



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

SOUTHERN GAS NETWORKS

PORTSDOWN HILL BIO-METHANE
FACILITY, PORTSDOWN HILL ROAD,
HAVANT, PO9 1BW

17TH JANUARY 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was carried out across land at the Portsdown Hill bio-methane facility at Portsdown Hill Road, located in Havant, Hampshire on the 12th December 2019. The assessment was required in order to ascertain whether any ecological constraints could affect the proposals for the site.

Proposals are to permit third party operators to use the bio-methane facility which, at present is used by SGN. To enable the site to operate at full capacity, allowing third party operators to deliver and inject bio-methane into the gas network at this site, up to 20 deliveries a day could be accommodated, which equates to approximately 15 additional vehicles a day than at present. The site supports five existing stanchions which can each accommodate a vehicle to inject bio-methane into the facility at any one time. There will be no need to increase the number of stanchions or alter the existing site layout in order to increase use of the facility. The site extended over approximately 0.2 hectares (ha).

The main findings of the survey are as follows:

- * The site is within a semi-urban area in the western extent of Havant. The immediate surrounding area comprises industrial use beyond which a golf course together with agricultural fields and associated tree lines and hedgerows extend to the north, east and west.
- * The bio-methane injection facility subject to this assessment is located immediately north of the wider Portsdown Hill Pressure Reducing Station. The survey site is dominated by hardstanding together with a series of small and medium sized buildings/structures together with associated gas plant and bio-methane equipment. No areas of semi-natural habitat were present within the site. The SGN site, together with an adjacent Waste Management site are located within an escarpment, separating the industrial area from the adjacent landscape.
- * The site is not subject to any statutory designations. The closest designated site is Portsmouth Golf Course East Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), situated approximately 30m to the north.
- * In the wider area, Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, Langstone Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Farlington Marshes Local Nature Reserve (LNR) are located approximately 1.1km to the south at their closest points with Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 1.3km to the south. These sites are designated for their important assemblages of waterfowl and wetland habitats. The site does not provide any supporting habitat for any of these designated sites.

- * The site is a well-managed, active site dominated by hardstanding and associated buildings with limited ecological value. The on-going use of the adjacent waste management site which extends to the north, east and west of the bio-methane facility serves to further limit the ecological value of the site.
- * The wider landscape is subject to on-going monitoring as part of the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy (2019) which is undertaken in order to monitor bird species associated with the Solent Maritime SAC. Results of which were returned by the data search to inform this assessment (HBIC 2020). All monitoring sites within 150m of the site currently show negative records; i.e. no records since 2002, or low use (with maximum count of 1 wader recorded during the last monitoring period).
- * Proposals will result in a modest increase in the volume of vehicles using the site. However, the level of use will be still be relatively low when considered in combination with the wider industrial site and the activity associated with the adjacent waste management site. Any increase in noise and emissions through use of the bio-methane facility is unlikely to result in any significant increase in levels beyond the baseline conditions.
- * Overall, a number of factors serve to reduce any likely significant impacts the current proposals may have on ecological receptors in the wider landscape. These include; the proposed low level of use within the bio-methane facility compared to current activity levels associated with the adjacent waste management site; the location of the facility within an escarpment which will serve to create a buffer between the site and the wider landscape; the distance of the site from areas of semi-natural habitat including designated sites; together with the low number of records of waders from potentially suitable habitat within 150m of the site (to include qualifying species for the SAC).
- * Based on the baseline conditions supported, protected species do not pose any constraints to works and further surveys in relation to protected species are not required. It is considered that the effects on qualifying species of the SAC from increased noise and emissions are not significant and therefore further assessment in the form of a Screening Opinion or Habitat Regulations Assessment is not considered necessary.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 CT Ecology Limited was commissioned by Southern Gas Networks to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, to inform the potential ecological constraints of proposals to permit third party operators to use the bio-methane facility at Portsdown Hill Road, located in Havant, Hampshire (hereafter referred to as “the site”).
- 1.2 Following a pre-application meeting in August 2019, it is understood that Havant Borough Council have requested that an ecology survey is undertaken to assess whether any ecological receptors, to include the designated sites in the wider area, could be impacted by the proposals.
- 1.3 This report has been compiled in accordance with current guidelines (British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development, 2013 and CIEEM, 2013 and 2016).
- 1.4 The purpose of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was:
 - * to classify the major habitats present;
 - * to identify the potential for any legally protected species to be present;
 - * to evaluate the nature conservation importance of the site;
 - * to recommend any additional ecological surveys and mitigation; and
 - * to provide recommendations for site enhancement.

Proposals

- 1.5 Current proposals are to permit third party operators to use the bio-methane facility which, at present is used by SGN personnel. To enable the site to operate at full capacity, allowing third party operators to deliver and inject bio-methane into the gas network at the site, up to 20 deliveries a day could be accommodated, which equates to approximately 15 additional vehicles a day than at present. The site supports five existing stanchions which can each accommodate a single vehicle to inject bio-methane into the facility at any one time. There will be no need to increase the number of stanchions or alter the existing site layout in order to increase use of the facility. The site boundary is shown on the Habitat Map in Appendix B.

