

**MILL RYTHE HOLIDAY VILLAGE,
HAYLING ISLAND, HAMPSHIRE**

**HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT:
STAGE 1 SCREENING REPORT**

A Report to: Away Resorts

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The information which we have prepared is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND	3
2. METHODOLOGY	5
3. RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITES	7
4. CHICHESTER AND LANGSTONE HARBOURS SPA AND RAMSAR SITE	8
4.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	8
4.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	9
4.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE.....	9
5. SOLENT MARITIME SAC	10
5.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	10
5.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	11
5.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC	11
6. SOLENT AND ISLE OF WIGHT LAGOONS SAC	12
6.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	12
6.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	12
6.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE.....	12
7. PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR SPA AND RAMSAR SITE	13
7.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA.....	13
7.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	13
7.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE.....	14
8. VULNERABILITY OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES.....	15
9. SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	17
9.1 CURRENT LAND USE.....	17
9.2 SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	19
10. POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES.....	20
10.1 PUBLIC ACCESS / DISTURBANCE	20
10.2 COASTAL SQUEEZE	26
10.3 FISHERIES.....	26
10.4 WATER POLLUTION.....	26
10.5 CHANGES IN SPECIES DISTRIBUTIONS / CLIMATE CHANGE	26
10.6 CHANGES TO SITE CONDITIONS.....	27
10.7 INVASIVE SPECIES	27
10.8 DIRECT LAND TAKE FROM DEVELOPMENT	27
10.9 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE USE	27
10.10 CHANGES IN LAND MANAGEMENT	27
10.11 INAPPROPRIATE PEST CONTROL.....	27
10.12 AIR POLLUTION: NITROGEN DEPOSITION	28
10.13 HYDROLOGICAL CHANGE.....	28
10.14 DIRECT IMPACT FROM THIRD PARTY	28
10.15 EXTRACTION: NON-LIVING RESOURCE	28
11. SCREENING MATRIX.....	29
12. CONCLUSIONS AND PRECAUTIONARY RECOMMENDATIONS	31
12.1 CONCLUSIONS.....	31
12.2 PRECAUTIONARY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	32
13. DRAWINGS	33
14. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	36
APPENDIX 1	37

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In August 2016, Away Resorts commissioned Middlemarch Environmental Ltd to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment (Stage 1: Screening) associated with a proposed development at Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island in Hampshire. [This assessment is required to inform a planning application associated with the development of a new holiday village at the site. The new holiday village will have the same visitor capacity as the existing village, however the arrangement of buildings and amenity space will be reconfigured.](#)

As part of a suite of preliminary ecological surveys, Middlemarch Environmental Ltd recommended that a Habitat Regulations Assessment be undertaken due to the proposed development site's proximity to a number of nature conservation sites. Reference to mapped data identified the following European statutory nature conservation sites within a 5 km radius of the scheme: Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar Site and Special Protection Area (SPA), Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, and Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Site and SPA. These sites form part of the Natura 2000 network of European statutory nature conservation sites.

This report comprises Stage 1 (Evidence Gathering and Screening) of a Habitat Regulations Assessment for the scheme. The need for projects with the potential to impact upon Natura 2000 sites to be assessed is stated in Article 6 of the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (hereafter 'the Habitats Directive'). Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of this Directive state that an Appropriate Assessment is required for any plan or project that is considered likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. Natura 2000 sites are those sites designated under the Habitats Directive to ensure the protection of European important habitats, and include SACs, SPAs, Offshore Marine Sites (OMS) and Ramsar sites. The Habitats Directive is transposed into UK legislation through the Habitat Regulations. Regulation 61 of the Habitat Regulations incorporates the requirements of Articles 6 (3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive.

The competent authority can only agree to the proposed development after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. Where adverse impacts are anticipated, projects or plans may still be agreed provided that there are no alternative solutions and the plan is considered to be of overriding public interest. In such instances appropriate compensatory measures are required to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 site network is protected.

[The original version of this report was submitted in September 2016. Subsequently, during a consultation exercise objections were received from Natural England, Havant Borough Council \(via Hampshire County Council Ecologist\) and Chichester Harbour Conservancy. In relation to Natura 2000 sites, the content of these objections was broadly similar, and focused on the need to provide more information to support the conclusion of 'no likely significant effects'. In particular, the need to refer to the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy was highlighted as a key omission from the previous iteration of the report. The report has therefore been revised to provide a much stronger evidence base than the previous iteration. It now includes a review of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy and relevant records sourced from Hampshire Biological Information Centre, as well as data sourced from field surveys completed by suitably qualified ornithologists in February 2017. A further update was completed in April 2017 in response to additional comments received at the end of March 2017. This update provided further information in relation to the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy, and reviewed the potential for likely significant effects to occur.](#)

[A further consultation response received from Natural England dated 10th April 2017 concluded that they have no objection to the site proposals, subject to appropriate mitigation being secured. The requested mitigation measures are:](#)

- [1. Prior to the commencement of the development, a Construction Environmental Management Plan \(CEMP\) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Environmental Management Plan shall identify the steps and procedures that will avoid or mitigate impacts of the designated sites and their qualifying features. Once approved, the CEMP shall be adhered to at all times, unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Further advice is included below.](#)

2. An ornithological watching brief shall be undertaken for the duration of the demolition and construction works carried out during the sensitive period (01 October to 31 March).
3. No dogs shall be permitted on the Mill Hythe Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SINC) / pitch and putt golf course from 01 October to 31 March inclusive.
4. Access from the Holiday Village to the sea wall shall be closed from 01 October to 31 March.

Recommendations relating to the implementation of each of these requested mitigation measures are provided in Section 12.2.

A copy of this correspondence is provided in Appendix 1.

2. METHODOLOGY

The current assessment is based on the best practice for Habitat Regulations Assessment as outlined in The Habitat Regulations Handbook (DTA Publications, 2013 and subsequent updates). This document expands upon previous guidance published by the Impacts Assessment Unit at Oxford Brookes University (2001) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (2006).

Best practice guidance identifies that the Habitat Regulations Assessment process is broadly divisible into four stages, with the need to complete each stage determined by the results of the previous stage. In summary, these stages are:

- **Stage 1: Evidence Gathering and Screening**
This stage is associated with collecting evidence regarding those parts of the Natura 2000 network that have the potential to be impacted by the strategic land-use plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. Where no significant effects are perceived, sites may be screened out of the need for further assessment during Stage 2.
- **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment of Significant Impacts**
Where it is considered a Natura 2000 site may experience significant effects from a project or strategic land-use plan, either alone or in combination, a detailed assessment of likelihood and severity of the perceived impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network is undertaken. This assessment is based on a detailed review of the project or plan in conjunction with the structure, function and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site. This stage may also include a preliminary assessment regarding the potential for the identified impacts to be mitigated.
- **Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**
Where impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network are perceived, this stage examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or strategic land-use plan in order to avoid these impacts.
- **Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and Compensation Measures**
Where the potential for adverse impacts remains, and where it is deemed that a project or land-use plan should proceed for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), an investigation of appropriate compensatory measures is undertaken.

This report focuses on Stage 1 of the Habitat Regulations Assessment process. Evidence gathering and screening is undertaken for those Natura 2000 Sites identified as being of relevance to the current project. In accordance with the consultation response summarised in Section 1.2, the following Natura 2000 sites are considered in this screening report: Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar Site and SPA, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, and Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Site and SPA. These sites form part of the Natura 2000 network of European statutory nature conservation sites.

Implicit in the Habitats Directive is the application of the **precautionary principle**, which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty whether there will be an impact or not (Oxford Brookes, 2001). The European Commission's Final Communication from the Commission on the Precautionary Principle (European Commission, 2000a) states that the use of the precautionary principle presupposes:

- Identification of potentially negative effects resulting from a phenomenon, product or procedure; and,
- A scientific evaluation of the risks which because of the insufficiency of the data, their inconclusive or imprecise nature, makes it impossible to determine with sufficient certainty the risk in question (CEC, 2000).

According to best practice guidance, this means that the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating, with supporting evidence, that there will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. The publication 'Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC' (European Commission, 2000b) provides explanatory guidance regarding this point, which is paraphrased below.

It is clear from the context and from the purpose of the directive that the 'integrity of the site' relates to the site's conservation objectives. For example, it is possible that a plan or project will adversely affect the

integrity of a site only in a visual sense or only habitat types or species other than those listed in Annex I or Annex II. In such cases, the effects do not amount to an adverse effect for the purposes of Article 6(3), provided that the coherence of the network is not affected.

The expression 'integrity of the site' shows that focus is here on the specific site. Thus, it is not allowed to destroy a site or part of it on the basis that the conservation status of the habitat types and species it hosts will anyway remain favourable within the European territory of the Member State.

As regards the connotation or meaning of 'integrity', this can be considered as a quality or condition of being whole or complete. In a dynamic ecological context, it can also be considered as having the sense of resilience and ability to evolve in ways that are favourable to conservation. The 'integrity of the site' has been usefully defined as 'the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or levels of populations of the species for which it was classified' (IEEM, 2006).

The integrity of the site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives.

Conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment are presented in Chapters 4 to 7.

3. RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITES

This report presents evidence to allow potential impacts on relevant Natura 2000 sites to be assessed and the need for a full Habitat Regulations Assessment to be screened. The report focuses on six sites: Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar Site and SPA, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, and Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Site and SPA.

The qualifying criteria and relative distances of the sites from the application site boundary are summarised in Table 3.1. Elsewhere in the report Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar Site are treated as the same protected area, as the boundaries are largely concurrent. The same approach is adopted for Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar site. However, they are treated separately in Table 3.1 as the qualifying features for the two designations differ slightly in each case.

