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New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan HRA Report (Regulation 19 stage).

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Summary

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) require local planning authorities to assess the impact of their local plan on the internationally important nature conservation sites in and around their administrative areas. The task is achieved by means of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Sites that are relevant to the assessment are 'European sites' and include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites.

These European sites are the top tier of protected sites in the UK and much of the National Park and adjacent areas are designated, reflecting the importance of the area for nature conservation. There are 33 European sites in total that are within the 20km radius, of which 11 sites are within or abut the National Park area. These include the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar which covers the heathland, woodland and wetland habitats of the New Forest (and a suite of associated species) and also the coastal areas (the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar).

An HRA asks very specific questions of a plan. Firstly, it 'screens' the plan to identify if there is a risk that certain policies or allocations may have a 'likely significant effect' on a European site, alone or (if necessary) in-combination with other plans and projects. If the risk of likely significant effects can be ruled out, then the plan may be adopted but if they cannot, the plan must be subjected to the greater scrutiny of an 'appropriate assessment'. Following an appropriate assessment, a Plan may be adopted if an adverse effect on the integrity of the site can be ruled out, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This document is the HRA of the New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan (at the Regulation 19 stage). It has been updated with each iteration of the Plan. All policies were subjected to a comprehensive screening and likely significant effects were identified in relation to the following types of impact and at least one European site:

- General urban effects in relation to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC and Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar (risks from the Plan alone)
- Mobile species and functionally-linked land in relation to Mottisfont Bats SAC (risks from the Plan alone)
- Recreation in relation to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar (risks alone) and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC (risks from the Plan alone)
- Water quality in relation to the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, River Avon SAC (risks from the Plan alone);
- Water quantity in relation to the New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC and River Avon SAC (risks from the Plan in-combination);

- Air quality and the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar (risks from the Plan in-combination).

Each of the above pathways have been taken to appropriate assessment and considered in detail. Following appropriate assessment, and taking into account mitigation measures incorporated into the Plan, it can be concluded that the Plan has no adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, alone or in-combination.

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document is a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) report to accompany the New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan ('the Plan') at the publication plan stage ('Regulation 19'). The report has been prepared by Footprint Ecology on behalf of New Forest National Park Authority. An HRA assesses the implications of a plan for European sites. The HRA will be finalised at the point at which the Plan is ready for adoption.

The New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan

1.2 The Plan sets planning policies and allocations to meet the needs across the National Park Authority area. It covers the period to 2043 in order to ensure provision for growth for 15 years upon adoption.

1.3 Work commenced to review and update the existing plan (adopted in 2019) in 2024 and follows on from the draft plan (Regulation 18) produced in 2025, to ensure that it remained consistent with the latest national planning policies, guidance and legislation. This also includes changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in late 2024.

1.4 The Plan has nine strategic objectives:

1. Protect and enhance the natural capital and environment of the National Park, including the natural beauty of the landscape and the diverse range of habitats and species.
2. Conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and historic environment of the National Park, especially the wealth of individual characteristics that contribute to its local distinctiveness.
3. Plan for and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the landscape, species, character, cultural heritage, special qualities and communities of the New Forest, including energy-efficient development.
4. Strengthen the health and well-being, identity and sustainability of rural communities and the pride of local people in their area.
5. Promote appropriate housing to meet local needs, including the delivery of affordable housing for local people, to maintain the vibrant communities of the National Park.
6. Develop a diverse and sustainable low carbon economy, enabling suitable rural diversification, that contributes to the well-being of local communities and supports a 'working forest', throughout the National Park.

7. Encourage land management that both promotes and sustains traditional commoning practices to protect and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.
8. Support proportionate development which encourages sustainable tourism and recreation, providing opportunities for enjoying the National Park without harming its special qualities or the welfare of its local communities.
9. Reduce the impacts of traffic and enhance access to the National Park by supporting sustainable transport and active travel within the Park.

Habitats Regulations Assessment process

1.5 The designation, protection and restoration of European wildlife sites is embedded in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, which are commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations'. These are domestic law and remain in place post-Brexit. The most recent amendments (the Conservation of Habitats and Species (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019[1]) take account of the UKs departure from the EU.

1.6 Regulation 105 *et seq* addresses the assessment of local plans and determines the scope of this HRA alongside recent Government Guidance on the interpretation and application of the Regulations[2] .

European sites

1.7 'European sites' are those over which the provisions of the Habitat Regulations exert an influence, through statute or policy. They are the top tier of protected sites in the UK and are of international importance for nature conservation. Prior to Brexit, these were part of the Natura 2000 network of sites which formed the largest global network of protected sites.

1.8 Sites that are afforded statutory protection and included within regulation 8 of the Habitats Regulations are now part of the 'national network' and referred to as Habitats sites. Statutory sites comprise of the following:

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[1] The amending regulations generally seek to retain the requirements of the 2017 Regulations but with adjustments for the UK's exit from the European Union. See Regulation 4, which also confirms that the interpretation of these Regulations as they had effect, or any guidance as it applied, before exit day, shall continue to do so.

[2] Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site. Defra and Natural England. 24 February 2021. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the 1992 Habitats Directive;
- Sites of Community Importance (SCI) included on the list of such sites compiled by the European Commission and submitted before the UK left the EU;
- Candidate SACs (cSACs), submitted by the UK government to the European Commission before Exit day as eligible for selection as an SCI;
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the 1979 Birds Directive;
- Potential SPAs (pSPAs) include potential sites as designated by the European Comission under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (2009);
- Areas providing formal compensation for damage to a European site;
- Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance)[3].

Process

1.9 HRA proceeds through a step-by-step process, summarised in Figure 1. Throughout all stages, there is a continual consideration of the options available to avoid and mitigate any identified potential impacts. A competent authority may consider that there is a need to undertake further levels of evidence gathering and evaluation at the appropriate assessment stage in order to provide the necessary certainty. At this point the competent authority may identify the need to add to or modify the plan in order to adequately protect the European site, and these mitigation measures may be added through the imposition of particular restrictions and conditions.

1.10 For plans, the stages of HRA are often quite fluid, with the plan normally being prepared by the competent authority itself. This gives the competent authority the opportunity to repeatedly explore options to prevent impacts, refine the plan and rescreen it to demonstrate that all potential risks to European sites have been successfully dealt with.

1.11 When preparing a plan, a competent authority may therefore go through a continued assessment as the plan develops, enabling the assessment to inform the development of the plan. For example, a competent authority may choose to pursue an amended or different option where impacts can be

[3] The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 extended protections in the Habitats Regulations to provide statutory protection for Ramsar sites; previously these had been only afforded protection through long-established policy and the NPPF.

avoided, rather than continue to assess an option that has the potential to significantly affect European site interest features.

1.12 After completing an assessment, a competent authority should only adopt a plan where it can be ascertained that there will not be an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site(s) in question. In order to reach this conclusion, the competent authority may have made changes to the plan, or modified the project with restrictions or conditions, in light of their Appropriate Assessment findings.

1.13 Where adverse effects cannot be ruled out, further exceptional tests are set out in Regulation 107. In exceptional cases, this allows a plan to be taken forward where there are no 'alternative solutions', where 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' apply and where compensation can be delivered. It should be noted that meeting these tests is a rare last resort and ordinarily, competent authorities seek to ensure that a plan or project is fully mitigated for, or it does not proceed.

1.14 In such circumstances where a competent authority considers that a plan should proceed under Regulations 107, they must notify the relevant Secretary of State. Normally, planning decisions and competent authority duties are then transferred, becoming the responsibility of the Secretary of State, unless on considering the information, the planning authority is directed by the Secretary of State to make their own decision on the plan or project at the local level. The decision maker, whether the Secretary of State or the planning authority, should give full consideration to any proposed 'overriding reasons' for which a plan or project should proceed despite being unable to rule out adverse effects on European site interest features, and ensure that those reasons are in the public interest and are such that they override the potential harm. The decision maker will also need to secure any necessary compensatory measures, to ensure the continued overall coherence of the European site network if such a plan or project is allowed to proceed. However, it is understood that the National Park Authority would not wish to pursue these derogations.