Site Description

- 1.6 The site is located in the western extent of Havant, Hampshire and is accessed via Portsdown Hill Road to the south. The bio-methane injection facility subject to this assessment is dominated by hardstanding and a series of small and medium sized buildings/structures together with associated gas plant and bio-methane equipment. No semi-natural habitats were present within the site. The site is located to the north of the SGN Portsdown Hill Pressure Reducing Station.
- 1.7 A recycling and processing plant operated by L&S Waste Management is adjacent to the east of the site, with adjacent land to the north and west of the SGN site also used by L&S Waste Management for the storage of skips and vehicles. The SGN Portsdown Hill Pressure Reducing Station bounds the survey site to the south.
- 1.8 In the wider surrounds a golf course, which includes Portsmouth Golf Course (East) Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), extends to the north and west. Agricultural fields are to the east and south-west to include Land to the North of Portsdown Hill Road SINC and Fort Purbrook Paddock SINC respectively. These areas are marked on the habitat Map in Appendix B. A series of agricultural fields together with the residential area of Farlington are located beyond Portsdown Hill Road to the south.
- 1.9 The SGN site, together with the L&S Waste Management site are located within an escarpment which serves to separate the industrial area from the adjacent landscape. The National Grid Reference for the centre of the site is SU686 064 and the survey site measured approximately 0.2 hectares (ha).

2. METHODOLOGY

Desk Study & Consultations

- 2.1 The desktop study involved conducting database searches for statutory and non-statutory designated sites, legally protected species and features of interest within a 2km radius of the site. The data search was based on information provided by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC, 2020); Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC, 2020); Ordnance Survey mapping; and aerial photography.

Field Survey and Assessment

- 2.2 An ecological survey of the site was undertaken on 12th December 2019 by Carly Teague, a suitably qualified ecologist with over 13 years' experience as a professional ecologist. The weather conditions during the survey were dry and clear with a light breeze.
- 2.3 The field survey comprised a walkover inspection of the land and habitats present. The survey followed standard Phase 1 survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) and covered all accessible parts of the site, including boundary features. Habitats were described and mapped (Appendix B). A list of plant species was compiled, together with an estimate of abundance made according to the DAFOR scale (Appendix D).
- 2.4 This assessment provides information on the habitats in the survey area and identifies actual or potential presence of legally protected or otherwise notable species/habitats in or immediately adjacent to the site.
- 2.5 Target notes highlighting a particular feature of ecological interest are provided in Appendix A, with associated photographs.
- 2.6 Scientific names are given after the first mention of a species, thereafter, common names only are used. Nomenclature follows Stace (2010) for vascular plant species.

Protected Species Assessment

- 2.7 The potential for the site to provide habitat for protected species was assessed from field observations in conjunction with results of the desk study. The site was inspected for indications of the presence of protected species including:

- * Habitat considered suitable to support widespread reptile species including areas with a scrub/grassland mosaic and potential hibernation sites;
- * On-site ponds offering potential breeding opportunities for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and the presence of suitable terrestrial habitat including hedgerows and rough grassland;
- * The presence of features in, and on trees, indicating potential for roosting bats *Chiroptera*, including knot and rot holes and loose bark. The presence of features on buildings including loose roof tiles, gaps in fascia boarding in addition to secondary evidence including staining, droppings and feeding remains;
- * The presence of nesting habitat for breeding birds, including mature trees, dense scrub and hedgerows and direct evidence of bird nesting including bird song, old nests etc.; and
- * Habitats considered suitable to support badger (*Meles meles*) setts, and evidence in the form of hair, pathways and latrines.

- 2.8 The potential presence for protected species is categorised as Negligible, Low, Moderate, High or Present, based on the findings of the field survey and on the evaluation of existing data.
- 2.9 The purpose of this assessment is to identify whether more comprehensive Phase 2 surveys for protected species or mitigation should be recommended.

Caveat

Data Search

- 2.10 It is important to note that, even where data is held, an absence of records for a defined area does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of ecological interest; the area may be simply under-recorded.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.11 Ecological surveys are limited by factors that affect presence of plants and animals such as seasonality. Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation of the environment.

- 2.12 The appraisal does not constitute a full botanical survey, or a Phase 2 pre-construction survey that would include accurate GIS mapping for invasive or protected plant species. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area and any direct evidence observed during the survey. It is therefore used as a tool to recommend further protected species surveys (or other species of significant nature conservation interest) if on the basis of the preliminary assessment or during subsequent surveys, it is considered reasonably likely that protected species may be present.
- 2.13 It is considered that the survey was sufficiently rigorous to assess the ecological value of the site.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

Aerial Photography and OS Maps

- 3.1 The site is within a semi-urban area in the western extent of Havant. The immediate surrounding area comprises industrial use beyond which a golf course together with agricultural fields and associated tree lines and hedgerows extend to the north, east and west.
- 3.2 There are no on-site water bodies and no ponds within 500m of the site.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.3 The site is not subject to any statutory designations. There are five statutory designated sites within 2km of the survey boundary. The closest of which are Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, Langstone Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Farlington Marshes Local Nature Reserve (LNR). All of which are located approximately 1.1km to the south at their closest points. These sites are designated for the important assemblages of waterfowl which are significant at an international level. Assemblages include both overwintering and breeding waterfowl. Species recorded in significant numbers include ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*); black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa islandica*); common redshank (*Tringa totanus tetanus*); dark-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla Bernicla*); common shelduck (*Tadorna Tadorna*); grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*); dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*); bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*); common tern (*Sterna hirundo*); curlew (*Numenius arquata*); sandwich tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*); shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*); and teal (*Anas crecca*).
- 3.4 Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 1.3km to the south at its closest point. Qualifying features for the SAC designation include a number of Annex I habitats including estuaries, spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*) and Atlantic salt meadows (*Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae*), together with the Annex II species; Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*).