NATURA 2000 SITE	QUALIFYING FEATURES	DISTANCE FROM APPLICATION SITE
Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar Site	The Ramsar site contains a variety of habitats, including intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, sand and shingle spits and sand Dunes (Ramsar Criterion 1). The Ramsar site also supports a waterfowl assemblage of international importance (Ramsar Criterion 5), including dark-bellied brent geese <i>Branta bernicla</i>, common shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>, ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>, common redshank <i>Tringa tetanus</i> and little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> (Ramsar Criterion 6).	Adjacent to site
Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA	The site supports important winter populations of common shelduck, Eurasian wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>, Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, northern pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>, northern shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>, red-breasted merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>, ringed plover, grey plover, sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>, dunlin, bar-tailed godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>, Eurasian curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>, common redshank and ruddy turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>. The site also supports important breeding populations of sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>, common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> and little tern.	Adjacent to site
Solent Maritime SAC	The site contains a number of habitats listed as qualifying features, including sandbanks, estuaries, mudflats and sandflats, coastal lagoons, annual vegetation of drift lines, perennial vegetation of stony banks, <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand, <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>), Cord-grass swards and Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>). Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> is listed as a qualifying species.	Adjacent to site
Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC	The site contains the qualifying habitat, coastal lagoons.	5.66 km northwest
Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Site	The extent and diversity of intertidal mudflat and saltmarsh habitat present (Ramsar Criterion 3). The site contains extensive beds of eelgrass <i>Zostera angustifolia</i> and <i>Zostera noltei</i> which support the grazing dark-bellied brent geese populations. The Ramsar site also supports an internationally important winter population of dark-bellied brent goose (Ramsar Criterion 6).	8.71 km west-northwest
Portsmouth Harbour SPA	Internationally important winter populations of dark-bellied brent geese, red-breasted merganser, dunlin and black-tailed godwit.	8.71 km west-northwest

Table 3.1: Summary of Natura 2000 Qualifying Criteria and Distance from Application Site Boundary

The location of these sites in relation to the proposed development site is shown on Drawing C123420-03-01 in Chapter 13. The designation criteria and conservation objectives for each of the Natura 2000 sites listed in Table 3.1 are detailed in Chapters 4 to 7, and the known areas of vulnerability are detailed in Chapter 8.

4. CHICHESTER AND LANGSTONE HARBOURS SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

4.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying Natura 2000 data sheet, both of which are available at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2034>

Information regarding the Ramsar Site designation is taken from the Ramsar Sites Information Data Sheet, which is available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11013.pdf>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Hampshire and West Sussex Councils
Latitude:	50 48 23 N
Longitude:	00 55 12 W
Site Code:	UK9011011 (SPA); UK11013 (Ramsar Site Code)
Status:	Designated Special Protection Area (SPA); Ramsar Site
Area (ha):	5810.95

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar site comprises large, sheltered estuarine basins comprising extensive mud and sand flats exposed at low tide. The site is important for a wide range of coastal and transitional habitats, and is considered internationally important for its waterfowl assemblage.

4.1.1 SPA Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying Habitats

The site does not contain any Annex I habitats (Habitats Directive: 92/43/EEC) that are listed as primary reasons for selection.

Qualifying Species

The site supports important breeding populations of the following Annex I (Birds Directive: 79/409/EEC) species:

- Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis* (1.1% of the British breeding population); and,
- Little tern *Sterna albifrons* (4.2% of the British breeding population).

The site supports an important passage population of the following Annex I (Birds Directive: 79/409/EEC) species:

- Little egret *Egretta garzetta* (17.1% of the British population as at 1998).

The site supports important overwintering populations of the following Annex I (Birds Directive: 79/409/EEC) species:

- Bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica* (3.2% of the British wintering population); and,
- Little egret *Egretta garzetta* (20% of the British wintering population as at 1998);

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:

- Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (up to 4.9% of the Europe and North Africa wintering population);
- Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica* (1.4% of the wintering Iceland-breeding population);
- Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla* (5.7% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population);
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* (3.2% of the wintering Northern Siberia/Europe/Western Africa population);
- Grey plover *Pluvialis squatarola* (2.5% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic wintering population); and,
- Redshank *Tringa totanus* (1.2% of the wintering Eastern Atlantic wintering population).

4.1.2 Ramsar Qualifying Criteria

As outlined in the Ramsar Information Sheet, the site qualifies as a Ramsar site via five criteria:

Ramsar Criterion 1

As outlined in the Ramsar Information Sheet, the site supports *“two large estuarine basins linked by the channel which divides Hayling Island from the main Hampshire coastline. The site includes intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, sand and shingle spits and sand dunes”*.

Ramsar Criterion 5

The site supports an internationally important wintering population of waterfowl. The information sheet states *“76480 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)”*.

Ramsar Criterion 6

The site supports internationally important populations of bird species listed above as designation criteria for the SPA.

4.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

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.

4.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

Natural England has produced a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area, which includes information regarding the areas of known vulnerability for all of the constituent Natura 2000 sites that occur in the area. These areas of vulnerability are detailed in Chapter 8.

5. SOLENT MARITIME SAC

5.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying Natura 2000 data sheet, both of which are available at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/sac.asp?EUCODE=UK0030059>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Extra-Regio, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Surrey, East and West Sussex
Centroid:	SU756003
Latitude:	50.79638889
Longitude:	-0.927777778
Site Code:	UK0030059
Status:	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha):	11243.12

5.1.1 SPA Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying Habitats

The site contains the following Annex I habitats (Habitats Directive: 92/43/EEC) that are listed as primary reasons for selection:

1130 Estuaries

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

1320 Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritima*)

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

1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*)

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

The site also contains the following Annex 1 habitats that are present as a qualifying feature, but are not a primary reason for selection:

1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time

1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

1150 Coastal lagoons * Priority feature

1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines

1220 [Perennial vegetation of stony banks](#)

1310 [Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand](#)

2120 ["Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* \("white dunes"\)](#)

Qualifying Species

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

1016 [Desmoulin's whorl snail](#) *Vertigo moulinsiana*

5.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

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.

5.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SAC

Natural England has produced a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area, which includes information regarding the areas of known vulnerability for all of the constituent Natura 2000 sites that occur in the area. These areas of vulnerability are detailed in Chapter 8.

6. SOLENT AND ISLE OF WIGHT LAGOONS SAC

6.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying Natura 2000 data sheet, both of which are available at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0017073>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Centroid:	SZ608977
Latitude:	50.775
Longitude:	-1.136944444
Site Code:	UK0017073
Status:	Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Area (ha):	37.93

6.1.1 SPA Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying Habitats

The site contains the following Annex I habitats (Habitats Directive: 92/43/EEC) that are listed as primary reasons for selection:

1150 Coastal lagoons * Priority feature

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

Qualifying Species

The site does not support any Annex II species that are listed as primary reasons for selection.

6.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

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;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; and,
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.

6.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

Natural England has produced a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area, which includes information regarding the areas of known vulnerability for all of the constituent Natura 2000 sites that occur in the area. These areas of vulnerability are detailed in Chapter 8.

7. PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

7.1 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

The following information is taken from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) site description and accompanying Natura 2000 data sheet, both of which are available at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2036>

Information regarding the Ramsar Site designation is taken from the Ramsar Sites Information Data Sheet, which is available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11055.pdf>

Country:	England
Unitary Authority:	City of Portsmouth, Hampshire
Latitude:	50 49 41 N
Longitude:	01 07 32 W
Site Code:	UK9011051 (SPA); UK11055 (Ramsar Site Code)
Status:	Designated Special Protection Area (SPA); Ramsar Site
Area (ha):	1248.77

7.1.1 SPA Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying Habitats

The site does not contain any Annex I habitats (Habitats Directive: 92/43/EEC) that are listed as primary reasons for selection.

Qualifying Species

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

- Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla* (at least 0.9% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population).

7.1.2 Ramsar Qualifying Criteria

As outlined in the Ramsar Information Sheet, the site qualifies as a Ramsar site under the following two criteria:

Ramsar Criterion 3

As outlined in the Ramsar Information Sheet, “the intertidal mudflat areas possess extensive beds of eelgrass *Zostera angustifolia* and *Zostera noltei* which support the grazing dark-bellied brent geese populations. The mud-snail *Hydrobia ulvae* is found at extremely high densities, which helps to support the wading bird interest of the site. Common cord-grass *Spartina anglica* dominates large areas of the saltmarsh and there are also extensive areas of green algae *Enteromorpha* spp. and sea lettuce *Ulva lactuca*. More locally the saltmarsh is dominated by sea purslane *Halimione portulacoides* which gradates to more varied communities at the higher shore levels. The site also includes a number of saline lagoons hosting nationally important species”.

Ramsar Criterion 6

The site supports internationally important populations of wintering dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*.

7.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The site’s conservation objectives apply to the Special Protection Area and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the “Qualifying features” listed below).

The objectives are to ensure that, subject to natural change, the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and 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 populations of the qualifying features; and,
- the distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

7.3 VULNERABILITY OF THE SPA AND RAMSAR SITE

Natural England has produced a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area, which includes information regarding the areas of known vulnerability for all of the constituent Natura 2000 sites that occur in the area. These areas of vulnerability are detailed in Chapter 8.

8. VULNERABILITY OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

Natural England has produced a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area, which includes information regarding the areas of known vulnerability for all of the constituent Natura 2000 sites that occur in the area. The document lists each area of vulnerability, and outlines actions to be implemented to address these threats. Each of the issues to which the Natura 2000 sites are vulnerable are listed in Table 8.1.