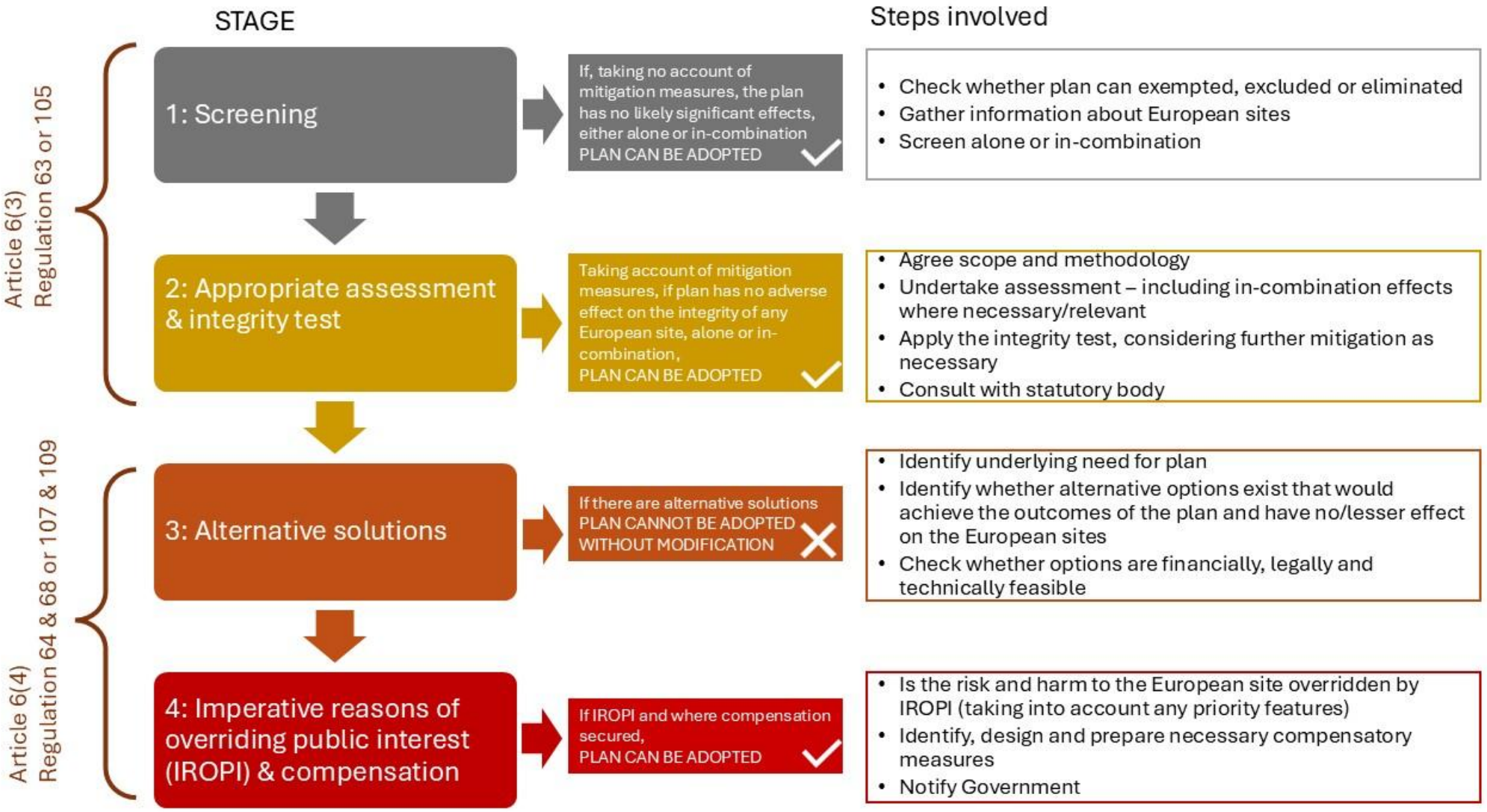


Figure 1: Flow chart illustrating the four-stage process of HRAs for plans. Adapted from Tyldesley & Chapman (2013).

Definitions, references to case law and guidance

1.15 This HRA follows principles of case law, both UK and EU. We follow relevant government guidance[4] and also draw on the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (Tyldesley and Chapman, 2013), which while no longer updated provides useful background and context.

1.16 The flow chart (Figure 1) includes a number of key terms which it is useful to clarify and define. At the beginning of the process, a plan can be **exempted** if it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site. It can also be **excluded** from further assessment if it is not a plan (or a project) and **eliminated** from the HRA process is it is obvious that it could not have any conceivable adverse effect on any European site.

1.17 In Stage 1, a **'likely significant effect'** following Waddenzee[5], is a '*possible significant effect; one whose occurrence cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information'*. It is a low threshold and simply means that there is a risk or doubt regarding such an effect. The screening stage is a preliminary examination, sometimes described as a coarse filter, or following Sweetman[6], as '*a trigger for the obligation to carry out an appropriate assessment'*. There should however be credible evidence to show that there is a real rather than a hypothetical risk of effects that could undermine a site's conservation objectives. This was amplified in the Bagmoor Wind[7] case where '*if the absence of risk… can only be demonstrated after a detailed investigation, or expert opinion,* [then] *the authority must move from preliminary examination to appropriate assessment'.*

1.18 Following the People Over Wind judgement[8], when making screening decisions for the purposes of deciding whether an appropriate assessment is required, competent authorities cannot take into account any measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects upon a European site.

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[4] See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site
[5] Waddenzee: European Courts C-127/02 Waddenzee 7th September 2004, reference for a preliminary ruling from the Raad van State.
[6] Sweetman: European Court C – 258/11 Sweetman 11th April 2013, reference for a preliminary ruling from the Supreme Court of Ireland
[7] Bagmoor Wind: UK courts Bagmoor Wind v The Scottish Ministers, Court of Session [2012] CSIH 93
[8] *People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (323-17) [2018] PTSR 1668

1.19 Stage 2 involves the **appropriate assessment and integrity test**. Here a plan can only be adopted if the competent authority can demonstrate that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site. This is precautionary approach and means it is necessary to show the absence of harm.

1.20 Following Champion[9] **'appropriate'** is not a technical term but simply indicates that the assessment needs to be appropriate to the task in hand.

1.21 The **integrity** of a European site has been described 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 the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified[10]. An alternative definition, after Sweetman[11], is 'the lasting preservation of the constitutive characteristics of the site'.

1.22 In terms of the burden of proof, the HRA of development plans was first made a requirement in the UK following a ruling by the European Court of Justice in EC v UK[12]. However, the judgement[13] recognised that any assessment had to reflect the actual stage in the strategic planning process and the level of evidence that might or might not be available. This was given expression in the High Court (Feeney)[14] which stated: "*Each … assessment … cannot do more than the level of detail of the strategy at that stage permits*".

1.23 The need to consider possible **in-combination** effects arises at stage 1 – the screening and also at stage 2 – the appropriate assessment and integrity test. The effects of the plan in-combination with other plans or projects are the cumulative effects which will or might arise from the addition of the effects of other relevant plans or projects alongside the plan under consideration. If during the stage 1 screening it is found the subject plan would have no likely effect alone but might have such an effect in-combination, then the appropriate assessment at stage 2 will proceed to consider cumulative effects. Where a plan is screened as having a likely

[9] *R (on the application of Champion v North Norfolk District Council)* [2015] 1 WLR 3170 at para 41
[10] Para 20 of the ODPM Circ. 06/2005
[11] *Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála* (C–258-11) [2014] PTSR 1092 at paragraph 39
[12] Commission v UK (C-6/04) [2005] ECR 1-9017
[13] Commission of the European Communities v UK Opinion of Advocate General Kokott
[14] *Feeney v Oxford City Council* [2011] EWHC 2699 Admin at paragraph 92

significant effect alone, the appropriate assessment should initially concentrate on its effects alone.

Role of the competent authority

1.24 Although this HRA has been prepared to help the National Park Authority discharge its duties under the Habitats Regulations, the National Park Authority is the competent authority, and it must decide whether to accept this report or otherwise. Further, it should be noted that this HRA has been prepared for the purposes of preparing and examining the Plan. Individual allocations will need to be reviewed when they become the subject of an individual planning application, to ensure that if further assessment under the Habitats Regulations is necessary, it is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of appropriate assessment.

Planning Reform

1.25 The UK government has set ambitious targets for house building over the current parliament. The Planning and Infrastructure Act[15], enacted in December 2025, is proposed to speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes, with a focus on strategic mitigation to enable development. The Act establishes Natural England (as the delivery body) responsible for the production and administration of Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs), determining standardised levels of environmental mitigation needed for certain types and scales of development in a specific area. At the time of writing, EDPs will initially focus on nutrient related issues such as water and air quality but there is scope in the future for these to cover a wider range of issues such as recreation, individual species and other sensitive features.

1.26 Until EDPs are adopted in a given area it is important that New Forest National Park Authority (as the competent authority) ensures necessary assessment work is undertaken and that, where required, strategic mitigation schemes are in place to address the impacts of development. The Plan will need to be assessed in light of the legislation and legal requirements in place at the time, and as such it is necessary to ensure all impacts are identified in the early stages of the Plan and necessary mitigation identified and secured.

[15] The Planning and Infrastructure Act received Royal Assent on 18th December 2025, see https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3946 for background and details.

2. European sites in and around the New Forest

2.1 We have used a 20km boundary from the National Park boundary as an initial area of search (20km providing a reasonable area within which policies could reasonably be considered to generate measurable effects). Air quality impacts at plan level are typically considered to relate to a 10km distance (Chapman and Kite, 2021) while generic analysis of Footprint Ecology visitor data to countryside sites in the UK (Weitowitz *et al.*, 2019) indicates that the majority of visitors originate within a 12.6km radius[16]. The choice of 20km is therefore precautionary.

2.2 Sites that fall within this initial area of search are listed in Table 1 and shown in Map 1 (SACs), Map 2 (SPAs) and Map 3 (Ramsar). There are 33 European sites in total that are within the 20km radius, of which 11 sites are within or abut the National Park area. All 33 sites are also listed in Appendix 1, which gives the relevant qualifying features and other site background, including links to the conservation objectives for each site.

Table 1: European sites within 20km of the New Forest National Park boundary. Those where no distance is given lie within or partly within the boundary. 20km reflects the distance we normally use to identify sites that might be relevant for the screening, recognising that many of these will then be eliminated from further consideration.