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.5 The site is not subject to any non-statutory designations. There are 33 non-statutory sites of nature conservation importance with a 2km radius. These are listed in the table below. The closest is Portsmouth Golf Course East Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) approximately 30m to the north.

Table 3.1: SINC's within 2km of the site

Non-Statutory Site	Features- species supported that meet Section 6 of SINC Selection Criteria	Distance from Site
Portsmouth Golf Course East		30m north
Fort Purbrook Paddock 4 (Havant)		70m south-west
Land to the north of Portsdown Hill Road	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i> , <i>Cupido minimus</i>	120m south-east
Field East of Farlington Redoubt (North)		135m east
Fort Purbrook Paddock 3 (Havant)		160m south-west
Portsmouth City Golf Course Copse	<i>Sorbus rupicola</i> , <i>Ophrys insectifera</i> , <i>Thesium humifusum</i>	220m north-east
Camp Down Grassland Remnants		280m east
Fort Purbrook Paddock 2 (Havant)	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i> , <i>Plantago media</i>	280m west
Fields off Havant Road	<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	330m south-east
Fort Purbrook Paddock 1 (Havant)	<i>Cupido minimus</i> , <i>Spiranthes spiralis</i>	510m south-west
Field to West of Gillman Road		530m south-west
Portsmouth Golf Course West		570m north-west
Fort Purbrook	<i>Spiranthes spiralis</i> , <i>Onobrychis viciifolia</i>	650m west
East and West of Gillman Road	<i>Petroselinum segetum</i> , <i>Poa compressa</i>	665m south-west
Purbrook Park Wood		730m north-west
Littlepark Wood (East)		910m north-east

Non-Statutory Site	Features- species supported that meet Section 6 of SINC Selection Criteria	Distance from Site
Sandy Dell		930m north-west
Littlepark Wood (West)	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	960m north-east
Gundymoor Wood (West)		1km north
Gundymoor Wood (Main)		1km north
Johnston's Coppice	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	1.1km north
Meadow Adjacent to Johnston's Copse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	1.3km north-east
Farlington Marshes Grassland (North-East)		1.5km south
Hulbert Road Meadow		1.5km north-east
Farlington Marshes	<i>Polypogon monspeliensis</i> , <i>Oenanthe lachenalii</i> , <i>Carex divisa</i> , <i>Inula crithmoides</i> , <i>Polygonum oxyspermum</i> subsp. <i>raii</i> , <i>Ononis spinosa</i> , <i>Puccinellia rupestris</i> , <i>Ranunculus baudotii</i> , <i>Ruppia maritima</i> , <i>Hordeum marinum</i>	1.5km south
Meadow west of Farlington Avenue		1.5km west
Adjacent to Farlington Playing Fields	<i>Ononis spinosa</i> , <i>Chenopodium murale</i> , <i>Carex divisa</i> , <i>Oenanthe lachenalii</i>	1.6km south
Farlington Avenue		1.7km south-west
Neville's Park Areas 4-10	<i>Bromus commutatus</i>	1.7km north-east
Land to the South of Portsdown Hill Road		1.8km west
Neville's Park East Wood		1.8km north-east
Newlease Copse, Havant		1.8km north

Non-Statutory Site	Features- species supported that meet Section 6 of SINC Selection Criteria	Distance from Site
London Road Fen		1.9km north-west

Other Habitat Classifications

Ancient woodland

- 3.6 There are five areas of ancient woodland within a 2km radius of the site which appear on the ancient woodland inventory. The closest of which is Littlepark Wood approximately 900m to the north-east.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 3.7 The site does not support any Habitats of Principal Importance. There are three Habitats of Principal Importance within 250m of the site. These include lowland calcareous grassland, located approximately 30m to the north at its closest point; lowland meadows, located 70m to the north at its closest point; and lowland mixed deciduous woodland, located approximately 185m to the north-east at its closest point.

Habitats

Site Summary

- 3.8 The main habitats recorded within the site are described below. Additional details are shown on the habitat survey map in Appendix B, and the target notes are listed in Appendix A.

Buildings (J3.6)

- 3.9 A series of seven buildings/structures were present throughout the site. These were all pre-fabricated metal equipment housing units which were completely sealed.

Hardstanding (unclassified)

- 3.10 Areas of gravel and tarmacadam areas dominated the site.

Protected Species

Legislation

- 3.11 Legislation relating to the protected species referred to in this section is included in Appendix C.
- 3.12 The following paragraphs detail the suitability of the on-site habitats to support protected species and include information from the data search for protected, rare and otherwise notable species returned within a 2km radius.

