5.7. Where harmful impacts are identified to be likely, development can only take place where that harm is avoided, or fully mitigated if it cannot be avoided. Avoidance of harm is best achieved by not locating high impact activities in sensitive locations, but within the Plan Area this cannot be wholly avoided. Where harmful effects cannot be ruled out, the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 can best be met by applying the Precautionary Principle to avoid or mitigate possible harm. Evidence of harm is best avoided by not locating high impact activities in sensitive locations, but within the Plan Area this cannot be avoided. Where harm is identified or likely to be caused, mitigation measures may be required.

5.8. Mitigation measures will be applied until such time as it can be demonstrated through the local Plan Review process that it can reasonably be concluded that development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on the following International Nature Conservation sites:

- the New Forest SAC, the New Forest SPA and the New Forest Ramsar site;
- the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC, the Solent and Southampton Water SPA, and the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site;
- the River Avon SAC, Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site;
- the River Itchen SAC.

For residential development, the requirement for mitigation will be considered on a case-by-case basis with regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed use. The approved mitigation measures for residential developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The approved measures for residential developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis with regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed use.

For non-residential developments, the requirement for mitigation will be considered on a case-by-case basis with regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed use. The approved mitigation measures for non-residential developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis with regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed use. The approved mitigation measures for non-residential developments will be considered on a case-by-case basis with regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed use.
Supporting text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy scope</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.9.</strong> Research and institutional care homes (Use Class C2) are not considered likely to generate recreational impacts on the International Nature Conservation sites, but may generate water quality impacts especially if located in the River Avon or Solent catchments.</td>
<td>For developments of 50 or more net additional residential dwellings: (a) A financial contribution towards access and visitor management; and (b) A financial contribution towards development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.10.</strong> The mitigation requirements for residential development apply to all forms of new residential development resulting in the net gain of a self-contained dwelling. This includes new build homes, redeveloped housing, extra care housing, second homes, visitor accommodation, and gypsy and traveller pitches.</td>
<td>(a) A financial contribution towards access and visitor management; and (b) A financial contribution towards development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.11.</strong> The primary focus of this policy is the mitigation of impacts of residential and institutional care homes (Use Class C2) on the International Nature Conservation sites, as most of the development proposed in the Local Plan is for housing.</td>
<td>For developments of 50 or more net additional residential dwellings, a financial contribution is required towards a Solent-wide programme of visitor management, monitoring and development mitigation projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.12.</strong> Non-residential development may also generate impacts that require mitigation. The diversity of possible activities means it is not possible to identify appropriate mitigation measures from a single-wide.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supporting text

5.11. Residential and institutional care homes (Use Class C2) are not considered likely to generate recreational impacts on the International Nature Conservation sites, but may generate water quality impacts especially if located in the River Avon or Solent catchments.

5.12. Non-residential development may also generate impacts that require mitigation. The diversity of possible activities means it is not possible to identify appropriate mitigation measures from a single-wide.
5.13. In general terms, for non-residential uses air quality and water quality impacts are more likely to be relevant issues for mitigation. The main exception is visitor or recreational activities, where recreational impacts of visitors are likely to require mitigation. Mitigation contributions will be required for hotel and visitor accommodation, and a unit of visitor accommodation will be treated as equivalent to a home for the purposes of calculating mitigation contributions, whether or not it is self-contained.

5.14. The general (rather than site specific) recreational impacts of employees can be screened out, as there is a net commuting outflow from the district. Mitigation of recreational impacts from residential development

5.15. The Plan Area has easy access to the New Forest National Park and to the Solent coast. International Nature Conservation sites in these areas require the highest levels of protection. A growing local population and the large numbers of summer visitors increase the pressures on sensitive habitats. The New Forest Special Protection Area is home to a number of very rare birds which nest on or near the ground during the breeding season and over-wintering birds. Management measures include a ranger service and the provision of advice and information to enable visitors to enjoy the New Forest and the Solent coast in ways that have less impact on habitat sites and protected species, especially in sensitive periods such as hatching seasons and breeding. Measures focus on the provision of natural green spaces within highly accessible to the public, and that are suitable for walking and dog-walking. The provision of natural green spaces will be a key component of the Greenway Project, to relieve ecological pressures on sensitive habitats.