European site	Distance to NFNPA boundary (km)
SACs	
Briddlesford Copses	10.7
Dorset Heaths	0.8
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes	17.4
Emer Bog	7.3
Great Yews	6.1
Isle of Wight Downs	4.1
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs	18.6
Mottisfont Bats	5.8
Prescombe Down	18.0
River Avon	-
River Itchen	6.6
Salisbury Plain	11.6

[16] Note this is a generic figure from an analysis of visitor survey data from across the UK. Specific data are available for some European sites and these referenced at the relevant point in the HRA.

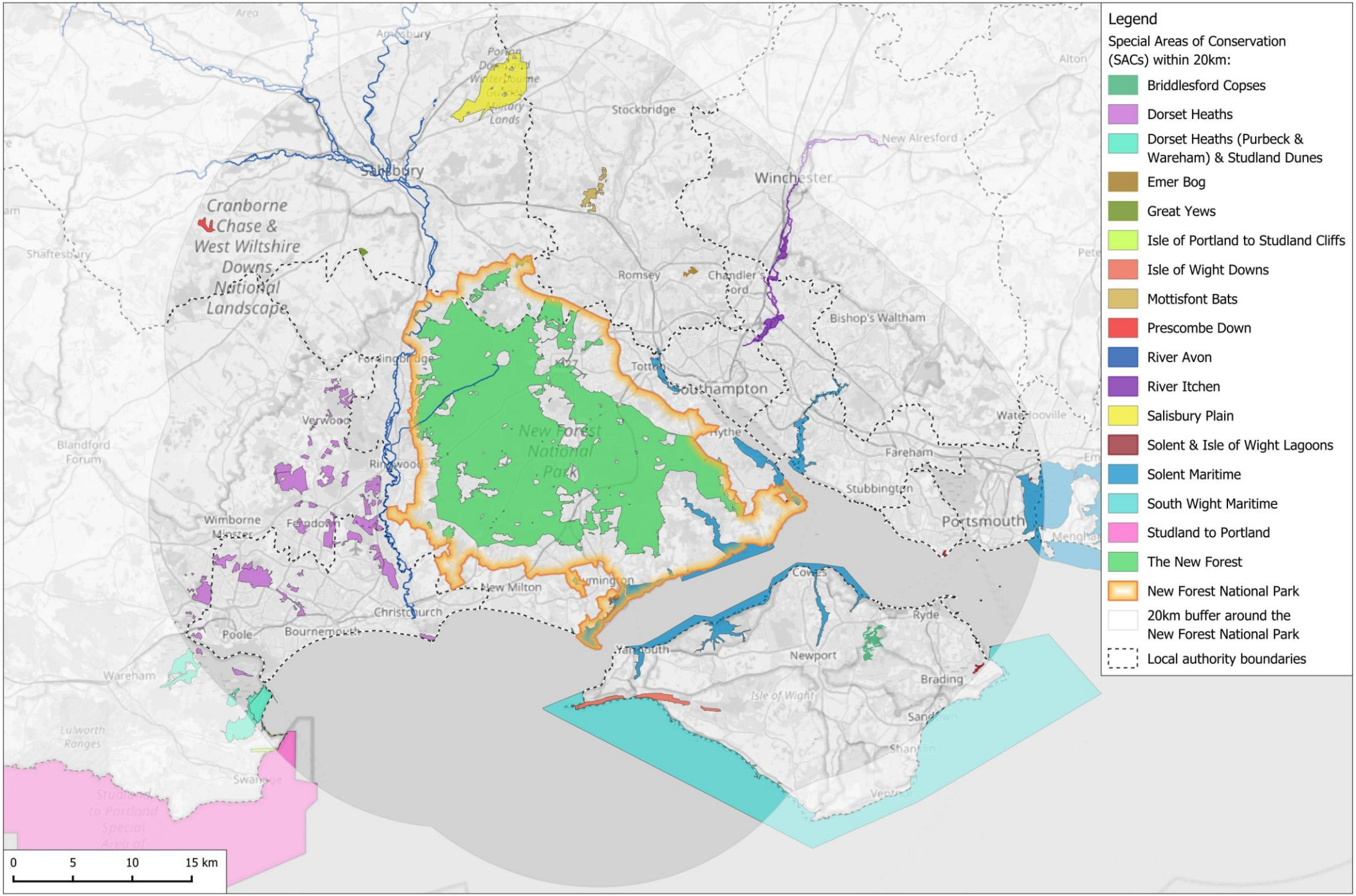
European site	Distance to NFNPA boundary (km)
Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons	-
Solent Maritime	-
South Wight Maritime	3.8
Studland to Portland	17.8
The New Forest SAC	-
SPAs	
Avon Valley	-
Chichester & Langstone Harbours	18.2
Dorset Heathlands	0.8
Poole Harbour	14.8
Porton Down	12.4
Portsmouth Harbour	8.9
Solent & Southampton Water	-
Solent & Dorset Coast	-
The New Forest SPA	-
Ramsar	
Avon Valley	-
Chichester & Langstone Harbours	18.2
Dorset Heathlands	0.8
Poole Harbour	15.4
Portsmouth Harbour	8.9
Solent & Southampton Water	-
The New Forest Ramsar	-

Overlapping site boundaries

2.3 The Dorset Heaths comprise a series of different heathland patches, from just to the east of Dorchester to the Hampshire boundary. These cover some 40 different SSSIs and multiple European sites. Where relevant and for simplicity, we use 'Dorset Heaths SAC/SPA/Ramsar' as an umbrella term for the following European sites: Dorset Heaths SAC; Dorset Heathlands SPA; and Dorset Heathlands Ramsar, noting that the boundaries of these sites are not necessarily all contiguous.

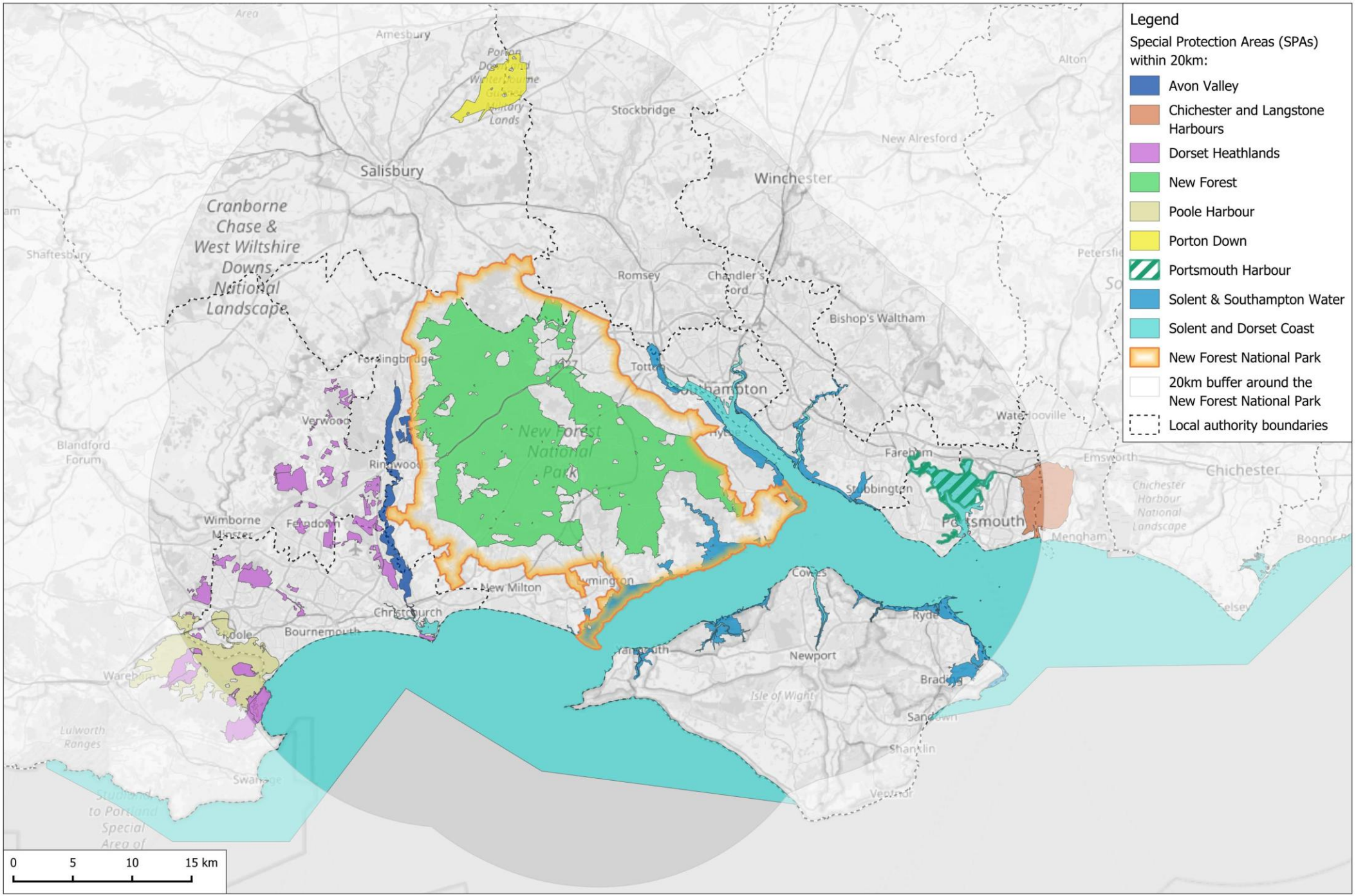
2.4 Similarly, we refer to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar when referring to the New Forest sites combined. It should be noted that the SAC, SPA and Ramsar site boundaries are not the same, but largely cover the same area.