Birds

- 3.13 A large number of bird records were returned by the data search, many of which are associated with wetland and grassland habitats in the wider area and which will not utilise any on-site habitats. A total of three **red** listed Bird of Conservation Concern¹ (BoCC) were returned by the data search which may pass through the site. These include **song thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*); **starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*); and **herring gull** (*Larus argentatus*).
- 3.14 The site was dominated by hardstanding and there were no on-site semi-natural habitats considered suitable to support nesting birds. The structures were all well-sealed with no suitable nesting opportunities for birds.
- 3.15 Overall the site was considered to provide **negligible** potential for widespread nesting birds.
- 3.16 Areas of suitable habitat within the wider landscape are subject to on-going monitoring as part of the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy (2019). This long-term initiative has been designed and implemented to monitor bird species associated with the Solent Maritime SAC in order to protect wintering bird feeding and roosting areas from recreational disturbance in the wider locality.

¹ Birds of Conservation Concern status is prioritised into high concern (Red), medium concern (Amber) and low concern (Green) (Eaton et al, 2009). Red-list species are those that are globally threatened according to the IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and have not shown a substantial recent recovery. Amber-list species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations. Green-list species are those that fulfil none of the criteria.

- 3.17 Current records from the interim project report (2018) were provided as part of the data search. Monitoring information for Brent Geese and other waders in relation to habitats/areas within 150m of the site (considered relevant to inform this assessment), are included in the table below.

Table 3.2: Summary of Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy Results (2018).

Site Reference (Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy)	Records	Location/Site Description/Distance from Site
H01	Negative records (no records since 2002)	An area of lowland meadow habitats and lowland calcareous grassland located approximately 30m north of the site.
P02	Low use (maximum count of 1)	An area of lowland meadow habitats located approximately 60m to the south-west of the site.
P03	Negative records (no records since 2002)	An area of lowland meadow habitats located approximately 130m south-east of the site.

- 3.18 There were no on-site habitats considered suitable to provide any supporting function for qualifying species of the Solent Maritime SAC.

Reptiles

- 3.19 The data search returned records for two species of widespread reptiles within 2km of the site boundary including slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*). The closest record was for common lizard approximately 550m to the west from 2006.

3.20 The site did not support any suitable habitat for this species with areas of hardstanding dominating the survey area. Reptiles favour a mosaic of natural and semi-natural habitats which offer a structural diversity required for feeding, basking and sheltering. The survey site is isolated in all directions by hardstanding and bare ground in use to the north, east and west by the waste facility and to the south by the wider pressure reducing facility.

3.21 The site was considered to provide **negligible** potential for reptiles.

Great Crested Newt (and other amphibians)

3.22 The data search did not return any records for great crested newt or other amphibians within 2km of the site.

3.23 There were no on-site water bodies and no ponds within 500m. Great crested newts, and other amphibians require a network of suitable ponds or ditches which contain standing water to enable egg laying and displaying. The survey site is isolated in all directions by extensive areas of hardstanding and the location within a dip in the landscape further isolates the site due to a presence of a steep embankment to the north, east and west.

3.24 The site itself was dominated by hardstanding considered to be completely unsuitable for great crested newts and other amphibians. These factors serve to significantly reduce the potential for newts and other amphibians to pass through the site.

3.25 Overall the site was considered to provide **negligible** potential to support great crested newt and other amphibians.

Bats

3.26 At least 12 species of bat have been recorded within 2km of the site boundary. This includes common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*); soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*); serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*); Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*); Natterer's (*M. nattereri*); Whiskered bat (*M. mystacinus*); Brandt's bat (*M. brandtii*); Alcahoo bat (*M. alcahoo*); parti-coloured bat (*Vespertilio murinus*); noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*); long-eared bat (*Plecotus* sp.); and brown long-eared (*P. auritus*).

3.27 The most frequently recorded species is pipistrelle species. All records are held confidentially and therefore locations and types of records (roosts or in-flight observations) were not disclosed by the data search.

- 3.28 The buildings are well maintained and completely sealed which did not provide any potential for roosting bats. There were no on-site trees. The site, together with the adjacent waste site are well-illuminated for security and located within a dip in the landscape. Overall the site and immediate surrounds provide limited foraging opportunities for bats.
- 3.29 Overall, the site was considered to provide **negligible** potential for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. Extensive areas of grassland, hedgerows and woodland blocks in the wider landscape instead provide more suitable and extensive opportunities for bats in the locality.