Area of Vulnerability	Detail
Public Access / Disturbance	Many human activities in the area can disturb birds. This includes activities such as: walking; dog walking; bird watching; boating; kayaking; kite surfing; hang gliding; paramotors; jet skis; wildfowling; model helicopters/aircraft; boat mooring, and Hovercraft. Recreational activities can also affect annual vegetation of drift lines (H1210) and the vegetation of stony banks (H1220).
Coastal Squeeze	Habitats are being lost as they are squeezed between rising sea levels and hard coastal defences that are maintained. There is a direct impact due to loss of the SAC habitats such as saltmarsh. There is also an impact on birds due to the loss of habitat for feeding, roosting and breeding. In some areas rising sea levels will result in coastal grasslands being lost to more saline grasslands, thus losing habitat for some breeding waders of the waterbird assemblage. The habitats that are lost could be created elsewhere, but there is difficulty in finding suitable areas. The neutral grassland habitats will take a long time to create as mitigation, but intertidal habitat can be created relatively quickly.
Fisheries: Commercial Marine and Estuarine	Dredges (inc. hydraulic), benthic trawls and seines and shore-based activities are categorised as 'Red' for these interest features (and specifically the sub-features: • Intertidal muddy sand communities; • Subtidal eelgrass <i>Zostera marina</i> beds as part of Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries management in European Marine Sites (EMS), and requisite mechanisms are being or will be implemented by Southern IFCA and Sussex IFCA. Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in EMSs require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by SIFCA. For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any in-combination effects of amber activities, and/or appropriate plans or projects, in the site. Towed gear, hand gathering of shellfish, bait digging and aquaculture are the main fishery activities in this site.
Water Pollution	Water pollution affects a range of habitat and bird species at the site through eutrophication and toxicity. Sources include both point source discharges (including flood alleviation / storm discharges) and diffuse water pollution from agriculture / road runoff, as well as historic contamination of marine sediments, primarily from copper and Tributyltin (TBT). Environment Agency flood event discharge consents allow untreated waters to be discharged which end up in the SAC and are likely to have a negative impact. There is a threat of spillage from Oil Transportation and Transfer and by the usage by ships & pilotage.
Changes in Species Distributions	Many waders and wildfowl are decreasing in the Solent probably as they move north and east under national trends. Some fish, such as sand eels, may be moving their breeding grounds resulting in less food availability for breeding terns. Invertebrate populations in the intertidal muds are changing and this may disadvantage some wintering wader species. Desmoulin's Whorl Snail has decreased dramatically. Areas of salt-marsh are eroding and decreasing resulting in decreasing breeding gulls and terns as their habitat decreases and decreasing plant species of salt-marshes.
Climate Change	Climate change has impacts upon coastal species, in that gull and tern colonies are more frequently washed out with raising sea levels when storm surges cause flooding to habitats.

Table 8.1: Summary of Known Areas of Vulnerability for Solent Natura 2000 Sites (continues)

Area of Vulnerability	Detail
Change to Site Conditions	There is an increasing loss of salt-marsh in much of the Solent for reasons unknown, and this needs to be investigated.
Invasive Species	The highest risk pathways through which marine invasive species are introduced and then spread have been identified as: commercial shipping (<i>through release of ballast water, and biofouling on hulls</i>); recreational boating (<i>through biofouling on hulls</i>); aquaculture (<i>through contamination of imported or moved stock - or escaped stock in the case of the pacific oyster</i>), and natural dispersal.
Direct Land Take from Development	Private sea defences are causing disruption to the natural processes of allowing erosion to move sediments around the SAC.
Biological Resource Use	Gull egg collecting occurs in some places, and wildfowling occurs in several places. These activities are likely to be disturbing to breeding and wintering birds even though they are licenced/consented at the moment.
Change in Land Management	Changes to land management are likely to occur in areas where tidal flaps/sluices are altered and this results in changes to water levels or salinity of that land. Some sluices are failing, which may also result in changes to water levels or salinity of land. Some ditches and drains are neglected and this can cause difficulties in land management, resulting in changes.
Inappropriate Pest Control	Predator control is decreasing, resulting in increased predation by foxes etc. and this is the likely cause of decrease in successful breeding of gulls and terns.
Air Pollution: Impact of Atmospheric Nitrogen Deposition	Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. Locally observed effects are unknown.
Hydrological Changes	Titchfield Haven has a high level of water abstraction licences - if all were used then water levels would be too low in the SAC/SPA. Percolation of sea water through sea walls is causing saline intrusion into non-saline grassland habitats and changing them.
Direct Impact From Third Party	Off-roading is causing damage to some areas of grassland. Private sea defences are causing disruption to the natural movement processes of natural materials along the coast. Military helicopters cause disturbance to wintering birds. House boats are unlicensed and have the potential to cause damage to intertidal habitats. Fly grazing is causing issues affecting large areas of Chichester Harbour.
Extraction: Non-living resources	Shingle extraction for aggregates may have an adverse impact upon intertidal fauna and flora, and may affect the movement of coastal sediments that would in turn have an impact upon intertidal habitats.

Table 8.1 (cont): Summary of Known Areas of Vulnerability for Solent Natura 2000 Sites

9. SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

9.1 CURRENT LAND USE

The development site is an irregular shaped parcel of land approximately 14 ha in size, located on Hayling Island, at National Grid Reference SU 73178 00804. The development site includes the existing Mill Rythe Holiday Village with a number of self-catering accommodation units and associated leisure facilities. At the time of the survey, the site included tennis courts, bowling green, swimming pool, car parking and associated hard and soft landscaping. The east of the site is dominated by a mosaic of grassland used as a 'pitch and putt' golf course. A large lake is present in the north east corner with a smaller man-made lake in the north west corner of the site. The wider landscape is dominated by large estuarine systems comprising habitats such as mud and sand flats and salt meadows.

The 'pitch and putt' golf course located in the eastern region of the site is designated as the Mill Rythe Holiday Village Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), a non-statutory wildlife site designation. The SINC is designated due to the presence of a notable plant species, spiny retharrow *Ononis spinosa*, and is also known to be one of the areas in the locality that are used by dark-bellied brent geese. For this reason the site is listed on the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy. Spiny retharrow is not listed as a qualifying species for any of the Natura 2000 sites considered in this report, however dark-bellied brent goose is a qualifying species for the Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar site and the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar site. This species is not, however, a qualifying species for either the Solent Maritime SAC or the Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC.

Plates 9.1 to 9.5, taken on the 2nd September 2016, show the current land use on and surrounding the site.



Plate 9.1: Amenity grassland and scattered trees (west of the site)



Plate 9.2: Rough grassland and path (northern boundary)



Plate 9.3: Large lake in north-east



Plate 9.4: Buildings surrounded by amenity grassland



Plate 9.5: Dense scrub around north-eastern lake

9.2 SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The site proposals include the demolition of the existing units within the holiday village and the installation of circa. 290 mixed accommodation units (including 203 caravans and lodges and refurbishment of 87 chalets) with associated dining and leisure facilities. The eastern section of the site, which comprises the 'pitch and putt' golf course designated as the Mill Rythe Holiday Village SINC, will be retained in situ and will be subject to management to increase its value as a nature conservation resource.

It is understood that the development proposals will result in no increase in the overall capacity of the holiday village in comparison to existing visitor numbers. The new accommodation will be installed on the same footprint as the existing holiday village, however there will be a different configuration of buildings and amenity space within the site. During a site meeting between relevant stakeholders from the design team and local planning authority on 16th February 2016, concerns were raised about the potential for the new development to push visitors into sensitive adjacent habitat areas due to a lack of significant amenity space within the main body of the development footprint. It was agreed that it would be viable to set aside a small area of the pitch and putt gold course nearest to the new buildings as a recreational area, designed to soak up this potential pressure and allow the rest of the SINC to be enhanced for biodiversity through improved management.

At the time of writing detail regarding the construction process is not known, therefore a precautionary approach is adopted when considering the potential for likely significant effects to occur to Natura 2000 sites as a result of the development.

A&M Architectural Partnership Drawing 3877-410 Rev K, showing the proposed masterplan for the scheme, is provided in Chapter 13.

10. POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES

This chapter provides a discussion of the potential for significant effects on the collection of Natura 2000 sites located in the Solent area, in proximity to site. For clarity, this section follows the same broad structure as Natural England's Site Improvement Plan for the area, with the potential for the proposed development to contribute to each of the known areas of vulnerability discussed individually.

10.1 PUBLIC ACCESS / DISTURBANCE

Consultation with various stakeholders has identified that the key area of concern associated with the proposed development is the potential for increased recreational disturbance. This disturbance could arise from increased recreational activity within the site itself, e.g. as a result of increased use of the pitch and putt area, or from visitors moving outside of the site into areas used by qualifying bird species, e.g. along the sea wall or venturing into the adjacent coastal marsh habitats.

There is an existing access point from the site to the sea wall, and whether or not to allow this feature to remain open during the winter months has been discussed by various stakeholders. A recommendation regarding this access point is provided in 12.2 of this report.

Background Data Regarding Bird Activity

Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy

The survey area falls within the Solent, which is the strait that separates the Isle of Wight from mainland England. This strait is known to be of exceptionally high value to bird species, and contains a wide range of nature conservation sites including the three sites that are under consideration as part of this report. Perhaps the most important feature of these nature conservation sites is the diverse array of wetland birds that they support, in particular brent geese (for which the Solent area is one of the key wintering grounds in the United Kingdom) and an array of wading bird species. The area is extremely rich in estuarine and saltmarsh habitats, both of which are of key importance for overwintering brent geese and waders. Brent geese will also feed within areas of grassland, including both agricultural grassland and urban amenity grasslands. During the winter months this species is exceptionally widespread in the area, with large groups of birds frequently observed flying between various roosting sites and feeding grounds.