Map 1: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 20km of the New Forest National Park



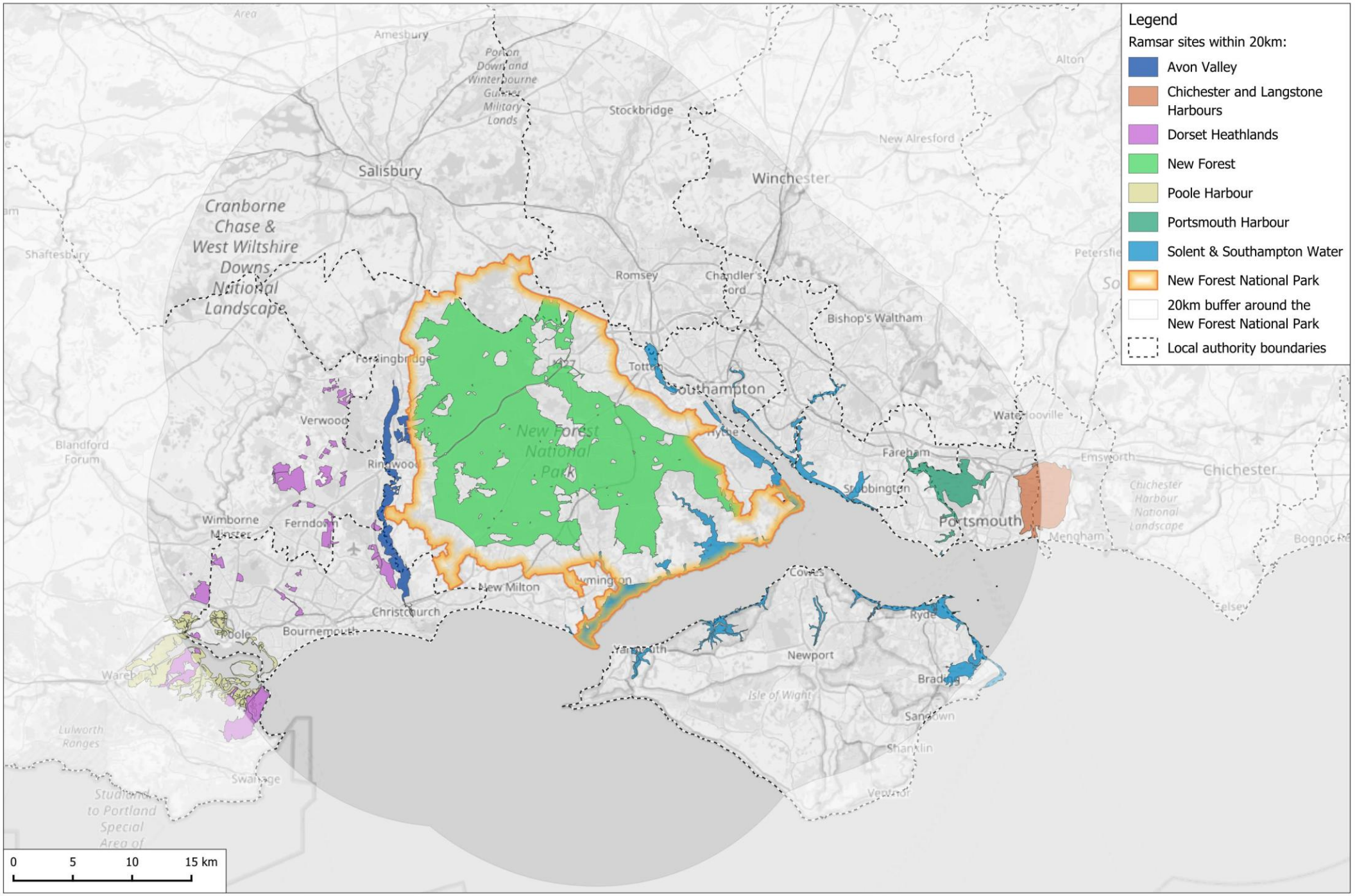
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Map 2: Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within 20km of the New Forest National Park



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Map 3: Ramsar sites within 20km of the New Forest National Park



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Potential impact pathways

2.6 Drawing on the background information relating to European sites, potential impact pathways, i.e. ways in which elements of the Plan might conceivably impact on the relevant European sites and trigger likely significant effects, could include:

- **Habitat loss and land-take, including coastal squeeze**, i.e. the direct loss of land within European sites with coastal squeeze an issue for coastal sites with habitats such as saltmarsh. Relevant for European sites within National Park where development could result in loss of habitat;
- **General urban effects**, covering impacts associated with development in very close proximity to European sites, through for example light pollution, noise, domestic cats, spread of garden waste and invasive species etc. This pathway would only be relevant where European sites are within the National Park boundary. Also only relates to sites with existing boundaries with extensive urban fringe or qualfying features potentially vulnerable to cat predation (e.g. heathland birds, herptiles);
- **Mobile species and impacts to functionally-linked land**, i.e. impacts to supporting habitat (loss of land or change of use) or risks for species moving outside European site boundaries (e.g. where lighting or development hinders movement). Relevant species are potentially Marsh Fritillary, bats, Nightjar, Great-crested Newt, migratory fish, waterbirds);
- **Recreation**, covering impacts relating to public access to sensitive areas, including disturbance, increased fire risk and contamination from dogs. Relevant where sites are accessible to the public and the accessible areas include habitats vulnerable to recreation/fire, such as heathland, chalk grassland, reedbeds, vegetated shingle, sand dunes or particular species (ground-nesting birds, colonial waterbirds, Dartford Warbler, wintering waterbirds etc.);
- **Water quality**, covering the impacts from increased nutrients and pollution and relevant for European sites with water-dependent qualifying features and a catchment within the National Park;
- **Water quantity**, covering impacts relating to abstraction of water and a reduction in the amount of water available, relevant for European sites with water-dependent qualifying features;
- **Air quality**, covering the impacts of air pollution including those associated with increased traffic. Relevant to European sites with roads within 200m and qualifying features potentially vulnerable to changes in air quality. When considering air quality impacts, a process contribution of 1% of the relevant critical load or level,

either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is usually used to identify an effect as potentially significant.

2.7 These are simplified, umbrella terms to facilitate screening and simplify a range of complex issues. The European sites have different qualifying features and as such impacts are relevant for different sites. The local geography and distance from the National Park boundary to the European sites will also determine which sites are vulnerable in which ways.

European sites and impact pathways

2.8 Potential impact pathways are summarised by European site in Table 2. This table provides the context for the screening for likely significant effects and shows which sites could be relevant and the pathways that need to be the focus when screening the Plan.

2.9 It can be seen that all impact pathways are potentially relevant for at least one European site and that the following European sites are the only ones for which there could be any credible impact pathway (and will therefore form the focus for the screening):

- Dorset Heaths SAC/SPA/Ramsar
- Mottisfont Bats SAC
- River Avon SAC
- River Itchen SAC
- Solent Maritime SAC
- The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar
- Avon Valley SPA/Ramsar
- Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar
- Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar
- Solent & Dorset Coast SPA

2.10 The table also helps eliminate European sites that do not need further consideration as – due to their location, interest feature or other characteristics there is no credible way they could be impacted by the Plan. The pale grey shading in the table indicates these sites are there are 16 European sites that need no further consideration within the HRA.

Table 2: Summary of potential impact pathways identified for each European site within 20km of the New Forest NPA boundary. Grey shading indicates sites where plan could pose no credible risk.

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
SACs									
Briddlesford Copses	10.62								Site on Isle of Wight, separated by Solent, therefore no impact pathways relevant.
Dorset Heaths	0.72				✓			✓	Species such as southern damselfly can be mobile however relatively small dispersal and Dorset sites are well away from the New Forest. Water issues not relevant as no hydrological links.
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes	17.22								Distance from New Forest precludes all risks. No connectivity in terms of water.
Emer Bog	7.30								No credible risks from recreation given the recreation opportunities available within the National Park itself. Air quality not relevant as only the very eastern corner of the site is within 200m of a minor road, no credible risk of development in the New Forest leading to increased traffic.
Great Yews	5.86								Recreation not a concern as site is privately owned and there is no public access inside the wood. Wood off beaten track and no parking nearby. No road within 200m so no air quality risks.