Badger

- 3.30 Records for this species have been returned within 2km however records are held confidentially and therefore specific details including locations are not disclosed by the data search.
- 3.31 No evidence of badgers in the form of setts or secondary evidence was observed during the survey within the site or within the surrounding 30m (where access permitted). The site was isolated by extensive areas of hardstanding and associated industrial/commercial use in all directions in addition to a steep embankment creating an additional barrier to dispersal by this species to the north, east and west.
- 3.32 Overall the topography of the site offered limited potential for sett building. The site was considered to provide **negligible** potential for badgers.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

- 3.33 No INNS listed on the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) were recorded during the survey.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1 On the basis of the information available from the habitat survey and desk study, the site has been evaluated in terms of its potential for biodiversity, support of protected species and habitats, and the contribution the area makes as part of the wider landscape. The nature conservation value of the site has been assessed following standard criteria developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2006) and is provided below.
- 4.2 The biodiversity value of protected species within the site is a preliminary evaluation based upon the desk study records, habitat suitability and the conservation status of the species in question. It should be noted that where European Protected Species (EPS) or species of Principle Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity are present on-site they may be valued at a lower level/scale where it is considered likely that populations would not be of sufficient importance to justify designation at a higher level. However, regardless of their biodiversity value, such species are still subject to national and/or European legislation.
- 4.3 Key aspects of relevant planning policy regarding conservation, including an explanation of species referred to as being of 'Principal Importance for Conservation of Biodiversity' and European Protected Species and habitats, are provided in the Legislation section in Appendix C.

Geographic Evaluation

Features of International Importance

- 4.4 Features of International Importance are principally sites covered by international legislation or conventions. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) implements the Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EC) (Habitats Directive) in England and Wales. The Regulations mainly deal with the protection of sites with certain habitats and populations of species that are important for nature conservation in a European context, i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and Special Protection Areas (SPA's).
- 4.5 The site is not subject to any international statutory nature conservation designations. The closest sites of International Importance Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar, both located approximately 1.1km to the south at their closest points. Solent Maritime SAC is located approximately 1.3km to the south at its closest point.
- 4.6 These sites are all designated for the important assemblages of waterfowl which are significant at an international level, including both overwintering and breeding waterfowl.

- 4.7 The survey site does not provide any supporting habitat for the SAC, SPA or Ramsar and based on the distance from the site, proposed increased in use of the existing bio-methane facility is not considered likely to have any impact on these designated sites.
- 4.8 Proposals will result in a modest increase in the volume of vehicles using the site however when considered in combination with the wider industrial site and the activity associated with the adjacent waste management site, any increase in noise and emissions through use of the bio-methane facility is unlikely to result in any significant increase in levels beyond existing baseline conditions. In addition, the location of the site within an escarpment further serves to reduce any likely significant impacts the proposals may have on waders and the associated semi-natural habitats in the wider landscape.
- 4.9 Based on the results of the current assessment, effects on qualifying species of the SAC from increased noise and emissions are not significant and therefore further assessment in the form of a Screening Opinion or Habitat Regulations Assessment is not considered necessary.

Features of National Importance

- 4.10 Features of national importance include SSSIs which are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The site is not subject to any national statutory nature conservation designations and it is not considered that any habitats or populations or assemblages of species within the site would meet the criteria for the designation of SSSIs at an appropriate geographic level².
- 4.11 The closest site of national importance for nature conservation is Langstone Harbour SSSI, located approximately 1.1km to the south at its closest point. This site is designated for the important assemblages of waterfowl. The survey site does not provide any supporting habitat for the SSSI and the proposals are not considered likely to have any impact on this designated site.

Features of Regional Importance

- 4.12 The site does not include any features of value at this level neither is it likely to be selected as a wildlife site based on the results of the current survey.

² JNCC Guidelines for selection of biological SSSIs (see <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2303#download>).

Features of District Importance

- 4.13 The site is a working gas site adjacent to a waste facility. The bio-methane facility is well-managed and does not support any semi-natural habitats. The site does not support any features that were considered to be of value at this level.

Features of Local Importance

- 4.14 The site is dominated by extensive areas of hardstanding with associated buildings and does not support any semi-natural habitats. The site does not support any features that were considered to be of value at this level.

Features of Value Immediate Vicinity (c. 250m) of the project

- 4.15 On-site features do not provide any value to wildlife and do not contribute to the biodiversity value of the wider landscape.

Summary

- 4.16 Overall on the basis of the survey results and the above criteria, the site is of limited ecological value due to an absence of any semi-natural habitats within the site.

Local Plan Evaluation

- 4.17 It is considered that the Havant Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 contains nature conservation policies relevant to the site. The full text of the relevant policies is contained in the Legislation section in Appendix C and this should be referred to. At the time of compiling this document, the Local Plan 2036 was being compiled and environmental policies within this document may also be relevant once formerly adopted.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- 5.1 The site is within a semi-urban area in the western extent of Havant. The immediate surrounding area comprises industrial use beyond which a golf course together with agricultural fields and associated tree lines and hedgerows extend to the north, east and west.
- 5.2 The bio-methane injection facility subject to this assessment extends over approximately 0.2ha and is located to the immediately adjacent to the north of Portsdown Hill Pressure Reducing Station. The survey site is dominated by hardstanding together with a series of small and medium sized buildings/structures together with associated gas plant and bio-methane equipment. No areas of semi-natural habitat were present within the site. The SGN site, together with an adjacent Waste Management site are located within an escarpment, separating the industrial area from the adjacent landscape.
- 5.3 Current proposals are to permit third party operators to use the existing bio-methane facility which, at present is used by SGN personnel. To enable the site to operate at full capacity, allowing third party operators to deliver and inject bio-methane into the gas network at the site, up to 20 deliveries a day could be accommodated, which equates to approximately 15 additional vehicles a day than at present. There will be no need to alter the existing site layout in order to increase use of the facility, with access remaining as existing from Portsdown Hill.
- 5.4 The site is not subject to any statutory designations. The closest designated site is Portsmouth Golf Course East SINCE, situated approximately 30m to the north. In the wider area, Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar, Langstone Harbour SSSI and Farlington Marshes LNR are located approximately 1.1km to the south at their closest points with Solent Maritime SAC located approximately 1.3km to the south. These sites are designated for their important assemblages of waterfowl and wetland habitats. The site did not provide any supporting habitat for any of these designated sites.
- 5.5 The wider landscape is subject to on-going monitoring as part of the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy (2019) which is undertaken in order to monitor bird species associated with the Solent Maritime SAC and in order to protect wintering bird feeding and roosting areas from recreational disturbance in the wider area. All monitoring sites within 150m of the site currently show negative records; i.e. no records since 2002, or low use (with maximum count of 1 wader recorded during the last monitoring period).

