

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening and Appropriate Assessment (AA)

PLEASE NOTE: Undertaking the HRA process is the responsibility of Havant Borough Council as the Competent Authority for the purpose of the Habitats Regulations. However, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the Competent Authority with the information that they require for this purpose.

HRA drafting date:	12/05/2026
HRA completion date:	01/06/2026
Application reference:	APP/25/00987
Application address:	270 London Road, Waterlooville, PO7 7HG
Application description:	Part retention and reconfiguration of ground floor commercial area; conversion of upper floors and part ground floor from commercial and 1no. self-contained flat, to residential use comprising 4no. Studio flats and 10 bedroom Co-Living apartment, to include construction of additional storey to rear and associated alterations.
Lead Planning Officer:	Jennie Fox
Please note that all references in this assessment to the 'Habitats Regulations' refer to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).	

Stage 1 - details of the plan or project

European site potentially impacted by planning application, plan or project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chichester & Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) Chichester & Langstone Harbours Ramsar site Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Solent and Dorset Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) Solent and Southampton Water SPA Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar Portsmouth Harbour SPA Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC <p>(Hereafter known as the Solent European Sites)</p>
Is the planning application directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (if yes, Applicant should have provided details)?	No. The development consists of an increase in residential dwellings, which is neither connected to nor necessary to the management of any European site.
Are there any other projects or plans that together with the planning application being assessed could affect the site?	Yes. All new housing development within 5.6km of the Solent SPAs is considered to contribute towards an impact on site integrity in combination with other development in the Solent area due to increase in recreational pressure.

All new housing development that would drain to the Budds Farm or Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works due to increase in nitrogen deposition leading to a reduction in water quality.

The PUSH Spatial Position Statement (<https://www.push.gov.uk/work/planning-and-infrastructure/push-position-statement/>) sets out the scale and distribution of housebuilding which is being planned for across South Hampshire.

Stage 2 - HRA screening assessment

Screening under Regulation 63(1)(a) of the Habitats Regulations – The Applicant to provide evidence so that a judgement can be made as to whether there could be any potential significant impacts of the development on the integrity of the SPA/SAC/Ramsar.

Recreational Pressure

The proposed development is within 5.6km of Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA/Ramsar. In accordance with advice from Natural England and as detailed in Policy DM24 of the adopted Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, a net increase in housing development within 5.6km of the Solent SPAs is likely to result in impacts to the integrity of those sites through a consequent increase in recreational disturbance.

Development within the 5.6km zone will increase the human population at the coast and thus increase the level of recreation and disturbance of bird species. The impacts of recreational disturbance (both at the site-scale and in combination with other development in the Solent area) are analogous to impacts from direct habitat loss as recreation can cause important habitat to be unavailable for use (the habitat is functionally lost, either permanently or for a defined period). Birds can be displaced by human recreational activities (terrestrial and water-based) and use valuable resources in finding suitable areas in which to rest and feed undisturbed. Ultimately, the impacts of recreational disturbance can be such that they affect the status and distribution of key bird species and therefore act against the stated conservation objectives of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA and Ramsar sites.

The proposed development represents a net increase in residential dwellings. Paragraph 6.4 of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy sets out that the “developer contribution will be required for every net additional dwelling within 5.6 kilometres of the boundaries of the Solent Special Protection Areas” (see para 6.3).

As a result, there would be a likely significant effect to the Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA due to recreation.

Water Quality

The proposed development is within the catchment of a wastewater treatment works that would drain into the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA. Natural England advises that there is a likely significant effect on the Solent European Sites due to the increase in wastewater from the new housing as a result of the Havant Borough Local Plan. Natural England also advises that any development proposed through any planning application providing overnight accommodation which would discharge into the Solent would be likely to cause a significant effect as there is uncertainty as new housing in the Solent catchment could have an adverse effect on the Solent's European Sites.

Natural England recommends that any new proposals which include overnight accommodation have inevitable wastewater implications. These implications, and all other matters capable of having a significant effect on designated sites in the Solent, must be addressed in the ways required by Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations. Nonetheless, the existing use of the site can be taken into account and it is the 'net' nutrient emissions into European Sites that is critical.

