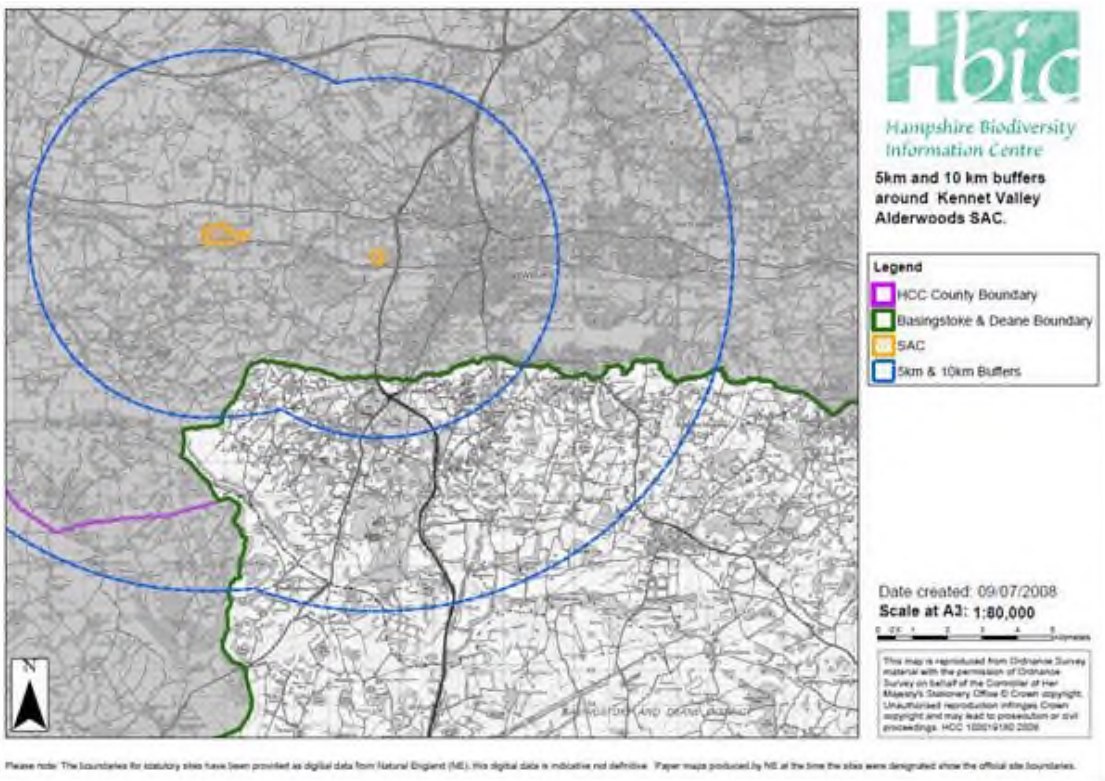
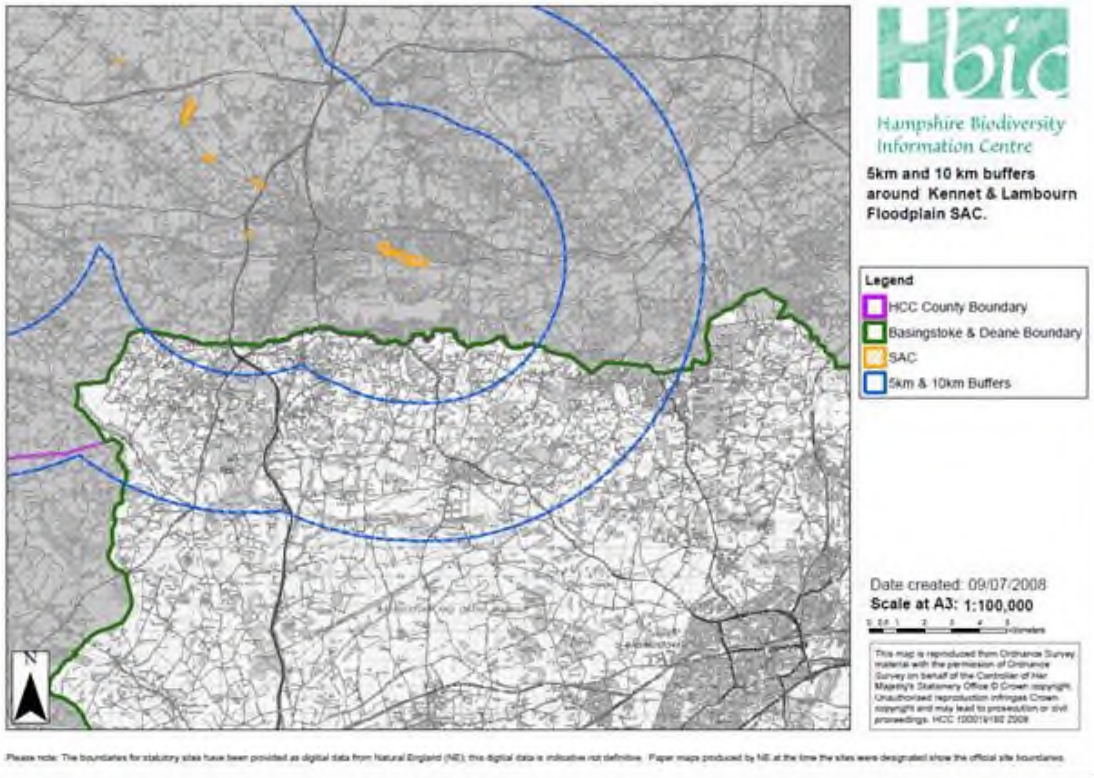