The value of the Solent area to brent geese and wading birds is recognised in the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBG Steering Group, 2010). This document, which was originally published in 2002 before being updated in 2010 and 2016/17, is a non-statutory document that provides evidence, analysis and recommendations to inform decisions relating to planning proposals in the area. As such it forms a key part of the evidence base for the current report. The main objective of the strategy is to conserve extant key sites, and create new sites, to enhance the quality and extent of the feeding resource for both brent geese and wading bird species. The data that underpins the strategy is based on over 1000 site surveys undertaken between 2006 and 2009. The report states that "38% of the sites surveyed are currently used by Brent Geese and 55% by waders. A total of 20 different wading birds species were recorded, with Curlew, Oystercatcher and Redshank being the most frequently recorded species, with over 1000 counts each. For Brent Geese, counts were recorded in excess of 3,000 individuals, the maximum count recorded at Farlington Marshes in Langstone Harbour. All of the sites identified in the Strategy as being currently used by waders and/or Brent Geese are considered to be "important" as they all form part of the ecological network of sites used by birds".

Hayling Island includes a number of survey sites that formed part of the baseline dataset for the strategy. The most valuable site for brent geese identified within the strategy was Farlington Marshes in Langstone Harbour, which is located c. 3 km to the northwest of the Mill Rythe site. The pitch-and-putt area adjacent to Mill Rythe Holiday Village is listed as survey sector H43 in the most recent iteration of the strategy, and data provided by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre highlights the following notable records attributable to this sector:

- Peak count of 100 brent geese in 2010 strategy. Site listed as 'important'.
- Peak count of 103 brent geese in 2016 data for strategy.
- Low counts of waders in Section H43. Site not considered to be important for waders.

Based on the information provided the H43 pitch-and-putt area is considered to be an important site for brent geese, but of negligible importance for wading birds. In accordance with the mitigation proposals requested

by Natural England, it is proposed that access to this area will be prohibited during the key wintering period. This is discussed further below.

Whilst the proposed development area at Mill Rythe Holiday Village does not fall within any Natura 2000 site, it is located directly adjacent to the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar site. The strategy highlights that although an area of habitat may not fall within the Natura 2000 network, if it provides important supporting habitat for qualifying species then the Natura 2000 site itself may still be subject to impacts. As such, if the Mill Rythe Holiday Village site were considered to provide important supporting habitat for Natura 2000 species then any impacts arising from the development would also be classed as impacts on the SPA and Ramsar site. It is therefore important to establish the value of the site to brent geese and wading birds through a combination of desk based research and field surveys. The findings of these assessments are described in the relevant sections below.

The strategy includes a series of recommended policies to be used by local planning authorities when determining applications. The significance of each of these recommended policies to the current application is discussed in Chapter 12.

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre Data

HBIC were contacted in February 2017 to request relevant data relating to brent geese and wading bird species within a 2 km radius of the Mill Rythe site. The purpose of this data is to allow the relative importance of various sites to brent geese and wading birds to be assessed, and also to allow any notable high tide roost locations to be identified. The data provided by HBIC includes recent data collected as part of the Solent Waders and Brent Goose strategy, and is therefore more up to date than the data sources described above.

Brent Geese Data

As described above, the data provided by HBIC included peak counts of brent geese from the pitch-and-putt grassland area of 100 birds in January 2009 and 103 birds in March 2016, and the H43 sector that includes the pitch-and-putt grassland was identified as being important for brent geese in the 2010 strategy.

By far the highest concentration of brent geese records in the immediate area, however, relate to the expansive mosaic of habitats to the south and west of the holiday village site. These habitats include coastal grazing marsh, saltmarsh and Tournaybury Golf Course, with between 1000 and 3070 birds recorded using the various sections that form this area. Access to these habitat areas from the holiday village site is restricted (see survey information provided in relevant section below), however they are all considered to provide high value brent goose habitat of greater value than the habitat found within the holiday village site.

It should be noted that the supplied data does not indicate how birds used this area and it therefore feasible that brent geese could spending a significant proportion of their time in excess of 800 m from the study site boundary. Furthermore, the topography of the land to the south is gently undulating and together with features along the southern boundary of the holiday village (including a raised bund feature) provides a high degree of screening from the adjacent holiday village complex during the winter period.

The remaining supplied brent goose data highlighted varied areas which the birds utilise all over Hayling Island throughout the winter period, with significant usage of farmland habitats in excess of 1 km from the holiday village recorded c. 380 m north. Numbers of birds generally ranged between the low hundreds up to a maximum count of 2500 birds (latter figure encompassing birds located approximately 1.5 km to the west and presumed to be using the coastal fringe on the eastern margin of Langstone Harbour).

Overall, the desk study data highlights a number of high value habitats for brent geese throughout Hayling Island. The pitch-and-putt grassland is considered to be an important habitat resource, but supports c. 3.5% of the number of birds recorded in the highest value areas. The habitat mosaic to the east and south of the holiday village is important, but is well screened and has restricted access.

Wading Bird Data

As with the data supplied for brent geese the information received from HBIC for wading bird species within a 2 km radius of the proposed development site was at a basic level. Specific species were not detailed and it is not therefore known if accumulations of wading birds were single species or mixed species counts and therefore it is not possible to discern whether these wading birds comprise those species which contribute to

the designation of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar site, namely ringed plover, black-tailed godwit, dunlin, grey plover and redshank. The closest site with a significant count of waders was located adjacent to the site and abuts the proposed development area at its south-eastern corner. This site supported a maximum count of 1500 birds, although no information on species was provided. It should be noted however that the compartment within which the data was provided is extensive in size (in excess of 8 ha) and incorporates grazing marsh, wet grassland and a coastal fringe. This area, as described above, is visually screened from the holiday village and no public access into the saltmarsh from the holiday village is possible.

Additional compartments supporting in excess of 100 wading birds (and with a maximum count of 600 birds) totalled six of which the closest was 270 m west of the proposed development area with other compartments up to 1.8 km distant on the edge of Langstone Harbour.

Hampshire Bird Report 2013

A review of the Hampshire Bird Report 2013 (Hampshire Ornithological Society, 2015) was completed to identify the importance of various sites for both brent geese and wading bird species. This report was not detailed enough to provide accurate information for the Mill Rythe area, but it did allow broad areas of importance for various species to be identified.

For dark-bellied brent geese Chichester Harbour was identified as the most important site, with Langstone and Portsmouth harbours also supporting large numbers of this numerous winter visitor. Over 10,000 birds were counted within Chichester Harbour in February and March 2013, with approximately 45% recorded within the 'Hampshire side' of the harbour adjacent to Hayling Island and the remainder located further to the east within the area of Chichester harbour located within West Sussex. No information is provided within the bird report for the Mill Rythe area specifically.

Key migratory wading bird species listed as primary reasons for the designation of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar site are ringed plover, black-tailed godwit, dunlin, grey plover and redshank. A review of records for these species from the 2013 bird report shows:

- WeBS count totals for ringed plover identified peak numbers in September and October 2013, during the autumn passage period. Key sites were Chichester Harbour, Langstone Harbour and Lymington-Hurst. Within the Chichester Harbour area Black Point was noted to support the majority of birds. Black Point is located at the southeastern tip of Hayling Island, c. 2.3 km from the application area.
- Chichester and Langstone Harbours were both used by moderate numbers of black-tailed godwit in 2013. No site-specific information relating to key high-tide roost sites is available.
- High-tide roost counts identified that Langstone Harbour supported the greatest numbers of wintering dunlin in 2013, with almost 17,000 birds recorded in November 2013. Chichester Harbour generally supported fewer birds, but almost 15,000 birds were counted in December 2013. Within the Chichester Harbour area Black Point appears to be of greatest importance, with 'Mid and North Hayling' also supporting good numbers of birds. According to the WeBS sector map, 'Mid and North Hayling' start c. 200 m to the north of the application area and continue northwards.
- Grey plover has been declining within Hampshire in recent years. In 2013 Chichester and Langstone Harbours supported the greatest number of birds roosting at high-tide, with the 'Mid Hayling' sector of Chichester Harbour highlighted as being of value. This sector begins c. 200 m to the north of the application site and continues northwards.
- In 2013 Chichester and Langstone Harbours supported the greatest number of redshank roosting at high-tide, with the greatest numbers recorded in the West Sussex parts of Chichester Harbour.

Due to the relatively low resolution of the data included within the 2013 bird report it was not possible to determine the relative importance of the Mill Rythe area compared to other parts of the local Natura 2000 network. As such, consultation was undertaken with Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre to collect site-specific data for key species.

Winter Bird Survey Information, February 2017

Winter bird survey visits were completed on 8th and 14th February 2017 by Tim Hextell MCIEEM (Principal Technical Consultant) and Tom Docker MCIEEM (Ecological Impact Assessment Manager). These visits were timed to allow a full tidal period (high tide-intertidal period-low tide) to be assessed, and to allow bird behaviour to be observed throughout a full tidal cycle. Weather conditions at the time of the survey visits are presented in Table 10.1.

Parameter	8 th February 2017	14 th February 2017
Temperature (°C)	5 - 6	8 - 11
Cloud (%)	75 - 100	25 - 75
Wind (Beaufort)	F3 - 4	F2 - 4
Precipitation	Mostly dry, brief showers	Dry

Table 10.1: Weather Conditions During Survey

During both survey visits the surveyors completed a visual assessment of the holiday village site and adjacent estuarine habitats within the adjacent part of the SPA/Ramsar site. The aim of these visits was to highlight key areas of bird activity, and to enable an overall profile of bird activity through a tidal cycle to be observed.