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs	18.37								
Isle of Wight Downs	4.06								Site on Isle of Wight, separated by Solent, therefore no impact pathways relevant.
Mottisfont Bats	5.86			✓				✓	Site qualifies for Barbastelle which also occurs in the New Forest and there is potential for movement between sites. Air quality included on a precautionary basis as B3084 bisects the SAC, however the road is relatively minor and traffic along it unlikely to be affected by development in the New Forest.
Prescombe Down	17.99								Marsh Fritillary relevant as a mobile species, however distance precludes risk; grassland habitat potentially vulnerable to trampling damage and contamination (recreation) but distance and steep slopes mean no credible risk.
River Avon	0.00		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Mobile species interest are fish; recreation a concern in relation to wild swimming, kayaks etc; existing requirement for nutrient neutrality with new development. Urban effects possible as much of river is outside the National Park boundary, however Woodgreen and Godshill area adjacent to river.
River Itchen	6.52						✓	✓	Hard to access in terms of recreation (kayaks etc.) and given distance recreation risks ruled out. No hydrological connectivity so no credible risks in relation to water quality, potentially a risk

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
									from abstraction and therefore water quantity. Air quality a potential pathway as site within 200m of numerous main roads including the M3.
Salisbury Plain	11.56								Marsh fritillary mobile species, distance precludes risk. Outside 6.4km ZoI for the Salisbury Plain in terms of recreation.
Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons	0.00								Urban effects not relevant given Lymington is outside the National Park area. Pennington and Normandy Marsh have public access along sea wall, but no potential for recreation impacts to lagoons as these are reserves where access controlled. Air quality not a credible pathway as Normandy Lane to south of Lymington is the only road within 200m and this is beyond 200m from the lagoons. The road is very minor and traffic here would not be affected by development within the National Park. Water quality not relevant as lagoons brackish and will have limited freshwater catchment (and lie outside National Park boundary).
Solent Maritime	0.00	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	SAC qualifies for a range of coastal habitats including saltmarsh and lagoons and includes areas within National Park. Multiple potential pathways therefore relevant.

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
South Wight Maritime	3.75								Marine SAC along the south side of the Isle of Wight and separated from the National Park boundary by the Solent. Distance and location preclude any risk.
Studland to Portland	17.72								Marine SAC that qualifies for reefs. Distance and location precludes risk.
The New Forest	0.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Large SAC qualifying for wide range of features and covering most of Plan area. Mobile species (Great-crested Newt, Southern damselfly and stag beetle) potentially relevant as mobile species but contiguous nature of the SAC and scale means risks potentially low.
SPAs									
Avon Valley	0.00				✓	✓	✓		Urban effects not relevant as Gadwall and Bewicks Swan are the only qualifying features and e.g. cat predation highly unlikely. No credible risks in relation to mobile species as neither species likely to be hindered in movement as a result of development in the National Park. Air quality not relevant to either qualifying feature.
Chichester and Langstone Harbours	17.75								Distance precludes risk.

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
Dorset Heathlands	0.72			✓	✓			✓	Nightjar, Hen harrier, Merlin movement between New Forest and Dorset Heaths populations (mobile species). Air quality a recognised concern for the Dorset Heaths and could have implications for bird interest.
New Forest	0.00	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	Large SPA extending over most of National Park area and multiple pathways potentially relevant for multiple qualifying features.
Poole Harbour	14.76								Distance and geography preclude risk. None of the National Park is within the catchment for Poole Harbour and the National Park is well outside recreation would be a concern. There could be some movements of waterbirds between the Solent and the Harbour but no conceivable risks from development within the National Park.
Porton Down	11.56								Stone Curlew potentially sensitive to buildings within 1500m, distance precludes risks from NPA LP.
Portsmouth Harbour	8.89							✓	Distance precludes risk for habitat loss/land-take and recreation. Air quality risks unlikely given travel distances.
Salisbury Plain	11.56								Distance precludes risk. Outside 6.4km ZoI for the Salisbury Plain in terms of recreation.

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
Solent & Southampton Water	0.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	SPA extends along coastline to south and east. Urban effects and coastal squeeze possibly relevant. Recreation a clear risk (and mitigation strategy established)
Solent and Dorset Coast	0.00				✓				SPA covers open water areas used by foraging terns. Possibly a risk in relation to recreation (boats, kayaks and water-based activity).
Ramsar sites									
Avon Valley	0.00		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Ramsar floodplain habitats and wetland invertebrates and plants and abuts National Park boundary so a range of impact pathways potentially relevant.
Chichester and Langstone Harbours	17.75								Distance precludes risk.
Dorset Heathlands	0.82				✓			✓	Water issues not relevant as no hydrological links.
New Forest	0.00		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Large site listed for wide range of features and covering most of Plan area. Multiple pathways relevant.
Poole Harbour	14.76								Distance precludes risk. There could be some movements of waterbirds between the Solent and the Harbour but no conceivable risks from development within the National Park.

European sites	Dist to NFNPA boundary (km)	Habitat loss and Land-take, including Coastal squeeze	General urban effects	Mobile species and Functionally linked land	Recreation	Water quality	Water quantity	Air quality	Commentry/reasoning
Portsmouth Harbour	8.89							✓	Distance precludes risk for habitat loss/land-take and recreation. Air quality risks unlikely given travel distances.
Solent & Southampton Water	0.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Site extends along coastline to south and east. Urban effects and coastal squeeze possibly relevant. Recreation a clear risk (and mitigation strategy established).

3. Screening and the potential for Likely Significant Effects

3.1 The screening is stage one of the four-stage process and is the point at which the plan is checked for likely significant effects. With a Local Plan the screening is usually a policy-by-policy check to ensure all elements of the Plan are considered in the context of the Habitat Regulations. Any areas of concern will then be examined in more detail at the appropriate assessment stage (stage two) of the Habitat Regulations process. In the previous section we have identified the relevant European sites and the potential impact pathways that be relevant to those sites – this facilitates the screening by setting out the different things that need to be checked.

3.2 The screening has been undertaken based on a draft of the Plan shared by the NFNPA in May 2026. Map 4 shows the potential development that would come forward as a result of the Plan. Sites that are shown in dark brown are ones carried forward from the 2019 local plan. The distance from all allocations to all European sites is provided in Appendix 3. As Map 4 illustrates, many of the allocations are towards the eastern side of the National Park.

3.3 Some of the sites carried forward have been granted full planning permissions and these are identified in the screening table (Appendix 2). These have already been subject to project level assessment are not re-assessed individually; however the cumulative effects of these sites are included in the overarching policies setting out the quantum and distribution of growth.

3.4 In undertaking the screening we have drawn upon the following geographic criteria, based on existing evidence or mitigation strategies:

- Likely significant effects from urban effects for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar triggered if proposal relates to residential development within 400m of any of the SAC/SPA/Ramsar boundary (see Fearnley *et al.*, 2012 for background and context);
- Likely significant effects from recreation for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar triggered if proposal relates to residential or tourist development anywhere within the National Park boundary (as the entire National Park is within the 13.8km zone of influence);
- Likely significant effects for recreation for the Dorset Heaths SAC/SPA/Ramsar triggered if proposal relates to residential or

tourist overnight development within a 5km buffer from the SAC/SPA/Ramsar boundary (see Map 5)[17];

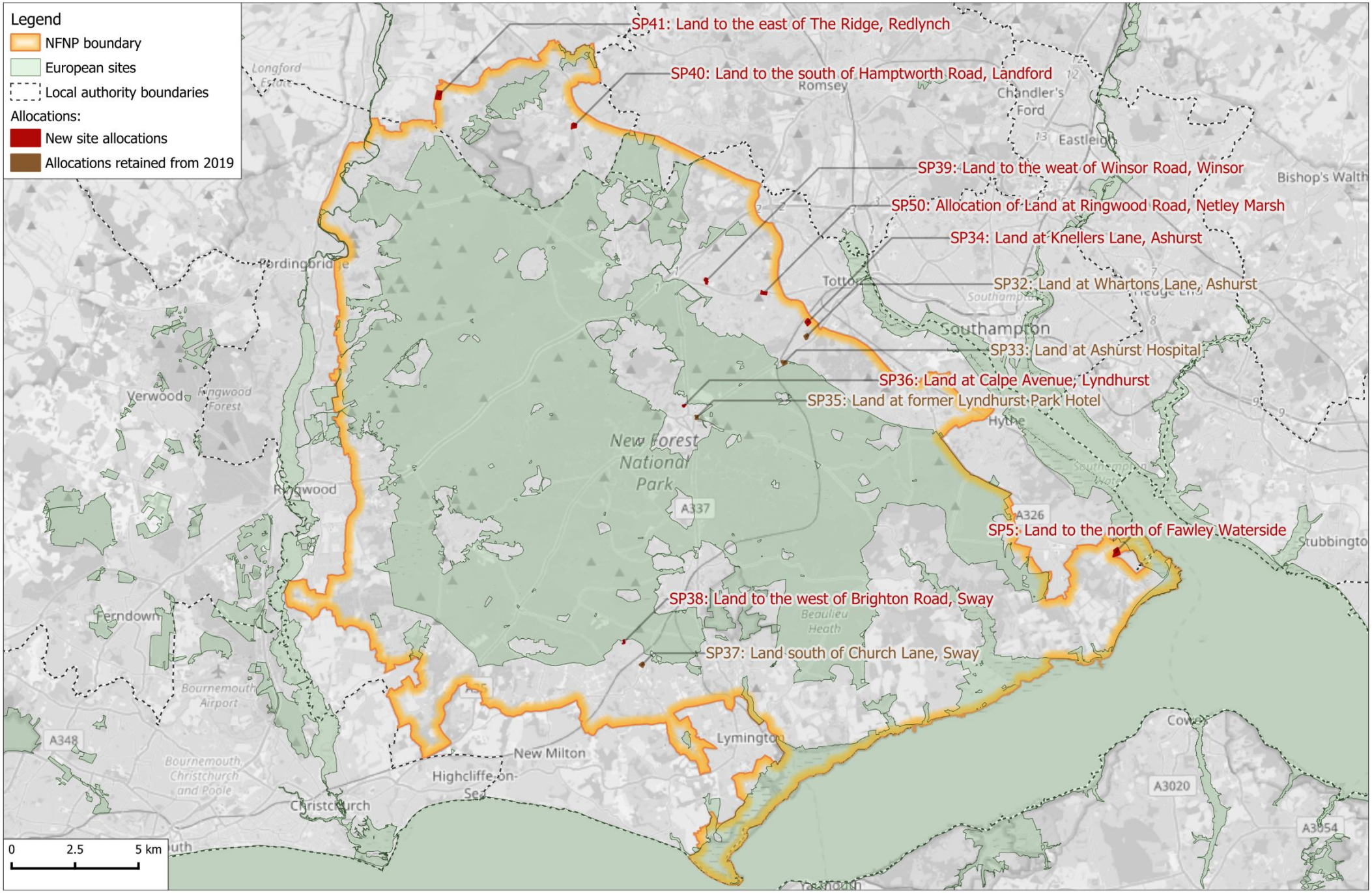
- Likely significant effects for recreation and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC triggered if proposal relates to residential or tourist overnight development within a 5.6km buffer from the SPA/Ramsar boundary (see Map 5)[18];
- Likely significant effects for water quality for the Solent European sites or the River Avon SAC triggered if proposal relates to overnight accommodation within the relevant catchment (see Map 6)[19];
- Likely significant effects for air quality only possible where roads are within 10km and where there are roads within 200m of the European site (see Map 7, which for context shows all roads within 200m of a European site within 10km of the National Park boundary).