Natural England advise that there is existing evidence of high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the Solent water environment with evidence of eutrophication at some designated sites. This causes eutrophication, which affects vegetation growth and food resources for qualifying species such that it affects the status and distribution of those species and therefore act against the stated conservation objectives of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA and Ramsar sites. The Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), Natural England (NE), and Environment Agency (EA) have been jointly working to develop an Integrated Water Management Strategy (IWMS). This examines the potential for the PfSH region to accommodate future housing growth without having a detrimental effect upon the water environment. There is currently uncertainty as to whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the new housing growth.

Natural England recommends that any new proposals which include overnight accommodation have inevitable wastewater implications. These implications, and all other matters capable of having a significant effect on designated sites in the Solent, must be addressed in the ways required by Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations. Nonetheless, the existing use of the site can be taken into account and it is the 'net' nutrient emissions into European Sites that is critical.

This would need to be examined within an appropriate assessment and that the existing nutrient and conservation status of the receiving waters be taken into account.

As a result, there would be a likely significant effect to the following Solent European Sites due to water quality:

- Chichester & Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Chichester & Langstone Harbours Ramsar site
- Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Solent and Dorset Coast Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Solent and Southampton Water SPA
- Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar
- Portsmouth Harbour SPA
- Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC

Would the proposal lead to a likely significant effect on European site integrity?

Yes, due to recreational pressure and water quality loss/degradation of supporting habitats and construction impacts.

(If yes, continue to Stage 3).

Stage 3 - Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 63(1) - if there are any potential significant impacts, the applicant must provide evidence showing avoidance and/or mitigation measures to allow an Assessment to be made. The Applicant must also provide details which demonstrate any long-term management, maintenance and funding of any solution.

Recreational Pressure

The project being assessed would result in a net increase of dwellings within 5.6km of the Solent SPAs. In line with Policy DM24 of adopted Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) and the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, a permanent significant effect on the Solent SPAs due to increase in recreational disturbance as a result of the new development, is likely. As such, in order to lawfully be permitted, the development will need to include a package of avoidance and mitigation measures.

Havant Borough Council formally adopted the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy in February 2018. The SRMS provides a strategic solution to ensure the requirements of the Habitats Regulations are met with regard to the in-combination effects of increased recreational pressure on the Solent SPAs arising from new residential development. This strategy represents a partnership approach to the issue which has been endorsed by Natural England. The strategy has since been updated the Bird Aware Solent Revised Strategy (September 2024) has been published.

As set out in the Strategy there are now three different developer contribution levels from the 1st April 2026. For summer and winter figures only please see the developer contributions guide. The table below sets out the all year round contribution figures.

Size of units	Scale of mitigation per unit	Amount proposed in this scheme	Cost
1 bedroom	£501.00	3	£1,503.00
2 bedroom	£723.00	0	£0.00
3 bedroom	£942.00	0	£0.00
4 bedroom	£1,108.00	0	£0.00
5 bedroom	£1,299.00	1	£1,299.00
Additional HMO bedroom rate	£348.00	5	£1,740.00
Flat Rate (Caravan/ Tent Pitches)	£836.00	0	£0.00

Monitoring fee¹ for this scheme: £227.10

Administration fee² for this scheme: £28.00

TOTAL AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION PACKAGE: £4,797.10

¹Monitoring fee is 5% of total mitigation cost

Policy DM24 of the adopted Local Plan sets out the Council's approach to securing the appropriate mitigation measures to address the in-combination impact of increased recreational disturbance arising from increased housing development. It states:

"Planning permission will be granted for residential developments that avoid or mitigate a likely significant effect on the SPAs, caused by recreational disturbance through the in-combination effect of net additional dwellings"

A legal agreement will be necessary to secure the mitigation package. The applicant has confirmed through a European Site Avoidance and Mitigation Checklist that they commit to providing a mitigation package. Without the security of the mitigation being provided through a legal agreement, a significant effect would remain likely. As long as such a legal agreement is secured through the planning process, the proposed development will not affect the status and distribution of key bird species and therefore the development will not act against the stated conservation objectives of the European sites.

Water Quality

The project being assessed would result in an increase in population in the catchment of several Solent European Sites as set out in stage 2. As advised by Natural England, a permanent significant effect on the Solent European Sites due to the decrease in water quality as a result of new development is likely. As such, in order to lawfully be permitted, further assessment is needed as to the net nutrient emissions from the site, including any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed.