During the survey visits it was noted that the sea wall adjacent to the application site is well-used by local dog walkers, and that the majority of these walkers are residents of Hayling Island rather than guests at the existing holiday village facility. The walkers can, however, only access c. 800 m of the sea wall, as there is no formal pathway along the coast to the east of the holiday village. Ordnance Survey mapping does not recognise the sea wall as a formal public right of way.

Survey Visit 1 – 8th February 2016

Brent Geese:

During the first survey visit a group of five brent geese were observed using the pitch-and-putt grassland c. 40 m to the east of the holiday park buildings at high tide. These birds were present for a period of c. 10 minutes before flying away to the north. At the same time a large concentration of brent geese (c. 250 birds) was observed feeding on a raised ridge within a parcel of coastal grazing marsh located c. 170 m to the south of the site. There is no formal access to this area from the proposed development site, and it is visually screened by the presence of a raised earth bund and band of dense scrub. As such, observations were made from the sea wall using high powered optics. Ambient levels of human activity within the holiday village did not appear to cause any disturbance to these birds, indicating that the existing visual screening is effective.

During the intertidal period and at low tide the area of grazing marsh adjacent to the site continued to be attractive to brent geese, with birds observed periodically flying in and out of this area. Numbers reduced to c. 50 birds at low tide, and geese were observed to be broadly spread both on the water and on areas of emergent eelgrass and mud all around Hayling Island (Chichester and Langstone Harbour sides). The exception was the southern edge of Hayling Island where the majority of leisure and amenity facilities are focused. This area tended to be avoided by bird species.

Frequent flocks of up to 50 brent geese were visible moving up and down the eastern edge of Hayling Island at both high and low tide.

Wading Birds:

No wading birds were observed using any habitats within the red line boundary of the Mill Rythe Holiday Village site during the first survey visit. Furthermore, the foreshore directly adjacent to the proposed development site was not observed to provide a high tide roost site for wading birds, and was only used by scattered individual redshank. This may be attributable to the regular usage of the sea wall as a dog walking resource by local residents, although during the observation period only one resident from the holiday village accessed the sea wall path. Concentrations of roosting waders were observed on the far side of the estuary, within the creek past the boatyard c. 1 km to the northwest of the application site (within the 'Mid Hayling' WeBS count area).

During the intertidal period a large number of wading birds were observed to fly into the expanse of raised saltmarsh and mudflats that became visible between 80 m and 300 m from the sea wall. From the early intertidal period to low tide this large expanse of habitat was used by several hundred dunlin, in addition to low to moderate numbers of curlew, oystercatcher, lapwing, grey plover and redshank.

Other Observations:

A group of c. 50 common gull was observed within a particular patch of exposed vegetation of both survey visits, and both shelduck and wigeon were frequent towards the far shore, some 350 m distant. Small

numbers of little egret were actively feeding during the intertidal period, and a group of four (two male and two female) red breasted mergansers were observed following the tide out into the open sea.

Survey Visit 2 – 14th February 2016

Brent Geese:

Patterns of brent goose activity recorded during the second survey visit were broadly the same as during the first visit, although no brent geese were observed using the pitch and putt grassland on site during this survey visit. The area of adjacent grazing marsh continued to be well-used at high tide, with up to 200 brent geese recorded. The habitat has direct connectivity to an area of valuable saltmarsh habitat beyond the southeastern boundary of the holiday village, and this saltmarsh was observed to support up to 50 brent geese, as well as small numbers of curlew and oystercatcher.

Access was obtained to the sea wall to the east and south of the holiday village area (this section of sea wall is fenced off and not publically accessible), which allowed a more comprehensive inspection of the wider area to the east and south of the holiday village to be made. Large numbers of brent geese were observed using exposed saltmarsh and eelgrass beds during the intertidal period and at low tide, with the greatest concentration of birds (c. 200+) observed using emergent eelgrass at Dip Rythe, c. 600 m to the southeast of the holiday village.

Wading Birds:

No wading birds were observed using any habitats within the red line boundary of the Mill Rythe Holiday Village site during the second survey visit, and no evidence of the adjacent foreshore providing an important high tide roost site for any species was noted. As with the first visit the foreshore adjacent to the holiday village was very sporadically used by wading birds (infrequent redshank and curlew activity).

Wading bird activity peaked during the intertidal period, when large numbers of dunlin and small groups of a broad range of other waders descended on emerging saltmarsh vegetation. The greatest number of birds were recorded on a very large area of emergent vegetation at Dip Rythe, c. 600 m to the southeast.

The sea wall adjacent to the holiday village continued to be well-used by local dog walkers, however the limited numbers of redshank and curlew along the foreshore showed no obvious evidence of disturbance. Other species, such as dunlin and grey plover, were sufficiently distant from the sea wall to avoid being disturbed.

Other Observations:

The group of common gull observed during the first survey visit were also present during the second visit, and shelduck and wigeon continued to be present towards the far shore.

Observation From Site Meeting on 16th February 2017

During a site meeting between relevant members of the design team and local planning authority on 16th February, a group of c. 30 brent geese were observed flying onto the waterbody at the northeastern point of the pitch and putt facility. Approximately 30% of these birds subsequently flew out onto the exposed estuarine habitat mosaic, but the remainder remained present for at least 20 minutes and showed little evidence of being disturbed by walkers along the sea wall.

No other significant observations of bird behaviour were observed during this site visit.

Predicted Recreational Use of Site and Surrounds

A key factor when assessing the likelihood of disturbance to the qualifying species for the adjacent Natura 2000 sites is the predicted pattern of recreational activity generated by the new development. Although the new development is considered to be a like-for-like replacement for the existing facility in terms of overall visitor capacity, the layout of the site will be different and will therefore generate a different pattern of visitor behaviour. The existing facility contains scattered areas of informal greenspace, whereas the new facility focuses on providing a central recreational area near to the central building complex, with scattered smaller areas of recreational space. The area of pitch-and-putt grassland, which forms part of the Mill Rythe SINC, is due to be retained as part of the new proposed layout, however a concern raised in discussion with a number of consultees is that the proposed new site layout could lead to an increased use of both the sea wall and the retained pitch-and-putt grassland. Based upon the data collected during the desk based and field studies, the importance of this grassland area to brent geese cannot be fully discounted and therefore it

is considered that any unmitigated recreational use of this resource between October and March inclusive could in theory lead to disturbance and displacement of brent geese.

To address these concerns a site meeting was held on 16th February 2017 between relevant members of the design team and key stakeholders from the local planning authority. During the meeting the potential implications of the proposed site layout were discussed, and a mutually agreeable solution was identified. The following text summarising the changes to the site layout arising from the meeting is provided by Eamonn Byrne, Principal Landscape Architect:

- *The open space area at the boating pond now includes a footpath link into this area and some specimen trees have been removed to keep the area more open.*
- *We have improved pedestrian access throughout the site by providing additional paths connecting the ends of cul-de-sacs and at the main pedestrian path in the north of the site which leads to the sea defence.*
- *We have provided a linked pedestrian route through the south east of the site and around existing trees.*
- *An area of amenity open space/ informal play area has been provided to the east of the site adjoining the woodland/ scrub buffer planting; and the adjacent pitch and putt golf course area is to be managed as grassland and scrub to maximise its wildlife value. One caravan has been removed to create an additional pedestrian/ link to this open space.*
- *In addition, 3 caravans have been removed in the north of the site, to allow for open space to be provided in this area of the site.*

The result of these changes is that the current landscape masterplan for the site now includes a main central recreation area, supported by a series of smaller pockets of greenspace within the site. The westernmost part of the pitch-and-putt grassland (c. 10% of the total area) will also be converted into an area that can be used for additional recreation, and retaining the remainder of the grassland to be managed for nature conservation value.

Subsequent discussions regarding the potential use of the pitch-and-putt grassland areas concluded that any use of the grassland during the winter period could in theory cause disturbance to brent geese, which are qualifying species for the adjacent SPA. It was therefore agreed with the client team and local authority that the most practical solution to avoiding this disturbance was to prohibit access to the grassland during the winter. The current site masterplan already shows that the grassland will be separated from the remainder of the holiday village by a band of linear scrub or hedgerow, however in order to fully restrict access and protect potential brent goose habitat from disturbance the following recommendations are made:

- Installation of low level fencing (c. 1 m to negate any landscape impact) and gated access to provide a controllable barrier preventing access into the grassland area.
- Access to be prohibited between 1st October and 31st March inclusive.
- Programme of habitat management to be implemented to maintain value of grassland to brent geese and prevent scrub encroachment. Management to be detailed in a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), and to be timed to avoid bird nesting season and wintering season. LEMP to be agreed with local planning authority prior to implementation.
- Use of interpretation boards to communicate to residents about the ecological sensitivity of the area.

The existing access point between the site and the sea wall was also discussed. Should this access point remain open once the site is developed it is likely to continue to be used by residents at a broadly similar level to the existing facility. It should be noted that this does not mean that there will definitely be a disturbance impact to qualifying bird species. The existing patterns of bird activity, coupled with the fact that only a small part of the sea wall is publically accessible, mean that the likelihood of significant disturbance to birds is considered to be very low. There is no access to those areas considered to be of greatest value to brent geese and wading birds, and local bird populations appear to be habituated to the existing use of part of the sea wall by local dog walkers. Furthermore, the species for which the proposed development has the potential to cause disturbance are almost exclusively overwintering species, therefore their presence will coincide with the period of lowest occupancy of the holiday village. Despite this conclusion, however, correspondence received from Natural England dated 10th April 2017 shows that seasonal closure of the access point to the sea wall is one of the required mitigation proposals that they require to enforce their lack of objection. The owner of the holiday village has indicated a willingness to restrict access to the sea wall from the development during the period in which the majority of qualifying bird species are present in the area, and a recommendation to this effect is made in Section 12.2.