[17] See Dorset Heaths planning framework for background and context: https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-heathlands-planning-framework

[18] See Bird Aware Solent strategy for background to zone: https://birdaware.org/solent/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/03/Bird-Aware-Solent-Revised-Strategy-September-2024.pdf we have used the 5.6km buffer to also identify likely significant effects in relation to the Solent Maritime SAC.

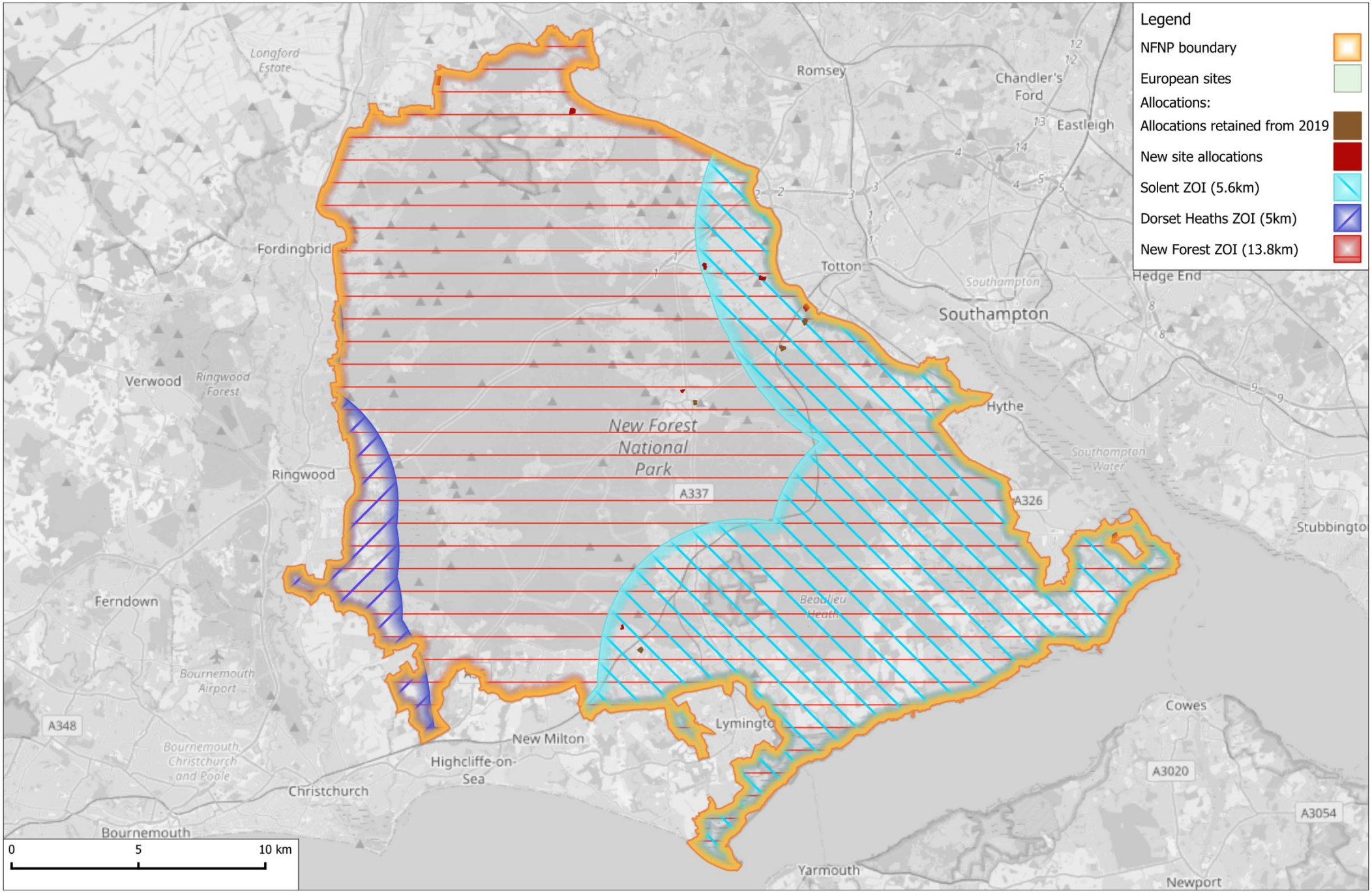
[19] For further information on the catchment maps see the Natural England website: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4982167238344704 and https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6522945605468160

Map 4: Allocations



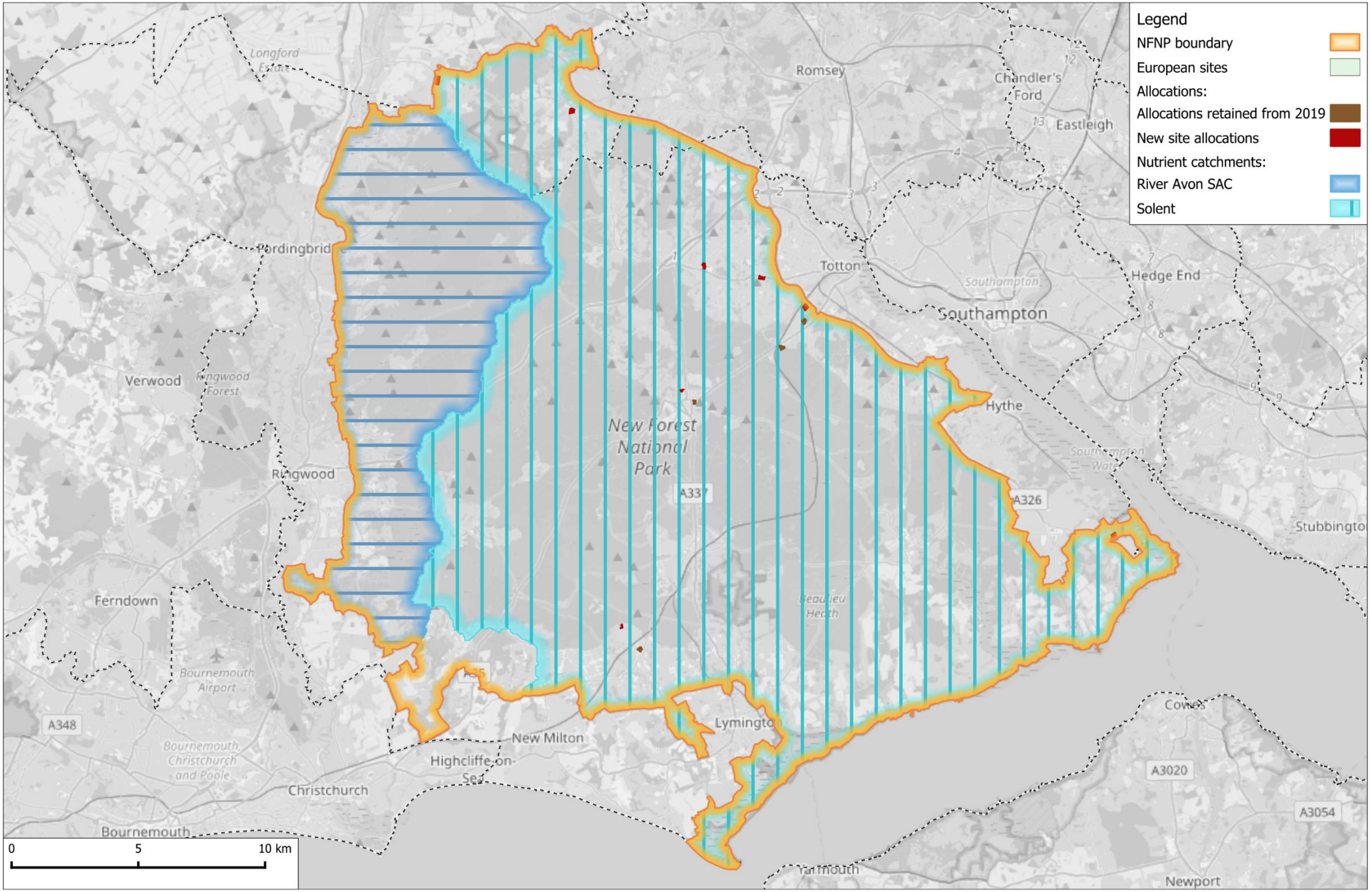
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Map 5: Recreation zones of impact (ZOIs)