5.16. The New Forest Special Protection Area is particularly important for the diversity of its habitats and the range of rare and scarce species which it supports. It is designated for a range of rare and scarce habitats, including European dry heaths, northern Atlantic wet heaths, and oligotrophic waterbodies, and Molinia meadows. The New Forest National Park is of international importance for the diversity of its habitats and the range of rare and scarce species which it supports. It is designated for a range of rare and scarce species, including rare birds, rare plants, and rare insects.

5.17. The New Forest National Park is particularly important for the diversity of its habitats and the range of rare and scarce species which it supports. It is designated for a range of rare and scarce species, including rare birds, rare plants, and rare insects. The New Forest National Park is particularly important for the diversity of its habitats and the range of rare and scarce species which it supports. It is designated for a range of rare and scarce species, including rare birds, rare plants, and rare insects.

5.18. The Mitigation for Recreational Impacts SPD sets out a programme of measures and projects collectively branded the Greenway Project, to relieve ecological pressures on sensitive habitats.

• Enhancing existing green spaces
• Enhancing the extensive network of walking routes that exist outside of the sensitive areas
• Providing Rangers to help manage sensitive areas, and to inform and influence visitors to the New Forest and the Solent coast.
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5.19. The Greenway Project is a programme of measures and projects collectively branded the Greenway Project, to relieve ecological pressures on sensitive habitats. The Greenway Project is a programme of measures and projects collectively branded the Greenway Project, to relieve ecological pressures on sensitive habitats.
Providing natural green spaces as part of new residential development.

5.19. Contributions are required for all new dwellings located anywhere in the Plan Area to fund a package of mitigation measures. For developments of 50 or more homes, the natural recreational greenspace element will be provided in kind by the developer on land either on or directly adjoining the site. The 50-home threshold reflects Natural England advice and the practical limitations of achieving a suitable layout to meet recreational mitigation requirements on sites below this threshold.

5.20. The design, management and maintenance of recreational mitigation areas is important to ensure that they are, and remain, safe and attractive areas for recreational walking and dog exercising. Working with Natural England the Council has established design guidelines and parameters for recreational mitigation land, to ensure it provides effective mitigation by creating attractive recreational walking and dog-walking routes and spaces. The design guidelines are set out in the Mitigation for Recreational Impacts SPD, and suitable arrangements are illustrated in the Strategic Site Allocation Policy concept master plans, forming part of an integrated approach that will also meet local Plan objectives to provide net gains for biodiversity and for landscape protection and enhancement (Policy 1: Achieving sustainable development; Policy 14: Landscape character and quality).

5.21. To be effective and used, recreational mitigation land must also be safe and appear safe to use. Woodland areas may not be acceptable if under use by people or dogs. Densely wooded areas may not be attractive to users concerned about their personal safety.

5.22. It will not generally be appropriate to use for recreational mitigation purposes land that has existing species or habitat value, unless it can be demonstrated that its habitat value would not be compromised by increased public and dog access. In some instances it will not be possible to provide recreational mitigation measures including protection of existing habitats, because it may not be practical to do so or would be infeasible. Recreational mitigation measures may also not be appropriate on slopes or gullies where there is significant waterlogging or other factors that may compromise the effectiveness of the measures.

5.23. In some instances it will not be possible to provide recreational mitigation measures in areas that are inaccessible or difficult to maintain.

5.24. In all circumstances developers may follow the Council's guidance and measures for mitigating the impacts of development on biodiversity.

5.25. Bird Aware Solent is the ‘brand’ name of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership, which comprises fifteen Solent local authorities including New Forest District, the New Forest National Park Authority, and thirteen conservation organisations. The Partnership aims to manage disturbance of birds, especially waders, in the Solent during wintering and breeding seasons, and to promote the use of designated bird-friendly areas. The Partnership has developed a strategic approach to managing disturbance of birds, and a set of guidelines for developers to follow. The guidelines are set out in the Solent Recreational Mitigation Guidelines, and provide a framework for developers to follow in order to minimise disturbance to birds.

5.26. In some instances it will not be possible to provide recreational mitigation measures on slopes or gullies where there is significant waterlogging or other factors that may compromise the effectiveness of the measures.