Construction Phase Disturbance

The risk of construction phase disturbance impacts to qualifying bird species is considered to be low, due to the type of construction activities proposed. These will broadly include conversion of existing chalet buildings and installation of new caravan facilities, neither of which will require significant excavation or any piling. It is considered that any disturbance can be avoided and minimised through appropriate design of the construction works and use of best practice mitigation methods e.g. hoarding to screen sources of visual disturbance.

Providing that construction works are undertaken in accordance with best practice and are designed with input from a suitably qualified ecologist no significant issues are anticipated. It is proposed that a Construction Ecological Management Plan will be compiled for the scheme, and guidance regarding the content of this document is provided in the most recent set of comments received from Natural England, dated 10th April 2017. A recommendation is made in Section 12.2.

10.2 COASTAL SQUEEZE

This area of potential vulnerability is associated with rising sea levels and hard coastal defences, which has resulted in the loss of areas of valuable intertidal habitat including saltmarsh and mudflats. The proposed development will be built within the footprint of the existing Mill Rythe Holiday Village, and will require no land take from coastal or intertidal habitats. Furthermore, no changes to existing coastal defences are anticipated.

The proposed development will not cause likely significant effects as a result of coastal squeeze.

10.3 FISHERIES

This area of vulnerability is associated with commercial fisheries. The proposed development of a new holiday village facility will have no impact on commercial fishing, therefore no likely significant effects are predicted.

10.4 WATER POLLUTION

This area of vulnerability is linked to a wide range of sources of pollution, including storm discharges, agriculture, road runoff, discharge from marine sediments, oil transportation and ships/pilotage. The proposed development will have no influence of the majority of these sources of water pollution, however if designed inappropriately the drainage system, including foul sewers and runoff from hard surfaces, could provide a minor contribution to this area of vulnerability.

As part of the planning application process the drainage proposals for the scheme will be subject to expert scrutiny, and planning consent will not be granted unless the proposals meet required standards. In addition, as the site is to be constructed on the location of the existing holiday village, there is existing drainage infrastructure in place. It is not considered likely that the proposed development will be allowed to proceed without appropriate drainage arrangements, therefore the risk of likely significant effects is considered to be negligible.

The construction phase of the development has the potential to contribute to water pollution in the absence of appropriate control measures, through issues such as siltation, vehicle fuel spillages and accidental pollution incidents. These potential issues are, however, all easily avoided by implementing good working practices.

10.5 CHANGES IN SPECIES DISTRIBUTIONS / CLIMATE CHANGE

These two areas of vulnerability are inherently linked, as the observed trends in climate are known to be an influencing factor on the changes in species distributions. This is resulting in the movement of important species, including prey species for wintering birds, away from traditional breeding grounds into new areas. This in turn has caused a reduction in the number of bird species that are so reliant on these prey species. Climate change is also known to change plant distribution and habitat composition, and to cause an increase in weather incidents such as storms which can cause flooding and subsequently result in failed breeding attempts for several bird species.

Climate change is a global issue, and it not considered that such a small scale development as a replacement holiday village is capable of creating an observable change in climate. The development will in fact replace an existing development, meaning that a number of old technologies (e.g. central heating systems) will be replaced by newer, more energy efficient systems. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would result in a likely significant effect either on species distribution or the climate.

10.6 CHANGES TO SITE CONDITIONS

The area of vulnerability is associated with increasing losses of saltmarsh habitat, however the Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area states that the reasons for this loss of habitat are unknown and require further investigation.

The proposed development will solely be constructed within the footprint of the existing holiday village site, and will require no loss of saltmarsh habitat. No likely significant effects are predicted.

10.7 INVASIVE SPECIES

The Solent Site Improvement Plan produced by Natural England identified four key issues associated with the potential spread of invasive species: commercial shipping, recreational boating, aquaculture and natural dispersal. The proposed development will have no influence on either commercial shipping or aquaculture, and the potential for spread of invasive species as a result of recreational boating will, due to the scale of the development, not exceed the ambient level of risk presented by the existing holiday village facility.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (RT-MME-123420-01) completed by Middlemarch Environmental Ltd in early September 2016 identified two desk study records of invasive species within a 1 km radius of the site, Virginia creeper and Japanese knotweed, however no evidence of either of these species, or any other non-native invasive species, was recorded on site during the survey. Provided that construction works are undertaken in a sensitive manner no issues associated with the spread of invasive species are predicted.

10.8 DIRECT LAND TAKE FROM DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development will result in no direct land take from any Natura 2000 site. No likely significant effects are predicted.

10.9 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE USE

This issue is associated with the legal and illegal practices of gull egg collecting and wildfowling. Given that the proposed development will result in no increased capacity for the holiday village, there is no evidence to suggest that the development is likely to lead to an increased risk above existing ambient levels. No likely significant effects are predicted.

10.10 CHANGES IN LAND MANAGEMENT

This area of vulnerability is associated with hydrological management, and the potential for changes in habitat to occur as a result of alternations in both water level and salinity. The proposed development will not have any influence of the operation of tidal flaps or sluices within any of the Natura 2000 sites, and will be constructed within an existing area of the built environment. No likely significant effects are predicted.

10.11 INAPPROPRIATE PEST CONTROL

This issue is linked to a decline in control of pest species such as foxes and rats, which in turn are predating both eggs and the young of gulls and waterbirds which is reducing breeding success. The proposed development will have no influence on pest control within the Natura 2000 network, and therefore no likely significant effects are predicted.

10.12 AIR POLLUTION: NITROGEN DEPOSITION

Nitrogen deposition within the nearby Natura 2000 site network is understood to already be in excess of critical loads. The replacement of an existing holiday village with modern and more energy efficient facility will not result in a significant increase in nitrogen deposition levels, however there is the potential for construction vehicles to cause a small-scale temporary increase in nitrogen deposition during the construction process.

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR199, published in February 2016, describes several sources which state that vegetation is susceptible to changes from nitrogen deposition from road vehicles up to 200 m from roads, with the greatest impacts likely to occur within the first 50 m to 100 m. The construction process for the new holiday village will involve work within 200 m of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar site and the Solent Maritime SAC, however the construction process is limited in duration and therefore habitats are likely to recover from any short term increase in nitrogen exposure post-development. As the vast majority of both the Chichester and Langstone Harbours and Solent Maritime Natura 2000 sites is located well in excess of 200 m from the proposed development footprint, the potential for likely significant effects to occur is considered to be negligible.

10.13 HYDROLOGICAL CHANGE

This area of vulnerability is associated with water abstraction at Titchfield Haven, for which existing abstraction levels are already known to be high. Titchfield Haven is located c. 19 km to the west of the proposed development site, and the development will have no increased capacity compared to the existing holiday village, therefore no significant increases in water abstraction will occur.

10.14 DIRECT IMPACT FROM THIRD PARTY

This area of vulnerability is linked to a wide range of sources, including off-roading, sea defences, military helicopters and house boats. It is not anticipated that the proposed development will lead to an increase in any of these factors, therefore no likely significant effects are predicted.

10.15 EXTRACTION: NON-LIVING RESOURCE

This issue is associated with extraction of shingle for aggregates. The proposed development will not require any increase in shingle extraction, therefore no likely significant effects are predicted.

11. SCREENING MATRIX

Table 11.1 provides a screening matrix summarising the findings of the screening exercise.

SITE	FACTOR AFFECTING SITE INTEGRITY	POTENTIAL EFFECTS ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL EFFECTS
Solent Natura 2000 Network (Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar)	Public access / disturbance	A review of existing records for qualifying species has been completed, in addition to site survey work completed by suitably qualified ornithologists in February 2017. This identified that the wider area is of high value to wintering brent geese and waders, and that the pitch-and-putt grassland has been known to support notable numbers of brent geese. Small numbers of brent geese were observed to sporadically use the pitch-and-putt area on site, but no use of the site by wading birds was observed. The area of grazing marsh and saltmarsh to the south and southeast of the site are important for brent geese, but these areas are visually screened from the site and no access is possible. The area surrounding the site does not provide any key high tide roosts for waders, and during the intertidal period and at low tide birds are sufficiently distant to avoid any potential disturbance. A site meeting held between the client team and local planning authority on 16 th February 2017 concluded that the risk of disturbance was minimal, and made recommendations to ensure that the majority of recreational activity is contained on site. It has subsequently been agreed that access to the pitch-and-putt grassland will be prohibited during the key wintering period of 1 st October to 31 st July inclusive. Provided that this restriction is implemented, no disturbance impacts on brent geese are predicted. Natural England has also requested additional mitigation measures in the form of season restrictions on access to the sea wall, production of a CEMP, and use of an ornithological watching brief for sensitive works.	NLSE (provided mitigation recommendations are followed)
	Coastal squeeze	The proposed development will not have any impact on water levels or coastal defences, therefore no increase in coastal squeeze will occur.	NLSE
	Fisheries	The proposed development will have no influence on fisheries.	NLSE
	Water pollution	The proposed development will only be granted planning consent once the drainage solution has been subject to expert review. The construction phase has the potential to cause small-scale water pollution incidents, however this risk can be minimised through sensitive working practices.	NLSE
	Changes in species distribution / climate change	These two interlinked issues are globally significant, and it is not considered that the replacement of a small holiday village site will have an influence on either climate change or species distribution.	NLSE
	Change to site conditions	The proposed development will not result in the loss of any areas of saltmarsh habitat.	NLSE
	Invasive species	No invasive species were recorded on site during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal completed by Middlemarch Environmental Ltd in early September 2016.	NLSE
	Direct land take from development	No direct land take from any Natura 2000 site is predicted as a result of the proposed development.	NLSE
	Biological resource use	The proposed development will result in no increased visitor numbers to the site, therefore the risk posed by gull egg collected and wildfowling will not increase.	NLSE
	Changes in land management	The proposed development will have no impact on the operation of tidal flaps and sluices within the Natura 2000 network, therefore no changes in water levels or salinity are predicted.	NLSE