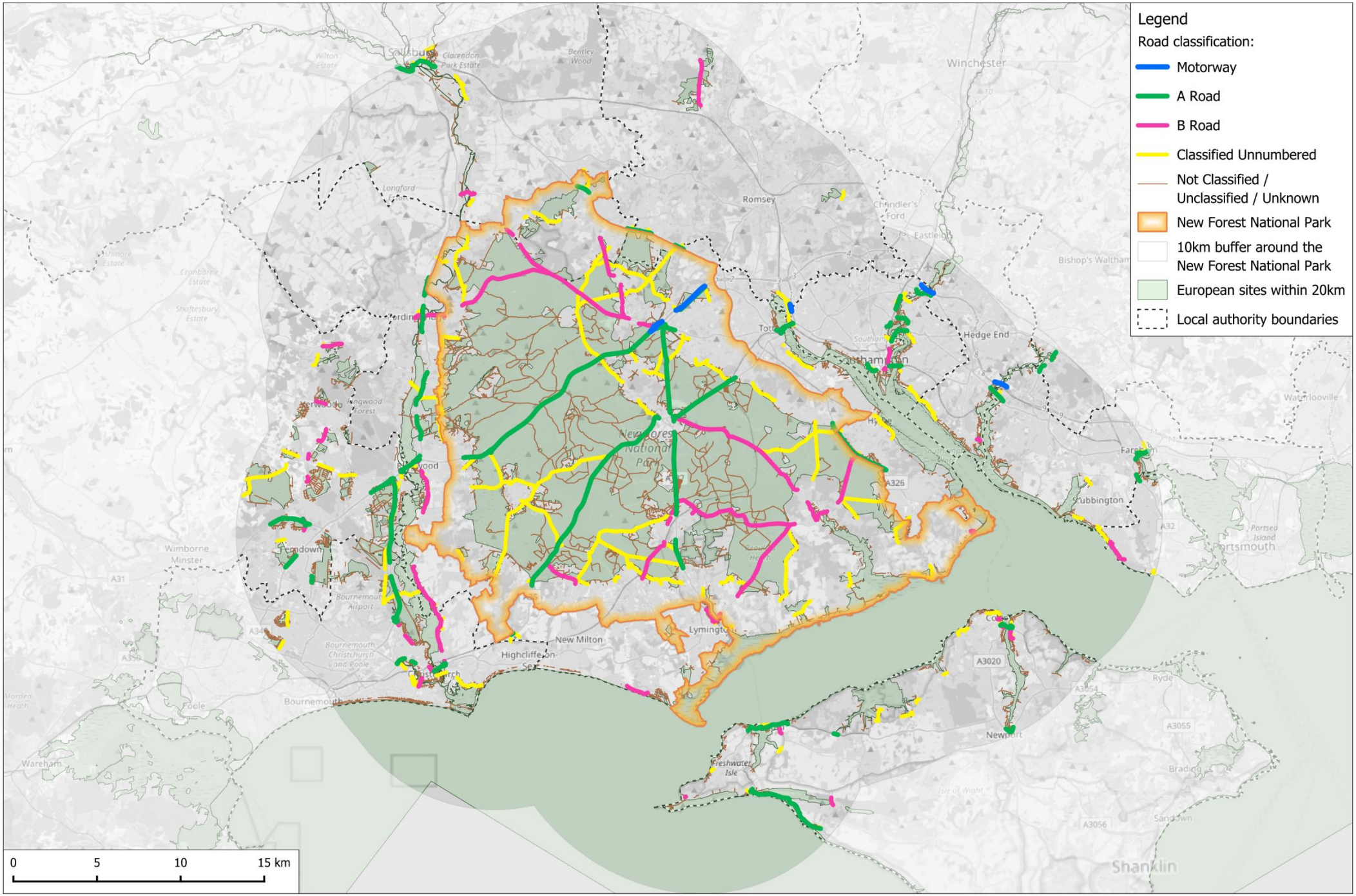
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Map 6: Catchments for nutrient neutrality



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Map 7: Roads within 10km of the New Forest National Park and within 200m of a European site



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Screening findings

3.5 The screening identifies which individual policies and the relevant European sites which should be taken forward to appropriate assessment.

3.6 Likely significant effects was identified for one or more European sites for the following policies, alone or in-combination:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy;**
- **SP5: Land to the north of Fawley Waterside;**
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park;**
- **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital;**
- **SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst;**
- **SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst;**
- **SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway;**
- **SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor;**
- **SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford;**
- **SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch;**
- **SP50: Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use**.

3.7 In addition, **Policy SP11: Nature conservation sites of international importance** was also screened in as it is a bespoke policy intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site and sets out mitigation measures that need to be considered at appropriate assessment.

3.8 Findings for each impact pathway are summarised below.

Habitat loss and land-take, including coastal squeeze

3.9 The Plan contains no policies or allocations that would result in land take from any European site and therefore direct habitat loss can be ruled out as an impact pathway. New development could pose risks in terms of a need to retain and maintain existing sea defences that might otherwise be planned for decline and breaching over time and can also strongly support the building of new defences. Likely significant effects can be ruled out for coastal squeeze as the only allocation that could pose such a risk is **Policy SP5: Land to the north of Fawley Waterside**. Checks of the relevant Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)[20] indicate the intention to Hold the Line (HTL) and the area is therefore not currently intended as an area where the

[20] See https://www.northsolentsmp.co.uk/; relevant section in the SMP is SC14 which runs from Redbridge to Calshot Spit

sea defences might be allowed to breach. Any loss of intertidal habitat (such as saltmarsh) within the Solent Maritime SAC or the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar is therefore addressed through the SMP (which is subject to its own HRA). This HRA is therefore in a sense 'shielded' by the SMP process and the HTL intention. The Local Plan includes no requirement build or maintain physical defences.

General urban effects

3.10 Policies **SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** have both been screened in alone for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar with risks such as cat predation, invasive species etc. resulting from development in close proximity.

3.11 Allocations that have not already been granted planning permission were also screened in alone for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, where they are within 400m. Relevant allocations were **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital; SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst** and **SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway**.

3.12 In addition, **Policy SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside** was screened in alone for the Solent Maritime SAC and Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar with risks from invasive species, noise etc. resulting from development in close proximity.

3.13 No likely significant effects were identified with respect to urban effects and the River Avon SAC as all allocations and Defined Villages are well away from the river (well beyond 400m).

Mobile species and functionally linked land

3.14 Policies **SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** were both screened in alone for the Mottisfont Bats SAC as new development (particularly to the north of the National Park at Landford and Redlynch) may pose risks to flight lines and foraging areas for Barbastelle associated with the Mottisfont Bats SAC. In addition, **SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford** screened in alone for the Mottisfont Bats SAC, with possible risks around lighting, disruption to flight lines as a result of development and loss of woodland habitat.

3.15 No risks for the waterbirds associated with the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar have been identified as allocations and Defined Villages are well away from any areas of possible foraging habitat including locations

within the Solent and Brent Goose mitigation strategy (Liley and Sharp, 2010; Whitfield and Marceau, 2024), with the exception of SP5, and checks of aerial imagery indicate the allocation does not contain suitable habitat for wintering waterbirds. No likely significant effects were identified for the River Avon SAC as the Plan contains no development or proposals that might affect the river/water course or movement of species (e.g. weirs).

Recreation

3.16 The whole of the National Park is within the 13.8km zone of influence for recreation impacts for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and therefore all net new dwellings and any forms of overnight accommodation are screened in. **Policies SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** were both screened in alone as these policies set the overall quantum of growth. All new allocations and those carried forward (but yet to be granted planning permission) were also screened in, in-combination: **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital; SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst; SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst; SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway; SP39 Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor; SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford; SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch** and **SP50: Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use.**

3.17 **Policies SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** were both screened in alone for the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC with risks from increased recreation use associated with new housing. New allocations and those carried forward (but yet to be granted planning permission) were also screened in, for in-combination effects, if within the 5.6km zone of influence: **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital; SP34: Land at Knellers Lane; SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway** and **SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor.**

3.18 **Policy SP11: Nature conservation sites of international importance** was also screened in, with respect to both the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar as it is a bespoke policy intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site and sets out mitigation measures that need to be considered at appropriate assessment.

3.19 No likely significant effects were identified with respect to recreation and the River Avon SAC or Avon Valley SPA/Ramsar as all allocations and Defined

Villages are well away from the river and any access points, or the gravel pits associated with the SPA/Ramsar. No allocations or Defined Villages are within the 5km zone of influence for the Dorset Heaths SAC/SPA/Ramsar and therefore no likely significant effects were recognised for the Dorset Heaths.