- 5.6 The site is a well-managed, active facility dominated by hardstanding and associated buildings with limited ecological value. The on-going use of the adjacent waste management site which extends to the north, east and west of the bio-methane facility serves to further limit the ecological value of the site.
- 5.7 Proposals will result in a modest increase in the volume of vehicles using the site however the level of use will be still be relatively low. The process of off-loading the bio-methane into the facility will not result in any changes beyond the baseline conditions with the bio-methane being pumped directly into the gas network via existing stanchions. Overall, the increased level of vehicle movements around the site is not considered likely to cause a significant increase in noise levels beyond the baseline conditions when considered in combination with the wider industrial site and the activity associated with the adjacent waste management site. Vehicle use will remain comparatively low when considered in the wider context of the industrial site, therefore, any increase in noise and emissions through use of the bio-methane facility is unlikely to result in any significant increase in levels beyond the baseline conditions.
- 5.8 Overall, a number of factors serve to reduce any likely significant impacts the current proposals may have on ecological receptors in the wider landscape. These include; the proposed low level of use within the bio-methane facility compared to current activity levels associated with the adjacent waste management site; the location of the facility within an escarpment which will serve to create a buffer between the site and the wider landscape; the distance of the site from areas of semi-natural habitat including designated sites; together with the low number of records of waders from potentially suitable habitat within 150m of the site (to include qualifying species for the SAC).
- 5.9 Based on the baseline conditions supported, protected species do not pose any constraints to works and further surveys in relation to protected species are not required. It is considered that the effects on qualifying species of the SAC from noise and emissions as a result of the proposals are not significant and therefore further assessment in the form of a Screening Opinion or Habitat Regulations Assessment is not considered necessary.

Recommendations

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.10 There are limited opportunities for ecological enhancement associated with the proposed works, particularly due to an absence of semi-natural habitats within the site.

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Appendix A

Photographs

Feature	Photograph of Feature
Photograph 1: A view west towards the stanchions within the western extent of the site. The embankment is visible beyond the site to the west.	
Photograph 2: Looking towards the south-west corner of the site towards one of the equipment stores.	
Photograph 3: A view north from the south of the site. Cars associated with L&S Waste Management are beyond the site to the north.	
Photograph 4: A view off-site, looking south with the western boundary fence line visible in the left of the photograph. Land to the west of the survey site is used by L&S Waste Management for the storage of skips and machinery.	

Appendix B

Habitat Map



Figure 1: Portsdown Hill Habitat Survey Map

Drawn by: CT
 Date: 15/01/2020
 Scale: 1:1250

Appendix C

Legislation

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This section contains information pertaining to the legislation and planning policy applicable in Britain. This information is not applicable to Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. Information contained in the following appendix is provided for guidance only.

Species

The objective of the EC Habitats Directive¹ is to conserve plants and animals which are considered to be rare across Europe. The Directive is transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (formerly The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) and The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and also implements the obligations set out for species protection from the Council Directive 2009/147/EC (formerly 79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds (EC Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

Various amendments have been made since the Wildlife & Countryside Act came into force in 1981. Further details pertaining to alterations of the Act can be found on the following website: www.opsi.gov.uk. Key amendments have been made through the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

There are a number of other legislative Acts affording protection to species and habitats. These include

- * Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
- * Deer Act 1991
- * Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- * Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- * Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

Badger

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), which consolidated and added to the previous Badger Acts of 1973 and 1991. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- * cruelly ill-treat a badger, including use of tongs and digging;

¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

- * intentionally or recklessly cause a dog to enter a badger sett;
- * intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett² or any part thereof;
- * intentionally or recklessly disturb³ a badger when it is occupying a badger sett;
- * possess or control a dead badger or any part of a badger;
- * sell or offers for sale, possesses or has under his control, a live badger; and
- * wilfully kill, injure, take, or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger.

A Development Licence will be required from Natural England for any development works affecting an active badger sett, or to disturb badgers while individuals are occupying the sett. Depending on the nature of the works and the specifics of the sett, badgers could be disturbed by work near the sett even if there is no direct interference or damage to the sett itself. Natural England has issued guidelines on what constitutes a licensable activity. There is no provision in law for the capture of badgers for development purposes and therefore it is not possible to obtain a licence to translocate badgers from one area to another.