SITE	FACTOR AFFECTING SITE INTEGRITY	POTENTIAL EFFECTS ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL EFFECTS
Solent Natura 2000 Network (Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar)	Inappropriate pest control	The proposed development will have no influence on pest control within the Natura 2000 sites.	NLSE
	Air pollution: nitrogen	The operational phase of the proposed development will be more energy efficient than the existing facility, therefore no increase in nitrogen deposition is predicted. The construction phase will involve temporary movement of construction vehicles within 200 m of a nature conservation site which may cause a small increase in nitrogen deposition, however this will be over a very short period and is not considered likely to be measurable within the Natura 2000 network as a whole.	NLSE
	Hydrological changes	The proposed development is the same in scale as this existing development, and will not increase the water abstraction burden on Titchfield Haven, which is located c. 19 km to the west.	NLSE
	Direct impact from third party	Proposed development will not result in an increase in any of the multiple factors understood to be influencing habitats and species.	NLSE
	Extraction of non-living resources	Proposed development will require no increase in abstraction of shingle for aggregate material.	NLSE
Key: NLSE – No Likely Significant Effect PSE – Possible Significant Effect LSE – Likely Significant Effect			

Table 11.1: Assessment of Effects of the Proposed Development on Natura 2000 Sites (continues)

Table 11.1 (cont): Assessment of Effects of the Proposed Development on Natura 2000 Sites

12. CONCLUSIONS AND PRECAUTIONARY RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with best practice guidance, a screening exercise has been undertaken to assess whether the proposed development is likely to result in significant impacts to the integrity of the network of Natura 2000 sites within the Solent, comprising Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar. This assessment has been undertaken based on development information provided by the client team and ecological information relating to the site and its surrounds collected by Middlemarch Environmental Ltd in September and October 2016 and January and February 2017. The original version of this report was submitted in late 2016, however consultation responses received from key stakeholders including Natural England and Hampshire County Council requested that further evidence should be provided to support the conclusions made. In response, a comprehensive data collected exercise (including a review of desk based sources and fieldwork by experienced ornithologists) was completed. A further update, including a resolution to prevent access to the pitch-and-putt grassland during the winter months, was made in April 2017. Natural England provided a further consultation response dated 10th April 2017, in which they stated that they have no objection to the proposed development if several mitigation measures can be secured to prevent disturbance to qualifying bird species. The requested mitigation is reflected in the recommendations in Section 12.2.

The conservation objectives for each of the Natura 2000 sites considered in this report are associated with preserving the favourable conservation status of qualifying habitats and species. Natural England has recently published a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent area that covers all of the sites considered in this report, and describes known areas of vulnerability for these sites. These areas of vulnerability are all factors which could reduce the ability of the sites to meet their conservation objectives, therefore this assessment is focused on the ability of the proposed development to contribute to known areas of vulnerability.

The proposed development involves the demolition of buildings within the existing Mill Rythe Holiday Village, and the construction of c. 291 mixed accommodation units (including 204 caravans and lodges and refurbishment of 87 chalets) with associated dining and leisure facilities. Information provided by the client team indicates that the capacity of the holiday village will not be increased when compared to the existing facility, however the configuration of the site will change.

Key potential impacts requiring further investigation related to the potential for disturbance to qualifying species for the Natura 2000 sites, specifically brent geese and wading birds. The Solent area is known to be a key site for overwintering birds, however data collected shows no evidence of the proposed development site itself being important for either brent geese or waders. No wading birds were recorded using the site in any capacity, and the adjacent foreshore does not support an important high tide roost. Small numbers of brent geese used the pitch-and-putt grassland area and associated waterbody, however by far the most valuable high tide area in the locality was an expansive area of saltmarsh and grazing marsh to the south and southeast. This area is visually screened from the application site by a raised bund and bank of scrub, and no access from the holiday village is possible. The vast areas of exposed saltmarsh and mudflat exposed during the intertidal period and at low tide are also of high value, however birds are sufficiently distant from the sea wall to avoid significant disturbance. Furthermore, access to the sea wall is limited to an 800 m stretch to the north of the holiday village complex, with no access to the sections closest to the most valuable habitat areas. Despite this, however, notable concentrations of brent geese have been observed using the pitch-and-putt grassland in January 2009 and March 2016, therefore the importance of this area to brent geese cannot be discounted. For this reason, it has been agreed with the client that access to the pitch-and-putt grassland will be prohibited between 1st October and 31st March. As requested by Natural England, access to the sea wall will also be restricted during the winter months.

Another relevant factor that has informed the conclusion of no likely significant effects with regard to disturbance are the fact that the period of peak sensitivity for qualifying wintering bird species coincides with the predicted period of lowest occupancy for the new holiday village facility. The owner of the holiday village has indicated a willingness to implement restrictions on access to the sea wall, however based on the level of risk predicted this is not considered necessary. A recommendation regarding the provision of interpretation boards and information packs communicating the ecological sensitivity of the area is provided in Section 12.2.

None of the other stated areas of vulnerability for the Natura 2000 network are of significance to the proposed development, therefore no likely significant effects are predicted.

12.2 PRECAUTIONARY RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the precautionary principle, which is a key tenet underpinning the Habitat Regulations Assessment process, the following recommendations are made. If these recommendations are adhered to, no further stages of the Habitat Regulations Assessment process are recommended. These recommendations include the mitigation measures requested by Natural England in their correspondence dated 10th April 2017.

R1 Restricting Access to Pitch-and-Putt Grassland

It has been agreed with the client and local planning authority that access will be prevented to the area of pitch-and-putt grassland during the key winter period for brent geese (1st October to 31st March). The following recommendations are made:

- Installation of low level fencing (c. 1 m to negate any landscape impact) and gated access to provide a controllable barrier preventing access into the grassland area.
- Access to be prohibited between 1st October and 31st March inclusive.
- Programme of habitat management to be implemented to maintain value of grassland to brent geese and prevent scrub encroachment. Management to be detailed in a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), and to be timed to avoid bird nesting season and wintering season. LEMP to be agreed with local planning authority prior to implementation.
- Use of interpretation boards to communicate to residents about the ecological sensitivity of the area.

R2 Restricted Access to Sea Wall

The existing access point between the site and the adjacent sea wall should be closed between 1st October and 31st March inclusive to minimise the potential increase in disturbance from residents of the holiday village accessing the sea wall.

R3 Construction Ecological Management Plan

A CEMP should be compiled for the proposed development. This document should describe how potential construction phase sources of disturbance, e.g. noise and visual disturbance, will be avoided or minimised during the construction phase of the proposed development. This strategy should be agreed with the local planning authority prior to any works commencing on site.

R4 Ornithological Watching Brief

Any construction phase works with the potential to cause disturbance to birds during the key period of 1st October to 31st March should be completed under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced ornithologist.

R5 Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

A LEMP should be produced for the retained pitch-and-putt grassland. This document should detail management and maintenance proposals for the grassland that will ensure that it remains suitable for use by brent geese and other fauna. The content of the LEMP should be agreed with the local planning authority ecologist prior to the occupation of the site.

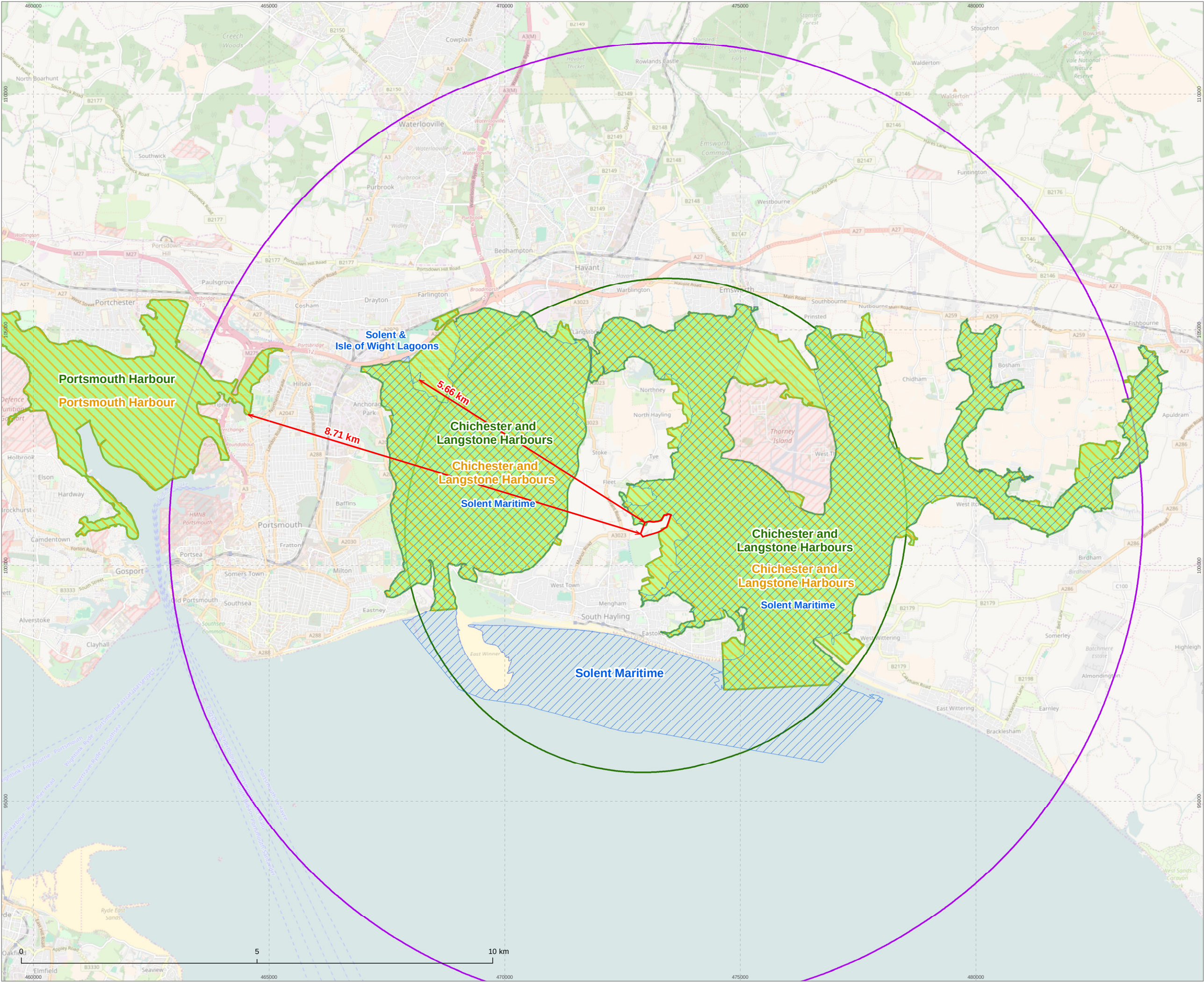
R6 Ecological Information for Holiday Village Guests