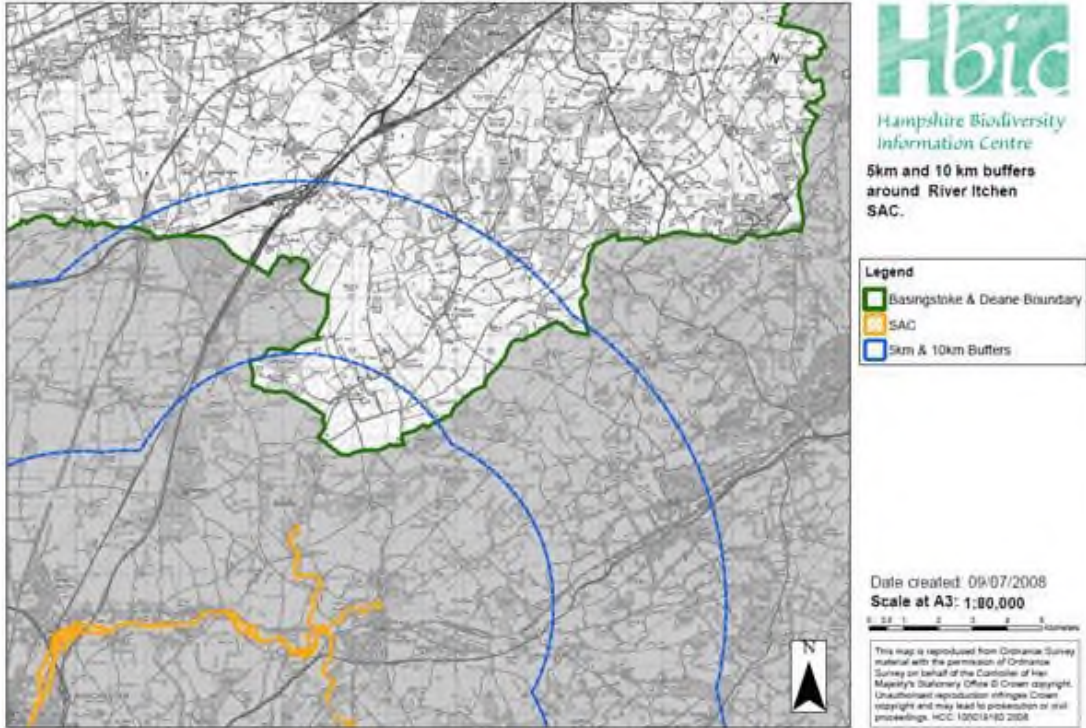
Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.



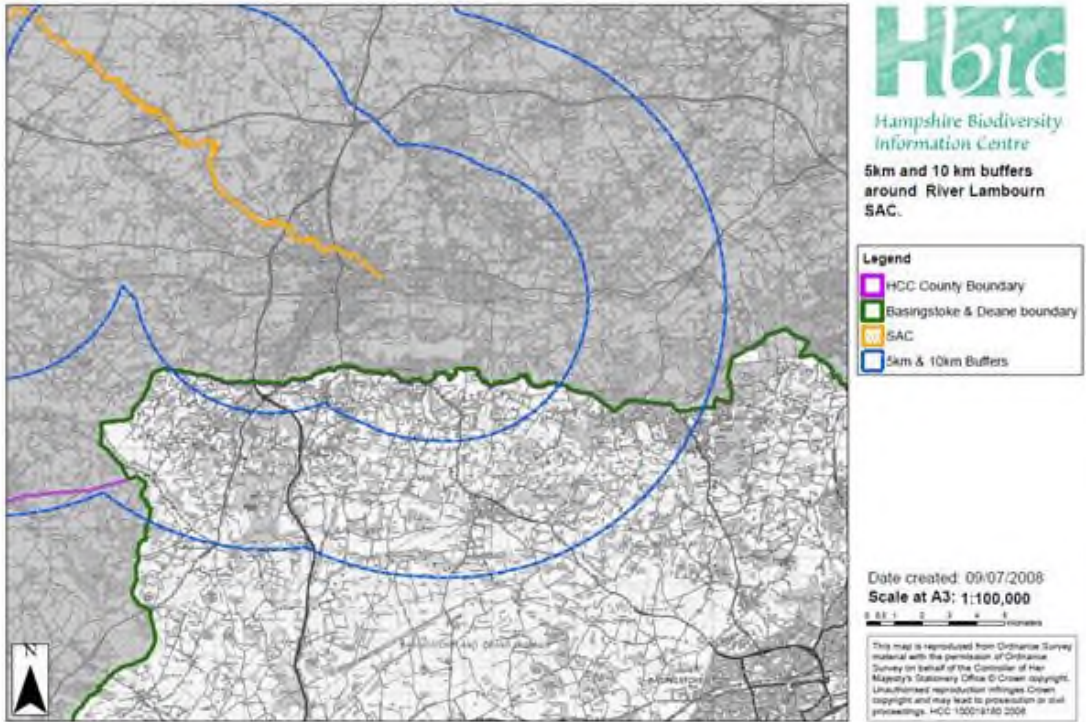
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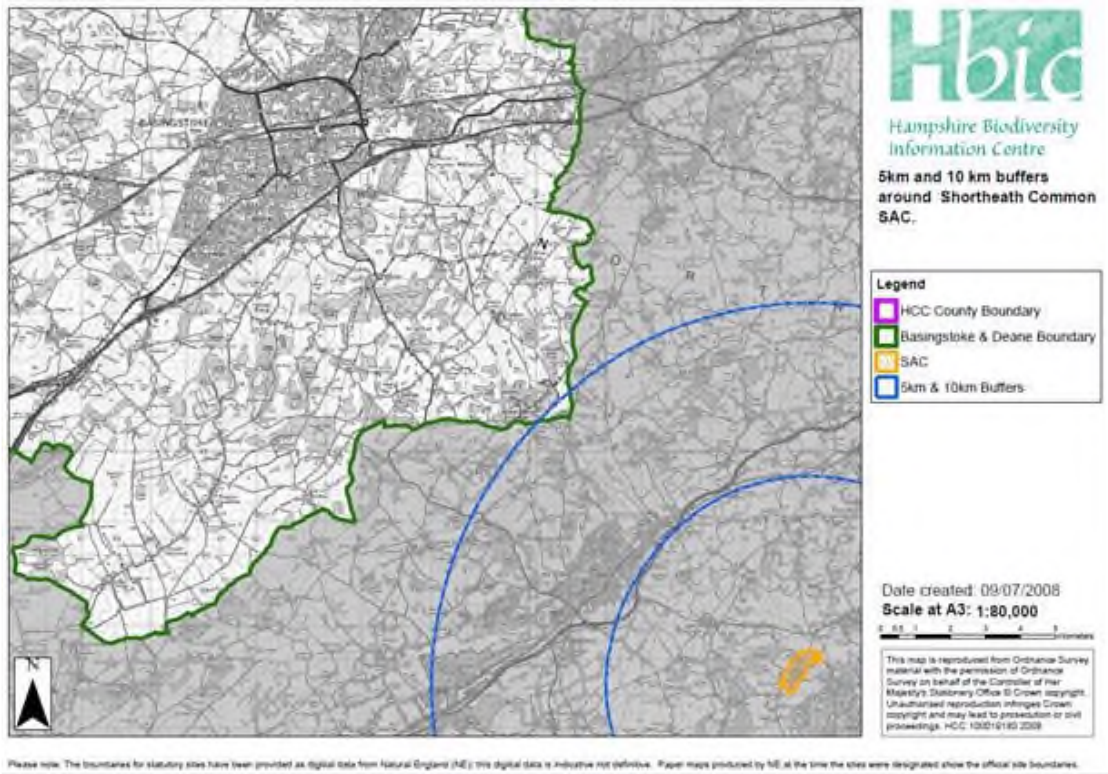




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(Source for all: Basingstoke and Deane Pre-Submission Local Plan Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment)

## 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>10</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>11</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>10</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6567218288525312>

<sup>11</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>12</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>13</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)
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Coastal shingle vegetation outside of the reach of waves

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<sup>12</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5762436174970880>

<sup>13</sup> <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030059>

- 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>14</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>15</sup>**

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)

<sup>14</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752>

<sup>15</sup> <https://sac.incc.gov.uk/site/UK0030138>

- 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>16</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>17</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 evidence does not indicate that eutrophication is affecting site integrity at any of the lagoons within the SAC, except for Butts Lagoon<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5294923917033472>

<sup>17</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5623422855938048>

<sup>18</sup> [Solent Nutrients - V5 June 2020 \(basingstoke.gov.uk\)](http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk)

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

Priority Habitats listed under Annex I of the Habitats Directive:

- Coastal lagoons

### **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 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>21</sup>**

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

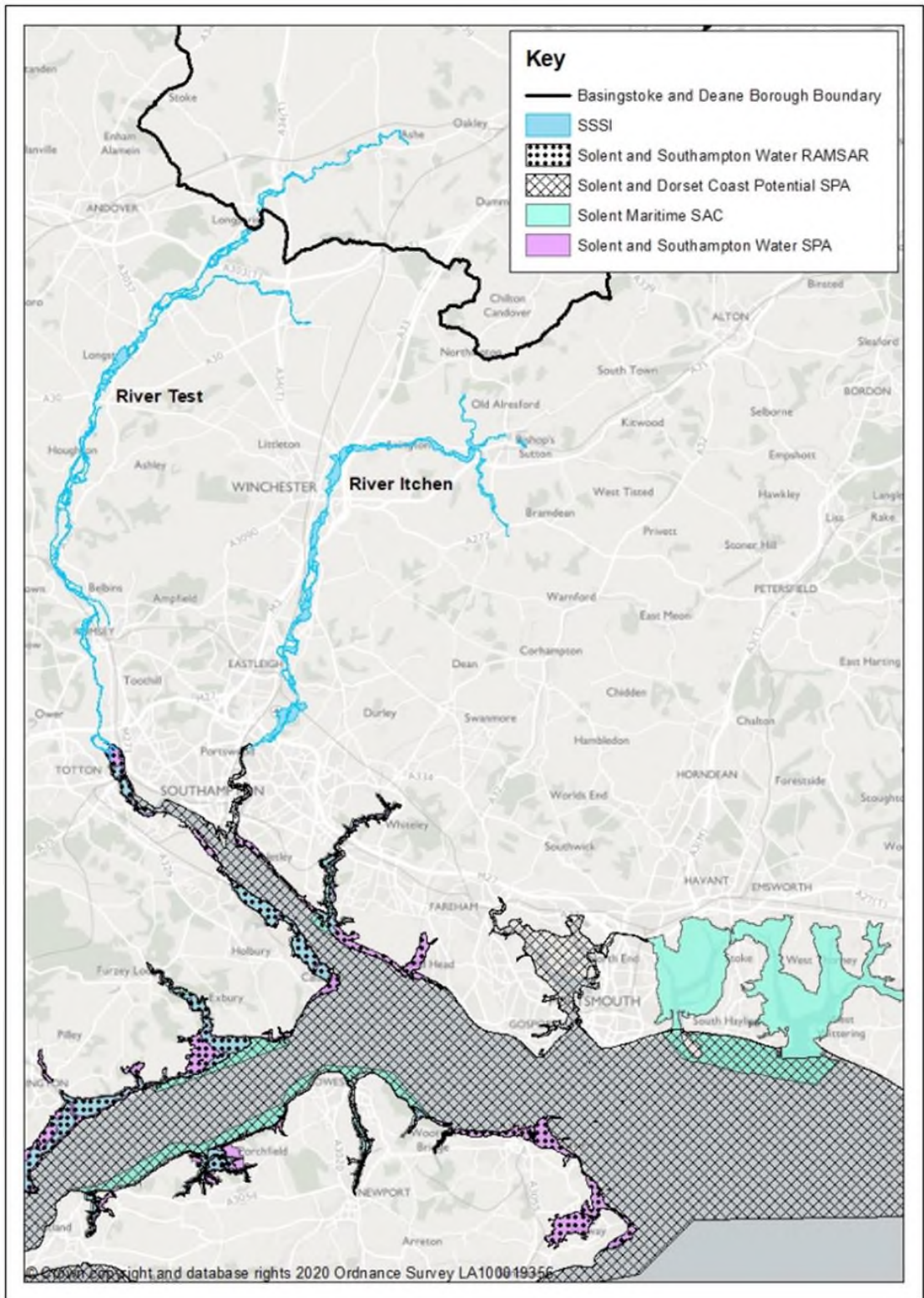
- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate weed control
- Coastal squeeze
- Invasive species
- Air pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