Bats

Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This act protects individuals from:

- intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

In addition, all species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (all bats);
- deliberate disturbance of bat species as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and

² A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "*any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*". This includes seasonally used setts. Natural England (2009) have issued guidance on what is likely to constitute current use of a badger sett: www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG17_tcm6-11815.pdf

³ For guidance on what constitutes disturbance and other licensing queries, see Natural England (2007) Badgers & Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing. www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/badgers-dev-guidance_tcm6-4057.pdf, Natural England (2009) Interpretation of 'Disturbance' in relation to badgers occupying a sett www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG16_tcm6-11814.pdf, Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Badgers & Development. www.snh.org.uk/publications/online/wildlife/badgersanddevelopment/default.asp and Countryside Council for Wales (undated) Badgers: A Guide for Developers. www.ccw.gov.uk.

(ii) to hibernate or migrate.

- deliberate disturbance of bat species as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part thereof.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake activities listed above. A licence is required to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Breeding Birds

Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), a wild bird is defined as any bird of a species that is resident in or is a visitor to the European Territory of any member state in a wild state. Game birds, however, are not included in this definition (except for limited parts of the Act). They are covered by the Games Acts, which fully protect them during the closed season.

Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), all birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Sections 1-8 of the Act and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) take, damage or destroy (or, in Scotland, otherwise interfere with) the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
- have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird, which has been taken in contravention of the Act;
- have in one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act;
- use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds;
- have in one's possession or control any bird (dead or alive) unless registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the Secretary of State's regulations; and
- in Scotland only, intentionally or recklessly obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest.

Certain rare species receive additional special protection under Schedule 1 of the Act and Annex 1 of the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (2009/147/EC). This affords them protection against:

- intentional or reckless disturbance while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young;
- intentional or reckless disturbance of dependent young of such a bird;
- in Scotland only, intentional or reckless disturbance whilst lekking; and
- in Scotland only, intentional or reckless harassment.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has a list of birds that are Species of Conservation Concern. These birds are not legally protected but where they are found on site they should be given planning consideration. The criteria for birds listed as amber (medium conservation concern) include:

- historical population decline during 1800-1995, but recovering: population has more than doubled over last 25 years;
- moderate (25-49%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years;
- moderate (25-49%) contraction of UK breeding range over last 25 years;
- moderate (25-49%) decline in UK non-breeding population over last 25 years;
- species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (Species of conservation Concern);
- five year mean of breeding pairs in the UK;
- $\geq 50\%$ of UK breeding population in 10 or fewer sites.
- $\geq 50\%$ of UK non-breeding population in 10 or fewer sites;
- $\geq 20\%$ of European breeding population in UK; and
- $\geq 20\%$ of NW European (wildfowl), East Atlantic Flyway (waders) or European (others) non breeding populations in UK.

Hazel Dormouse

The hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 through its inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- deliberate killing, injuring or capturing;
- deliberate disturbance as to impair its ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- deliberate disturbance as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part of this species.

The hazel dormouse is also currently protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through its inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, this species is additionally protected from:

- intentional or reckless disturbance;
- intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect dormouse breeding or resting places (N.B. this is usually taken to mean dormouse 'habitat') or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above. The licence will allow derogation from the relevant legislation but will also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Herpetofauna (Reptiles and Amphibians)

The following species receive full protection under the The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

- sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*);
- smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*);
- natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*);
- great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*); and
- pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*).

Under this legislation, Regulation 41 prohibits:

- deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of species listed on Schedule 2;
- deliberate disturbance of any Schedule 2 species as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- deliberate disturbance of any Schedule 2 species as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- deliberate taking or destroying of the eggs of a Schedule 2 species;
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part of a species.

With the exception of the pool frog, these species are also currently listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

Other native species of herpetofauna are protected solely under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These species include:

- adder (*Vipera berus*);
- grass snake (*Natrix natrix*);
- common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*); and
- slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*).

Under this legislation, for these species it is prohibited under Section 9(1) & (5) to:

- intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill or injure these species
- sell, offer or expose for sale, possess or transport for purpose of sale these species, or any part thereof.

The following species are listed in respect to Section 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which only affords them protection against sale, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transport for the purpose of sale:

- common frog (*Rana temporaria*);
- common toad (*Bufo bufo*);
- smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*); and
- palmate newt (*L. helveticus*).

Water Vole

The water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) (=terrestris) is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) this species;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection; and

- sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead water vole or part of this species.

Where development works are liable to affect habitats known to support water voles, Natural England must be consulted. All alternative design options must have been explored and communicated to Natural England in order to demonstrate that works have tried to avoid contravening the legislation e.g. the use of alternative sites, appropriate timing of works to avoid times of the year in which water voles are most vulnerable etc. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of water voles may be issued by Natural England for the purpose of development activities if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population.

Otter

Otters (*Lutra lutra*) are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of otters
- deliberate disturbance as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- deliberate disturbance as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part of this species.

Otters also receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect breeding or resting places or for activities likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above. The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Red Squirrel

The red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill, injure or take (capture) red squirrels;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb this species while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter; and
- sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead red squirrel or part of this species.