In order to increase awareness of the ecological sensitivity of the surrounding area, and to help to minimise the potential for disturbance to qualifying habitats and species, it is recommended that ecological information be provided to guests. This information could either be provided as part of the welcome pack for new guests, or through the installation of interpretation boards within the site. Ecological information provided should be verified by a suitably qualified ecologist, and the information should include recommendations for how disturbance can be avoided, e.g. by keeping dogs on leads at all times in sensitive areas.

13. DRAWINGS

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Drawing C123420-03-01 - Location of Natura 2000 Sites in Relation to Application Site

A&M Architectural Partnership Drawing 3877-410 Rev K – Proposed Masterplan



C123420-03-01

Legend

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Special Protection Area (SPA)

RAMSAR site

Site boundary

5000 m radius from site boundary

10000 m radius from site boundary

Project

Mill Rythe Holiday Village, Hayling Island

Drawing

Statutory Sites

Client

Away Resorts c/o &
M Architectural Partnership LLP

Drawing Number

C123420-03-01

Revision

00

Scale @ A3

1:75,000

Date

September 2016

Approved By

TM

Drawn By

RP

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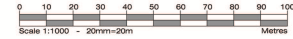
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MILL RYTHE HOLIDAY VILLAGE

PROPOSED MASTERPLAN - PROPOSED SITE PLAN

LEGEND:

	Site Ownership Boundary		Open Recreational Space (Grassed and Surfaced) - 16,670m ² (1.67ha)	
	Developed Area		Pathways	
	Building		Single Storey Self-Catered Chalet	26No. Units
	General Amenity Greenspace		Two Storey Self-Catered Chalet	61No. Units
	Grassland and Scrub Area - 26,500m ² (2.65ha)		22No. Caravans approved as part of Planning Application Ref: APP/11/01080	22No. Units
	Existing Landscaping		3.7m x 12.2m Caravan	181No. Units
	Proposed Landscaping		Total Accommodation	290No. Units
	Retained trees with bat potential			



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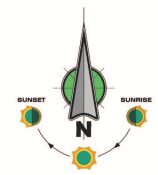
CHALET LEGEND:

Single Storey Chalets -

A	Windsor
B	Oxford
C	Nutley
D	Otley
E	Norfolk
F	Matlock

Two Storey Chalets -

G	Ganton
H	Ryde
I	Seaton
J	Solent
K	Tenby
L	Harrow
M	Dover





K	ADDITIONAL PATH INDICATED	SJM	05.04.17
J	REC AREA AMENDED AS VIA COMMENTS	SJM	03.04.17
H	SITE AREA FIGURES INDICATED	SJM	31.03.17
G	MINOR AMENDS TO LEGEND & REC AREAS	SJM	09.03.17
F	MINOR AMENDS TO PATHWAYS & COLOURS	SJM	08.03.17
E	AMEND FOLLOWING PLANNING OFFICERS MEET	SJM	01.03.17
D	LANDSCAPING & MINOR AMENDMENTS	SJM	08.11.16
C	AMENDED FOLLOWING TREE REPORT	SJM	03.11.16
B	AMENDED FOLLOWING TREE REPORT	SJM	01.11.16
A	REVISED TO REFLECT NEXT DEVE PROPS	SJM	25.10.16



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Site Address: **MILL RYTHE HOLIDAY VILLAGE**
HAVANT ROAD, HAYLING ISLAND,
HAMPSHIRE, PO11 0PB

Project: **PROPOSED MASTERPLAN**

Drawing Title: **PROPOSED SITE PLAN**

Date:	Scale:	Drawn:
Oct 2016	1:1000 @ A1	SJM
Computer File Name:	Checked by:	
3877-410K-422 Proposed Site Plan.dwg		
Status:		
	PLANNING	
Drawing Number:	Revision:	
3877-410		K

14. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1

Copy of Natural England Correspondence Received 10th April 2017

Date: 10 April 2017
Our ref: 211146
Your ref: APP/16/01237



Lewis Oliver
Havant Borough Council

Customer Services
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Lewis

Planning consultation: APP/16/01237 Demolition of 6,111 square metres of redundant chalets and facilities buildings, use of land for the siting of 204 holiday caravans - Additional information provided.

Location: Mill Rythe Holiday Village, 16 Havant Road, Hayling Island, PO11 0PB

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 15 March 2017 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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.

NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

The application site is adjacent to Chichester and Langstone Harbour Ramsar, Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA and Solent Maritime SAC. The application site includes an area identified as 'important' in the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (2010 update) (site H43) and is used as a high tide roost by Brent Geese and waders, which are qualifying features of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA.

As submitted the application would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the qualifying features of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour Special Protection Area. In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required:

- 1) Prior to the commencement of the development, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Environmental Management Plan shall identify the steps and procedures that will avoid or mitigate impacts of the designated sites and their qualifying features. Once approved, the CEMP shall be adhered to at all times, unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Further advice is included below.
- 2) An ornithological watching brief shall be undertaken for the duration of the demolition and construction works carried out during the sensitive period (01 October to 31 March).
- 3) No dogs shall be permitted on the Mill Hythe Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SINC) / pitch and putt golf course from 01 October to 31 March inclusive.
- 4) Access from the Holiday Village to the sea wall shall be closed from 01 October to 31 March

inclusive.

Reason: To ensure the disturbance to birds is minimised during the construction and operation of the Mill Hythe Holiday Village.

We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

Further advice on mitigation

In particular, the CEMP will include a methodology for the demolition of the existing holiday chalets and the installation of the mixed accommodation and associated dining and leisure facilities. This should include details of:

- The access route of construction vehicles to and from the site.
- Location of construction compound and car parking.
- Storage and location of equipment and materials.
- Potential for run-off from the site and waste disposal resulting from site preparation, groundwork and the construction phase of the development and appropriate mitigation measures.
- Measures to minimise creation and impact of dust.
- Consideration of how certain activities will be limited in time, location or noise level to minimise the risk of disturbance to SPA birds (i.e. October to March inclusive). Details of noise monitoring of the construction and demolition work at sensitive locations.
- Any percussive piling or works with heavy machinery (i.e. plant resulting in a noise level in excess of 69dbAmax – measured at the sensitive receptor which is the nearest point of the SPA or SPA supporting habitat – high tide roost sites) should not be undertaken during the bird overwintering period (i.e. October to March inclusive).
- Measures to visually screen the construction works from the sensitive areas.
- Details of the ornithological watching brief necessary for any demolition and construction works during October to March.
- During construction, access onto the sea wall from the development site should be restricted.

Other advice

It is noted that the eastern section of the site is designated as the Mill Rythe Holiday Village SINC and will be retained in situ and subject to management to increase its value as a nature conservation resource. Natural England welcomes this approach.

Natural England welcomes the provision of ecological information to guests and the provision of interpretation boards around the site. Ecological information should be verified by a suitably qualified ecologist and should include recommendations to minimise disturbance; including keeping dogs on leads in sensitive areas and at sensitive times, and preventing access to the intertidal area during the winter months and details of the sensitive habitats and species around the site.

It would be useful to review how much the pitch and putt golf course is currently used during the winter months and whether it is possible to prevent access between November and March. As the site looks quite wet, the restriction of access may help prevent damage to the pitch and putt course during these winter months. This approach would be welcomed by Natural England

The Holiday Village users and local community would benefit from finding out about the SINC and how the ecological management measures proposed at the Holiday Village will help to support the nature conservation interest of the site and the surrounding area. This would be a useful way to enhance links with the local community in the surrounding area.

Further general advice on consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

Should the developer wish to discuss the detail of measures to mitigate the effects described above with Natural England, we recommend that they seek advice through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me on 07717 808691.

Natural England will need to be consulted on the discharge of conditions. Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Jones
Lead Advisor Solent
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight