

Planning Statement

Full Planning Application: Proposed excavation of grassland scrapes and associated landscaping works to create enhanced habitat for wetland birds

Northney Farm, Hayling Island

Dandara Southern Ltd

Date: January 2025 | Pegasus Ref: P24-2310

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Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision
ROO1v1	23.10.2024	TM	JG	First draft
ROO1v2	24.10.2024	TM	JG	Second draft for client approval
ROO1v3	28.10.2024	TM	JG	Third draft
ROO1v4	26.11.2024	TM	JG	Fourth draft
ROO1v5	04.12.2024	TM	JG	Fifth draft
ROO1v6	08.01.2025	TM	JG	Final draft



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1. Introduction.

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Dandara Southern Ltd in support of a full planning application seeking planning permission for the following development at Northney Farm, Hayling Island:

“The excavation of grassland scrapes with related landscaping, boundary treatments and associated works to create enhanced habitat for wetland birds.”

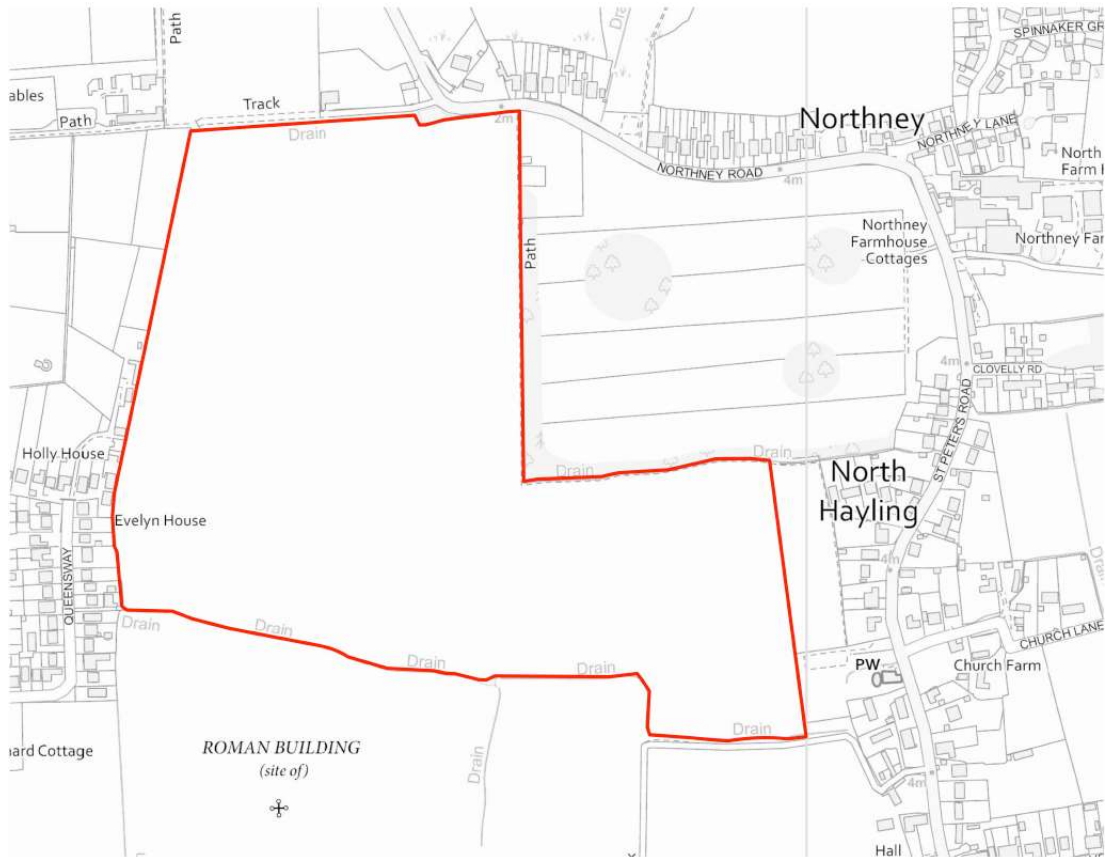
- 1.2. The enhanced habitat at Northney Farm will off-set the loss of land that forms part of residential development proposals (Havant Borough Council (HBC) ref. APP/23/00488) that has records of past use as supporting habitat by Curlew and some very limited use by Brent Goose, both of which are individually qualifying features of the nearby Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 1.3. This Statement should be read alongside the Wetland Bird Mitigation Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), prepared by EPR Ltd, which sets out further detail of the proposals and how they form part of the wider wetland bird mitigation strategy.

The Planning Application

- 1.4. This planning application is comprised of the following documents and plans:
- Planning application form;
 - Layout of Proposed Interventions Plan, prepared by EPR Ltd;
 - Typical Scrape Cross Section Plan, prepared by Pegasus Group;
 - Site Location Plan, prepared by Pegasus Group;
 - Planning Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group;
 - Wetland Bird Mitigation Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, prepared by EPR Ltd;
 - Ecological Statement, prepared by EPR Ltd;
 - HBC Biodiversity Checklist, completed by EPR Ltd.

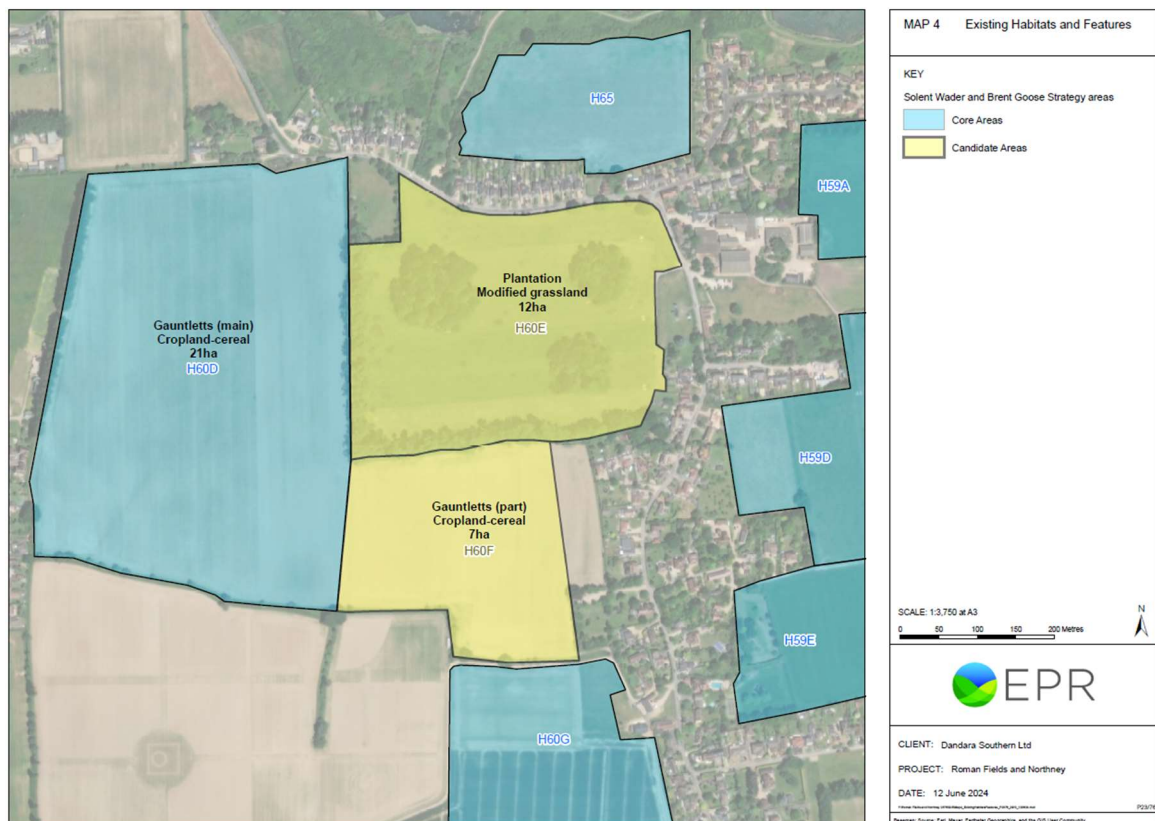
2. Site Location.