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<sup>19</sup> [European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC - UK0017073 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk)

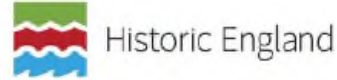
<sup>20</sup> [European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC - UK0017073 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk)

<sup>21</sup> [Site Improvement Plan: Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons - SIP270 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://naturalengland.org.uk)



## Appendix 5 – Responses from Consultation bodies

Historic England



By email only to: [Jessica.Wells@basingstoke.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.Wells@basingstoke.gov.uk)

Our ref: PL00796732  
Your ref: Silchester Neighbourhood Plan SEA



Date: 27/08/2024

### Silchester Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan ) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

The supporting information (screening report and draft neighbourhood plan) supplied with the consultation indicates that within the plan area there is a range of designated historic environment assets. There is also likely to be other features of local historic, architectural or archaeological value, and consideration should also be given to the wider historic landscape including views. It is also noted that there is an allocation for new development.

Given the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) upon the historic environment, Historic England hence concurs with the Council's view That on the basis of the information supplied, and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of 'SEA' Directive], Historic England concurs with the Council that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.



Historic England, 4th Floor, The Atrium, Cannon Bridge House, 25 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2YA  
Telephone 020 7973 3700 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.





The views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

I should be pleased if you can send a copy of the determination as required by REG 11 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the SEA process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that, despite the SEA, these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

Please do contact me, via email if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

**Louise Dandy**  
Historic Places Adviser

## Environment Agency

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**From:** Planning\_THM <Planning\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 21 August 2024 16:23  
**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: June 2024

If your email relates to:

- obtaining information and data (including flood risk and other environmental data)
- Freedom of Information
- the role of the Environment Agency

Please contact our Thames Area Customers and Engagement team: [enquiries\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Please be aware that many of our datasets are now available online. Simply visit [environment.data.gov.uk](https://environment.data.gov.uk)

For detailed guidance and advice on environmental permits please visit [Environmental management : Environmental permits - detailed information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/environmental-management)

### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING NOTICE

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

Thank you for your email.

#### Planning application consultations and enquiries

Due to current operational challenges, there may be some delays in our response to planning consultations. We are working to address these challenges and ensure that we handle each case with the utmost care and attention. Please be assured that we are doing all we can to process consultations as efficiently as possible. We appreciate your understanding and patience during this time.

#### Pre-planning enquiries

If your enquiry relates to pre-planning advice from us, please email us at [planning\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Please ensure you complete an enquiry form which can be obtained at: [Pre-planning application enquiry form \(preliminary opinion\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/forms/pre-planning-application-enquiry-form-preliminary-opinion)

We will be able to provide you with a free preliminary opinion if the proposed development is within our remit to comment.

Details of proposals we may be able to advise on can be found at:

[Developers: get environmental advice on your planning proposals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Requests for environmental data should be sent to [enquiries\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Kind regards,

Thames Sustainable Places Team  
Environment Agency

[Planning\\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk)



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## Natural England

Date: 02 October 2024  
Our ref: 485845  
Your ref: Silchester Neighbourhood Plan



Ms Jessica Wells  
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

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

T 0300 060 3900

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Ms Wells

### **Silchester Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 21 August 2024.

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 (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- 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.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle  
Consultations Team