White Clawed Crayfish

The white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) receives partial protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This species is protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5), making it an offence to:

- intentionally take/capture white-clawed crayfish; and
- sell, offer or expose for sale, have in possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead white clawed crayfish or part of this species.

A conservation licence for the capture and translocation of crayfish may be issued for the purpose of development activities if it can be demonstrated that the activity has been carefully planned and this species considered. The activity must also demonstrate that it contributes to the conservation of the population.

Wild Mammals

All wild mammals are protected against intentional acts of cruelty under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

To avoid possible contravention of this legislation, due care and attention should be taken when carrying out works that have the potential to impact any wild mammal as described above.

Plants

Wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence for an 'unauthorised' person to intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) uproot wild plants. An authorised person can be the owner of the land on which the action is taken, or anybody authorised by them.

Some rare plant species also receive full protection under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits:

- intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) picking, uprooting or destruction of any wild Schedule 8 species (or seed or spore attached to any such wild plant in Scotland only); and
- selling, offering or exposing for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, any wild live or dead Schedule 8 plant species or parts.

In addition to the legislation outlined above, several plant species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Regulation 45 makes it an offence to:

- deliberately pick, collect or destroy a wild Schedule 5 species; and
- be in possession of, or control, transport, sell or exchange any wild live or dead Schedule 5 species or anything derived from it.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect species of plant listed under The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010.

Invasive Plant Species

Certain plants are listed on Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in respect to Section 14(2). Species include:

- Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*);
- giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*);
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*);
- certain species of rhododendron (*Rhododendron* sp.); and
- certain species of cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* sp.).

Species listed are non-natives whose establishment or spread in the wild may be detrimental to native wildlife. Inclusion on Part II of Schedule 9 therefore makes it an offence to:

- plant or otherwise cause these species to grow in the wild.

This legislation makes it is an offence to cause species listed to grow in the wild. Therefore, if they are present on site and development activities have the potential to cause the further spread of these species to new areas, it will be necessary to ensure appropriate measures are in place to prevent this.

HABITATS

International Statutory Designations

- Special Protection Areas (SPAs): Terrestrial SPA's are afforded protection by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c. Regulations 1994 (as amended) an offshore SPA's are afforded protection under The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended). SPAs are designated under the EC Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds). SPAs are areas recognised as important habitat for rare and migratory birds within the European Union (rare birds as listed on Annex I of the Directive).
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): These areas are designated under the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora), designated for the habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive under the same regulations as detailed for SPA's.
- Ramsar sites: These areas are wetlands designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971). Wetlands can include areas of marsh, fen, water or peatland and may be natural or artificial, permanent or temporary. Ramsar sites are underpinned through prior notification as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and as such receive statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with further protection provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

National Statutory Designations

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): These sites are designated by the countryside agencies (for example Natural England) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Prior to 1981 these were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Improved mechanisms for the protection of SSSIs have also been introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (in England and Wales).
- National Nature Reserves: These sites are also designated by the countryside agencies under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Local Statutory Designations

- 1949 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs): These sites are designated by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These are sites recognised for their wildlife or geological interest at a local level and are managed for nature conservation.

Non-Statutory Designations

- Local Wildlife Sites: Areas of local conservation interest may be designated by local authorities. The terminology for these sites varies depending on the county. They can be called Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI's), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Listed Wildlife Sites (LWS), Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs). The designation criteria may vary between counties. Local Wildlife Sites are of material consideration when planning applications are being determined.
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997: These have been compiled to protect 'important' countryside hedgerows from damage or removal. A hedgerow is considered important if (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy certain hedgerows without permission from the local planning authority. Hedgerows covered by these regulations include those on or adjacent to common land, SSSIs (including all terrestrial SACs, NNRs and SPAs), LNRs, land used for agriculture or forestry and land used for the keeping or breeding of horses, ponies or donkeys.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) replaces the former PPS9 document and emphasises the need for sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and priority species. An emphasis is also made for the need for ecological networks through preservation, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species is also included as a requirement of planning policy. In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from adverse harm; appropriate mitigation or compensation measures are in place where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

Regional and Local Planning Policy

The Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011) contains the following Nature Conservation Policies that are relevant to the site.

Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011)

- 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.'*

- **DM8 Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features:**

'Development will only be permitted where it protects and enhances local habitats and landscape distinctiveness and which addresses all of the relevant criteria as set out below:

- 1. Protects natural features of nature conservation and/or amenity importance on the site, for example trees, woodlands, hedgerows, soils, streams, stream corridors, springs, ditches or ponds from damage, destruction and a deterioration in quality.*
- 2. Sympathetically incorporates existing features into the overall design of the scheme including measures taken to ensure their continued survival.*
- 3. Provides new landscape works that integrate successfully with the local environment and existing natural features, using local materials and plant species and making provision for future maintenance of new landscape works associated with new developments.*

4. *Ensures sequences of greenspaces are maintained and protects the attractiveness and visual amenity of all green open spaces that contribute to the identity of the borough.'*

At the time of compiling this document, the Local Plan 2036 was being compiled and environmental policies within this document may be relevant once formerly adopted.

Regional and Local BAPs

Many local authorities in the UK have produced a local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) implemented at a County or District level. The Havant Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed and is based on the UK list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance and contains 50 species and 17 habitats.