- 2.1. The site is located on the northern part of Hayling Island, as shown on the location plan below, and measures approximately 28.18 hectares.



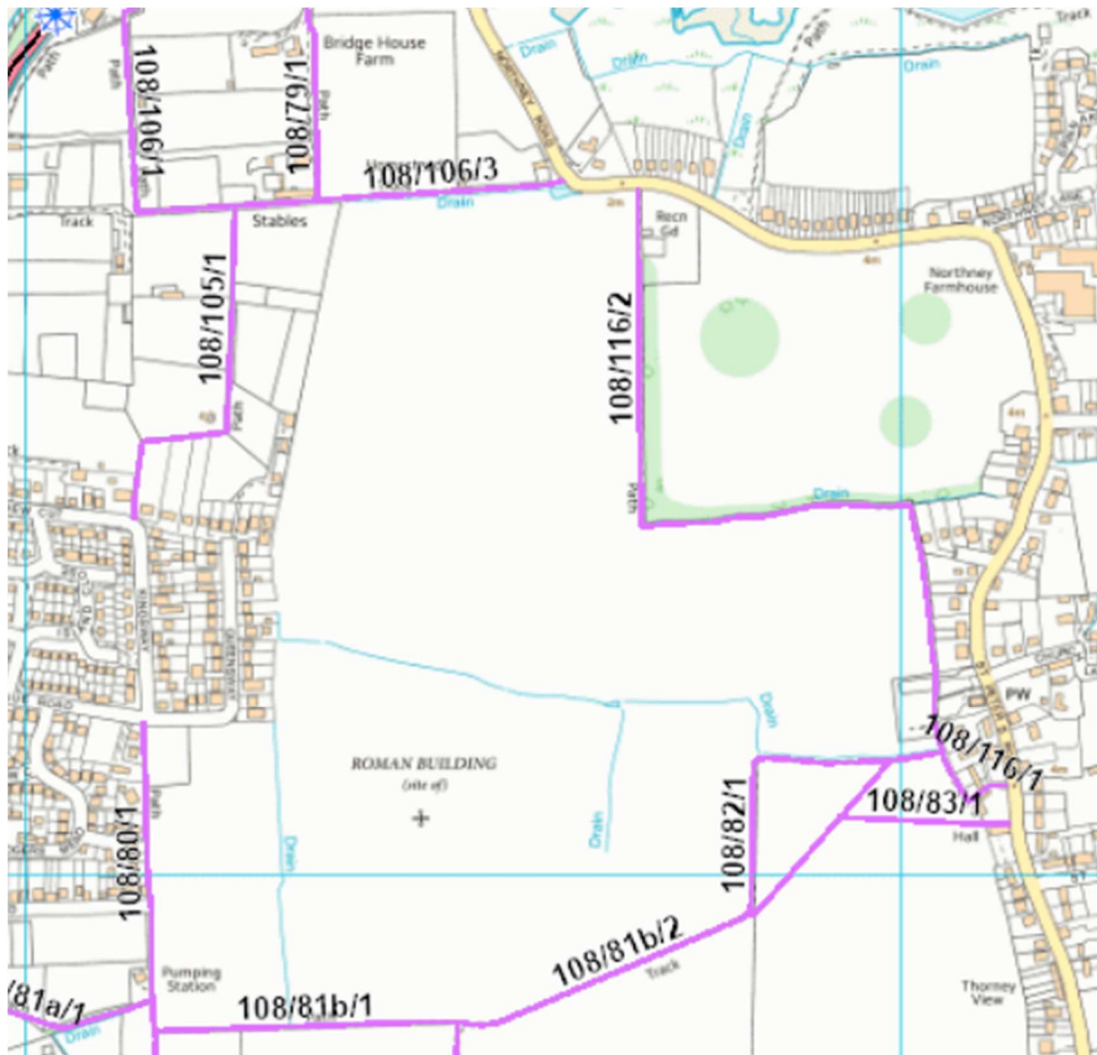
Site Location Plan

- 2.2. The site is made up of two fields which form part of Northney Farm. These fields are identified as 'Core Areas' and 'Candidate Areas' within the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS) as shown on the plan below.