Havant Borough Council has published a Position Statement and Mitigation Plan for Nutrient Neutral Development. This sets out how mitigation can be provided to enable development to take place within Havant Borough whilst avoiding any likelihood of a significant effect on the Solent European Sites identified in stage 2.

Natural England have produced guidance for developers and mitigation providers. This can be found on the Council's nutrient neutrality webpage. This sets out a methodology to calculate the nutrient emissions from a development site. The Council has also produced advice on the occupancy figure which should be used within Natural England's calculator this can be found in the Council's published Position Statement and Mitigation Plan. The applicant has used and submitted the Council's occupancy calculator and Natural England's calculator as part of an overall nutrient budget. This calculation has confirmed that the site will emit a nutrient load into European Sites. The calculations for this development site are part of the applications case file.

Achieving a position where there are no net nutrient emissions into the Solent's European Sites from this development involves the use of specific on-site avoidance measures as well as the use of a third party mitigation scheme. The Whitewool Wetland Scheme is proposed as mitigation for the development site. Natural England have confirmed that the scheme is appropriate for development draining to Budds Farm. This is due to Budds Farm being a coastal WwTW and the nutrients discharged from the long sea outfall are spread over a wider area due to water currents therefore a wider area can be considered for mitigation, page 27 of Natural England's methodology sets out the spatial suitability of mitigation schemes. In particular, paragraph 5.40 details that mitigation affecting the River Meon can mitigate development draining to Budds Farm WwTW. The Whitewool Wetland Scheme will result in a reduction in nitrogen emitted into the Solent European Sites from the River Meon. As such, it represents a suitable mitigation scheme for this development.

A nitrate mitigation proposals pack has been provided to the Council and has been considered as part of the development HRA AA. The effect of this pack is to demonstrate that sufficient nutrient mitigation for the proposed development has been reserved subject to the grant of planning permission.

The following Grampian condition will need to be imposed:

The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless the Council has received confirmation that 4.72kg/TN/yr of nitrate mitigation capacity has been allocated to the development pursuant to the allocation agreement dated [].

Reason: To demonstrate that suitable mitigation has been secured in relation to the effect that nutrients from the development has on European protected sites.

Havant Borough Council is responsible for ongoing monitoring of Third Party Nutrient Mitigation Schemes. When accepting mitigation from such schemes, the Council will need to seek a payment from the applicant to contribute towards these costs. The amount payable will be 1% of the total overall kilogramme (kg) purchase cost. Where this is calculated to be less than £100, a minimum fee of £100 will be payable.

Stage 4 – Summary of the Appropriate Assessment (To be carried out by the Competent Authority (the local planning authority) in liaison with Natural England

This assessment represents Havant Borough council's Appropriate Assessment as a Competent Authority in accordance with requirements under Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and having due regard to its duties under Section 40(1) of the NERC Act 2006 to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Consideration of the Ramsar site/s is a matter of government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

This assessment concludes that the application will have a likely significant effect in the absence of avoidance and mitigation measures on the above Solent European sites.

The authority has concluded that the adverse effects arising from the proposal are wholly consistent with the effects detailed in the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy with regards recreational disturbance. The adverse effects are also consistent with the effects detailed in the Position Statement and Mitigation Plan for Nutrient Neutral Development with regards water quality.

The authority's assessment is that the application complies with these strategies and the potential to provide mitigation to remove the significant effects that otherwise would have been likely. It can therefore be concluded that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the designated sites identified above.

Natural England Officer:

Summary of Natural England's comments:

NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

Natural England considers that without appropriate mitigation the application would have an adverse effect on the integrity of European designated sites

Your authority has measures in place to manage potential impacts through contributions to an agreed strategic solution(s) which we consider to be ecologically sound. Natural England is of the view that if these measures, including contributions to them, are implemented, they will be effective and reliable in preventing harmful effects on the Habitats Site(s) for the duration of the proposed development. Mitigation measure(s) to offset any positive nutrient budget should be provided within the relevant catchment area(s).

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

A lack of objection does not mean that there are no significant environmental impacts. Natural England advises that all environmental impacts and opportunities are fully considered, and relevant local bodies are consulted.