Existing Habitats and Features Plan

- 2.3. Gauntlett's Field (main) measures 21 hectares and is in arable use and has been used for growing cereals for at least 20 years.
- 2.4. Gauntlett's Field (part) measures 7 hectares is also in arable use.
- 2.5. Plantation Field does not form part of the application site as no works requiring planning permission are included in that area (the works on Plantation Field being limited to bramble scrub clearance within the small round woodland copses). However, those works do form part of the wider Wetland Bird Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (included for context as part of this application) and as such there are references to Plantation Field within the application documents.
- 2.6. There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in and around the site, including footpath 108/116/2, which runs through the site along the field boundaries between Gauntlett's Field (main) and Plantation Field and between Gauntlett's Field (part) and Plantation Field, as shown on the plan below.



Extract from Hampshire County Council Public Rights of Way Map

- 2.7. Field boundaries are predominantly made up of hedgerows and trees. Residential properties lie to the north (along Northney Road), east (along St Peter's Road) and to the south-west (along Queensway). There are a number of listed buildings along St Peter's Road, including St Peter's Church. There is open farmland to the south and west. OS mapping shows the site of a Roman building on the field south of Gauntlett's Field (main).

3. The Proposals.

Background

- 3.1. Dandara Southern Ltd submitted a full planning application for the following development at Land East of College Road, Purbrook, Waterlooville, in June 2023 (HBC ref. APP/23/00488):

“Mixed use residential development comprising 628 dwellings, community centre, allotments, public open space including play areas, new junction to College Road, related internal access road, footways and cycleways, pumping station and drainage basin”.

- 3.2. The application is currently under consideration. The proposals will result in the development of land that has records of past use as supporting habitat by Curlew and some very limited use by Brent Goose, both of which are individually qualifying features of the nearby Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 3.3. To seek to mitigate the loss of the supporting bird habitat an additional planning application for a proposed mitigation strategy located on land at Northney Farm (HBC ref. APP/23/00507) was submitted alongside the residential application at College Road (Campdown). This mitigation strategy involved the creation of a new 1,200m flood defence bund and approximately 200m of repairs and refurbishments to the existing sea wall, designed to prevent the anticipated future loss of existing ‘core’ high tide roosting areas to predicted sea level rise, thereby compensating for the loss of habitat at Campdown.
- 3.4. In view of objections from Natural England and the Chichester Harbour Conservancy to the Northney Farm planning application, Dandara Southern Ltd appointed EPR to review the previous mitigation strategy and develop a proposed response comprising either amendments to the submitted mitigation package, or a new package of measures, to address the concerns that were raised.
- 3.5. As a result of this review, a new mitigation strategy has been prepared in consultation with Natural England and HBC’s Ecologist, as set out in full in the Wetland Bird Mitigation Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) submitted as part of this application.
- 3.6. The HMMP includes development which requires planning permission, i.e. the excavation of scrapes with related landscaping, boundary treatments and associated works, to enable the creation of enhanced habitat for wetland birds.
- 3.7. The following section sets out a summary of the proposed development.

The Proposed Development

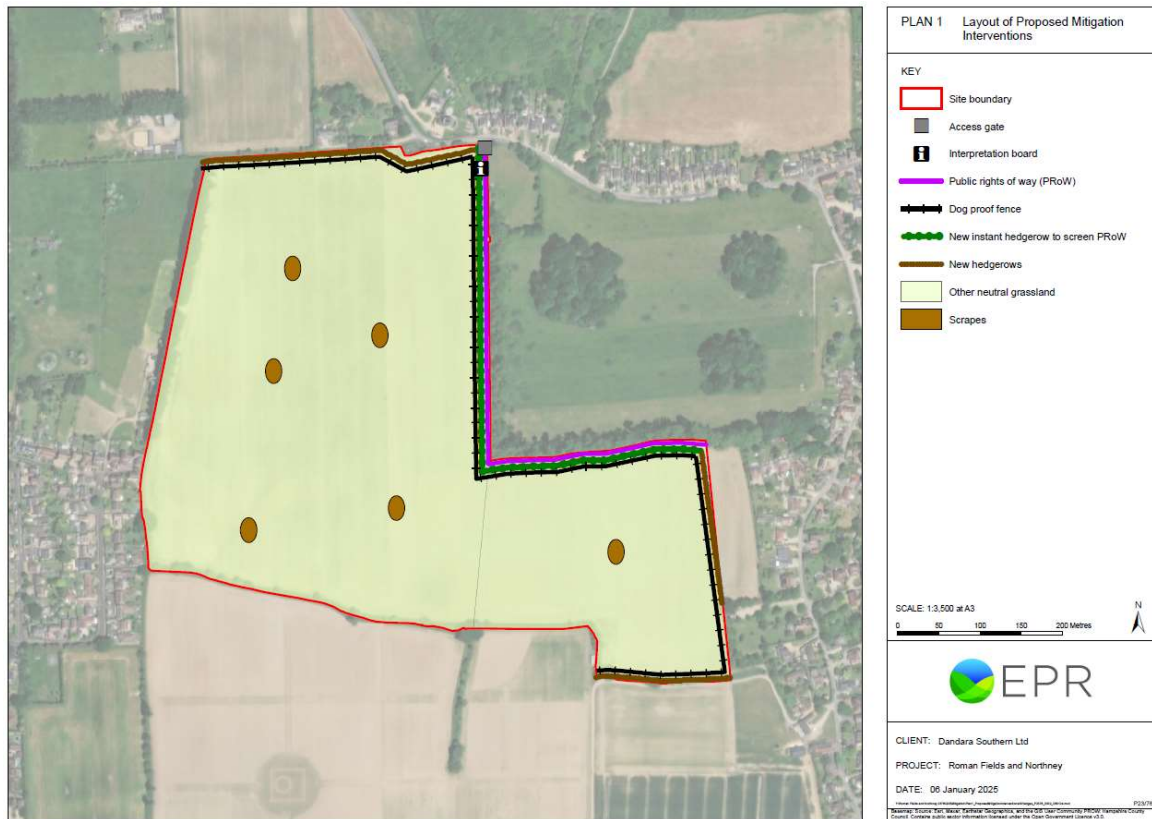
- 3.8. The description of the proposed development is as follows:

“The excavation of grassland scrapes with related landscaping, boundary treatments and associated works to create enhanced habitat for wetland birds.”

- 3.9. The HMMP sets out details of each of the elements of the proposed development, which are summarised below. The other components of the wider bird mitigation strategy do not require

planning permission and will be secured through a legal agreement linked to the planning application at Campdown.

3.10. The plan below shows the works that are proposed as part of this planning application.



Proposed Mitigation Interventions Plan

Grassland Scrapes

3.11. The creation of a series of shallow grassland scrapes will provide temporary standing water and damper areas of grassland which will enhance the habitat for Curlew by promoting invertebrate prey.

3.12. A total of 6 scrapes will be created in the fields with the following specification, as shown on the Layout of Proposed Interventions Plan and Cross Section drawing:

- 20m by 20m or larger;
- Scalloped edge, to increase the length of wet muddy areas;
- Gentle slopes with an uneven finish, to allow gradual exposure of feeding surfaces;
- Water depth in early spring should be:
 - Up to 25cm over half of the area;
 - 25-50cm over the rest;
- Create between July and November; and
- Spoil can be spread across the remaining field.

3.13. The scrapes will be mechanically excavated and then observed until after the first heavy rainfall event. If they fail to hold water then they will be lined using puddled clay if required.

Public Rights of Way Screening, Information Panel and Gates

- 3.14. The Wetland Bird Mitigation Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) identifies that the use of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the site is likely suppressing the use of the site by birds, especially Curlew which are very sensitive to human disturbance.
- 3.15. It is therefore proposed that these PRoWs will be screened from the fields by planting native species-rich hedgerow along their inside edges, combined with the provision of a stock-proof fence (approximately 1,406m) with sheep netting or similar to prevent dogs from accessing the fields (as shown on the Layout of Proposed Interventions Plan). As set out in the HMMP, this will greatly increase the prospects of these fields for being used by the birds.
- 3.16. Instant hedging will be used for the section of PRoW that passes along the eastern edge of Gauntlett's Field and northern edge of Gauntlett's Field. The remaining new hedgerow will be comprised of two staggered lines of whips to create a thick bushy structure that aids visual screening and expedites establishment. Further details of the hedgerow species are set out within the HMMP.
- 3.17. As shown on the Layout of Proposed Interventions Plan, way markers and an information panel will be provided at the northern end of the PRoW to direct users, inform them of the sensitivity of the new Bird Refuge and explain the requirement for them to keep dogs under control, to stick to the marked and screened PRoW, and not to enter the main fields.
- 3.18. A gate will be included at the northern end of the PRoW, and the design will be such that access on foot or via wheelchair or mobility scooter etc is possible, but larger motorised vehicles (such as scramble or quad bikes) cannot gain entry. There are various suitable designs of gate, such as a kissing gate with over-sized chamber sufficiently large to permit a wheelchair to enter.

Grazing Infrastructure

- 3.19. Gauntlett's fields are currently under arable cultivation. It is proposed that the fields will be grazed by beef cattle as they create a mix of longer and shorter vegetation and bare ground and their dung helps maintain invertebrate populations which are taken by waders including Curlew and other invertebrates, all of which will help to enhance the habitat for wetland birds.
- 3.20. Stock fencing with field gates, and a water supply to drinking troughs are required. The external perimeter of these fields will need to be fenced by stock-proof fencing with three to four strands of tensioned wire or stock net and a single strand of barbed-wire along the top.

Maintenance and Monitoring

- 3.21. The HMMP sets out details of the ongoing maintenance of the above infrastructure as well as the monitoring and review of the mitigation strategy.

4. Assessment against Planning Policy

- 4.1. This section sets out the local planning policy and guidance pertinent to the application scheme and provides an assessment of the proposals against key policies.

Havant Borough Local Plan

- 4.2. The Development Plan for Havant Borough includes the following documents of relevance to the proposed scheme:
- Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) – Adopted 2011.
 - Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) – Adopted 2014.
- 4.3. Following the withdrawal of the Draft Havant Borough Local Plan from Examination in 2022, HBC are currently preparing a new Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy and Allocations Plans. The Council's most recent Local Development Scheme (September 2024) confirms that the next stage of consultation is the Draft Plan Consultation (Regulation 18) which is anticipated to take place in mid 2025, with examination not anticipated before 2027. Given the early stages of preparation in the new plan it can be given little weight in the decision making process.
- 4.4. Policies CS11 (from the Core Strategy) and DM23 (from the Allocations Local Plan) are of particular relevance as they are concerned with the protection and enhancement of the environment, including Brent Geese and Wader sites (which the application site is identified as forming part of). The policy text is replicated below.

Policy CS11 Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough

"Planning permission will be granted for development that:

- 1. Ensures the key landscape and built form principles set out in the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment are protected and where possible enhanced by partnership working with developers, groups and the wider community.*
- 2. Protects and where possible enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory designated landscape, habitats and features of biological, hydrological or geological interest. Protection and enhancement will be achieved by appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures including wardening, education and information and the creation of new habitats, water bodies/courses planting of new trees and woodland.*
- 3. Has particular regard to the following hierarchy of nature conservation designations within the borough (as identified on the Proposals Map): (i) Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar [International]. (ii) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves [National]. (iii) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), other Ancient Woodland not identified in (ii) above [Local].*
- 4. Protects and where appropriate enhances the borough's statutory and non statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites, buildings of local historic or architectural interest.*
- 5. Supports an ongoing programme of survey of habitats and species and designation of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.*

6. *Incorporates partnership working with conservation organisations to improve public understanding of biodiversity and to manage public access to designated sites, particularly on the coast, to reduce harm to nature conservation interests.*
7. *Incorporates partnership working with landowners and developers to ensure land management practices restore, enhance and where appropriate create new valued landscapes, habitats and their soil structure, particularly the ancient woodland remnants of the Forest of Bere and coastal salt marsh.*
8. *Protects wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors to prevent the fragmentation of existing habitats and to allow species, for example Brent Geese, to respond to the impacts of climate change by making provision for habitat adaptation e.g. coastal managed realignment and species migration.*
9. *Maintains undeveloped gaps between the settlements of Emsworth/Havant; Havant/Waterlooville; Havant/Portsmouth; Emsworth/Westbourne and Leigh Park/Rowlands Castle as shown on the Proposals Map.*
10. *Protects the best and most versatile agricultural land that has the greatest potential for local food security.*
11. *Responds to the emerging evidence from the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, the published recommendations, and future related research."*

- 4.5. The application proposals will directly enable the enhancement of habitat for wetland birds (qualifying features of the nearby Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA)) and therefore accords with Policy CS11.
- 4.6. The provision of information panels will educate users of the PRoW through the site as to the importance of the bird refuge and therefore accords with criterion 2 of Policy CS11.
- 4.7. The Ecological Statement submitted with this application sets out details of ecological assessment that has been undertaken and confirms that the proposals will not have any adverse impact upon protected species. Indeed, as set out above, the principal aim of the proposals is to help facilitate improvements to bird habitat.
- 4.8. With regards to heritage features, it is noted that there are listed buildings along St Peter's Road and OS mapping shows the site of a Roman building on the field south of Gauntlett's Field (main). However, given the minor nature of the works (primarily shallow grassland scapes), it is not considered that there will be any unacceptable impact on heritage features, and therefore no conflict with Policy CS11 in this regard.

Policy DM23 'Sites for Brent Geese and Waders'

"Planning permission will be granted for developments that avoid important sites for Brent Geese and/or waders outside of the statutory designated areas, identified on the Policies Map. Where this cannot be avoided, development proposals on or adjacent to an important Brent Goose and/or wader site outside of the statutory designated areas will need to demonstrate levels of impact, alone and in combination with other proposals subject to the tests of the Habitats Regulations. Where a negative impact upon a site cannot be avoided or satisfactorily mitigated, and the tests of the Habitats Regulations are met as necessary, replacement feeding/roosting habitat, on a no net loss basis, will be sought. Where a negative impact upon an important site cannot be avoided or mitigated and replacement feeding/roosting habitat is not or cannot be provided on a no net loss basis, the proposal will be refused. Planning permission will be granted for development on or adjacent to uncertain sites for Brent Geese



and/or waders outside of the statutory designated areas, where appropriate surveys are undertaken and it is determined that the site has no importance.”

- 4.9. The application proposals will facilitate the off-setting of the loss of supporting habitat for wetland birds at Campdown through enhancement of bird habitat at Northney Farm. There will therefore be no “net loss”.
- 4.10. The acceptability of the wider bird mitigation scheme against the tests of the Habitat Regulations will be assessed as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment that will be undertaken as part of the determination of the planning application at Campdown.
- 4.11. The Local Plan Policies Map identifies that the central northern part of the application site is in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and where **Policy CS15 ‘Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk’** is of relevance. However, given that the proposed shallow grassland scrapes are located outside of these zones and within Flood Zone 1 (area with the lowest probability of flooding), it is not considered that the proposals will have any unacceptable flooding impact.



5. Conclusions.

- 5.1. Whilst the application proposals are minor in nature, they are important components of the wider bird mitigation strategy, thereby helping to facilitate the off-setting of the loss of supporting habitat for wetland birds at Campdown through enhancement of bird habitat at Northney Farm.
- 5.2. The proposals accord with Policies CS11 and DM23 of the Local Plan by enhancing designated sites for Brent Geese and Waders and the application should be approved accordingly.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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