Water quality

3.20 Policies **SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** were both screened in alone for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the River Avon SAC, with risks from wastewater discharge and nutrient neutrality. It should be noted that none of the defined villages or proposed housing site allocations are within the catchment of the River Avon SAC, and as such risks for the latter SAC are particularly low. Likely significant effects were also identified in-combination for all allocations (excluding those already granted planning permission) and the Solent Maritime SAC, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar: **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital; SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst; SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst; SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway; SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Bartley; SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford** and **SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch**.

3.21 In addition: **SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside** was screened in alone for water quality and Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar due to risks associated with run-off (including during construction).

3.22 **SP3: Spatial Strategy, SP29: New residential development in the National Park** and the following allocations (either new or those not yet granted planning permission) were screened in alone in relation to water quality and the New Forest SAC and the New Forest Ramsar due to risks from run-off: **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital; SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway**.

Water quantity

3.23 Policies **SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** were screened in for in-combination effects in relation to the New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC and River Avon SAC in relation to water quantity. Given the scale and distribution of growth these are the only European sites with water dependent features where risks from water quantity are relevant. All new allocations and those yet to be

granted planning permission are also screened in, in-combination, with respect to water quantity and the same European sites.

Air quality

3.24 Air quality modelling work to generate process contribution data for the allocations within the Plan, in-combination with growth in surrounding areas (including BCP and New Forest District) is a significant undertaking and was not available to inform this HRA. Policies **SP3: Spatial Strategy** and **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** were therefore both screened in, in-combination for air quality and the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. There are numerous roads that cross the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and any new residential development within the Plan is likely to affect traffic on these roads. All new allocations and those yet to be granted planning permission were also screened in, in-combination, with respect to air quality and the same European sites.

3.25 Likely significant effects were ruled out for all other European sites with respect to air quality, due to the levels of growth proposed and geography of the road network and European sites in relation to the distribution of growth proposed in the Plan.

3.26 Given that all the allocations are to the east and south of the National Park and the Defined Villages are in the north and north-east of the National Park, there are no likely significant effects for the Dorset Heaths SAC/SPA/Ramsar in relation to air quality. Routes such as the A31 Ringwood Road near Avon Heath, which has heathland adjacent to it, are too far outside the authority for there to be risks for the Dorset Heaths. Similarly, the easterly focus for the allocations, limited lengths of road within 200m (most roads within this distance cross it rather than run parallel) means risks can be ruled out for the River Avon SAC. The Mottisfont Bat SAC is bisected by a minor road but given layout of the road network and the SAC being nearly 6km from the New Forest boundary, there is no risk from the quantum of growth proposed. No likely significant effects are identified for the River Itchen SAC and air quality from roads either, given the site's distance from the National Park and scale of growth proposed. For the Solent sites (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar) the tidal cycle and constant flushing will reduce the impacts of air quality and the only roads within 200m on the west side of Southampton Water are lanes set back from the saltmarsh by fields, given the growth proposed in the Plan there are no likely significant effects.

4. Appropriate assessment: General urban effects

Policies identified in the screening

4.1 Likely significant effects were identified for the following policies from the screening:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy** (likely significant effects alone for New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside** (likely significant effects alone for the Solent Maritime SAC and Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** (likely significant effects alone for New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital** (likely significant effects alone for New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst** (likely significant effects alone for New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway** (likely significant effects alone for New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);

Overview of impact

4.2 General urban effects relate to sites where development has been situated close to the boundary of European sites. Potential impacts relate to light and noise pollution, cat predation, fly tipping and overspill of garden waste, spread of invasive species and vandalism. Informal access points can be created where gardens directly touch a European site boundary. As such there are some overlaps with urban effects and recreation.

4.3 Mitigation approaches such as access management and wardening are likely to be less relevant to development in close proximity to European sites as it is harder to intercept visitors who enter from multiple informal access points (e.g. back gardens) and are likely to use the heath at a wide range of times of day (and even during the night). Such use will be by people who have the greenspace literally on their doorstep – their de facto space to use and potentially seen as an extension to their garden. That will differ from the use by people who travel to the site and make an effort to visit, potentially driving and arriving at a main car-park.

The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar

4.4 With respect to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the principal concerns relating to urban effects are:

- Cat predation;
- Increased fire risk (e.g. from bonfires, bbqs etc.);
- Spread of invasive plants and other species/pests etc from gardens;
- Noise pollution (resulting in disturbance);
- Light pollution.

4.5 There are also potential issues around new residents trying to influence the area around the gardens or access, for example in terms of tidying (e.g. deadwood) or interactions with grazing animals (e.g. around gardens).

4.6 These impacts all relate to development in very close proximity. Some of the issues with the more urban heaths in Dorset and Hampshire – such as arson, people building bike jumps, motorbikes etc – are perhaps more associated with the urban environment and are less of a concern in the New Forest.

4.7 We have used 400m as a guide to determine where there are risks of urban effects and screen-in allocations. The choice of 400m is a pragmatic one, reflecting the exclusion zone (i.e. assumption against growth established in policy or strategic mitigation strategy) used around other heathland sites such as the Dorset Heaths and the Thames Basin Heaths. It should also be noted that in some areas such as around Burnham Beeches SAC and around the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC at Ashridge, a strict 500m zone is applied, while at some sites such as Epping Forest SAC, development within 400m of the SAC is assessed on a case-by-case basis (see Beveridge *et al.*, 2024 for summary).

4.8 Risks decrease with distance (i.e. the closer to the European site, the greater the risk), and there is no clear cut-off point at which risks no longer occur. For example there are many studies of the home ranges of cats (see Hall *et al.*, 2016 for meta-analysis and review) and these show varying results, reflecting great variability between individual cats and different locations. The study by Kays et. al (2020) indicates that most pet cats have very small ranges and stay within 100m of their home (noting that some in the same study were also recorded over 1km from their home). Some studies from the UK indicate 300-400m as an exclusory limit for cats (Thomas, Baker and Fellowes, 2014; Pirie, Thomas and Fellowes, 2022), and the study by Pirie et al. provides evidence that cats associated with houses on urban boundaries

(e.g. where heathland abuts housing) have much larger home ranges. As such 400m seems a sensible distance to use with respect to cats.

4.9 For other impacts, such as the prevalence of plants that have spread from adjacent gardens or the impacts of noise from houses and gardens on species of conservation concern, there is relatively little evidence for the specific distances at which risks occur and where any cut-off point might be.

4.10 A report in 2012 for the National Park Authority (Fearnley *et al.*, 2012) considered the risks from disturbance and urban effects in more detail. The report highlights the challenges of applying a 400m zone in the New Forest, given the complex shape of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and the fact that it comprises a very large extensive block of semi-natural habitat which surrounds some small settlements such as Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst. This is essentially the opposite of the situation in Dorset where there are small, fragmented heaths surrounded by housing. Development within the New Forest is also highly constrained due to the extent of designated sites and planning constraints within the National Park, and as such the scale of urban development that has occurred around some heathland areas (such as in Dorset and the Thames Basin) will not occur. This reduces the risks from cumulative effects. Nonetheless the risks from development in close proximity cannot be discounted and it is necessary to have a clearly defined and robust approach.

4.11 The Plan follows the approach established in the adopted plan, where any allocations where the boundary fell within 400m of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar were either designed so that any development was at least 400m from the European site boundary or restricted in use to C2 type use (care homes etc). Risks from urban effects are less with care homes as pet ownership is likely to be limited and residents are unlikely to stray beyond the grounds of the care home. Natural England, in their submission to the hearing for adopted plan in 2018[21] confirmed that certain types of C2 residential accommodation (e.g. purpose-built schemes for the frail elderly) could take place within 400m of the heaths.

4.12 The Plan allocates 3 sites that are within 400m. **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital** has been carried forward from the previous plan. Planning

[21] Dated 20 November 2018

permission was granted in 2026[22]. It is for Class C2 care home or extra care use, with built development confined to previously developed land and mitigation incorporated into site design to ensure a buffer to the designated site boundary. Natural England raised no objection to the application, subject to a series of mitigation measures being secured, including:

- The care home is to be restricted to C2 use, with a no pet policy and parking restrictions. These measures are to be secured for the life time of the development by an appropriate worded condition.
- Details of proposed mitigation measures to address any nutrient impacts, including appropriately funded management and monitoring, and details of how the measures will be secured for the lifetime of the development.
- Details of planting scheme and ongoing maintenance to strengthen the boundary buffer, and protect the New Forest designated sites from urban edge effects to be secured within an appropriate worded condition.

4.13 **SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue** is within Lyndhurst and there are existing houses and development between the allocation and the SAC/SPA/National Park. The main edge to the allocation faces open grassland away from the European site and the allocation is for C2 care home, nursing home or extra care housing.

4.14 **The SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road** allocation at Sway is also allocated for C2 or extra care housing and policy wording requires a landscaped buffer to the north of the site (which abuts the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar) and – once detailed design elements are available – information on how any remaining urban edge impacts will be addressed.

4.15 Policy SP3 and SP29 set out the overall housing numbers and how these will be delivered. 285 dwellings will be on allocated sites and a further 380 will be windfall. It is not possible to ascertain whether any of these windfall sites might come forward within 400m. Case by case assessment will be necessary and wording in the Plan at paragraph 6.14 and accompanying footnote (supporting text of Policy SP11) is clear that the applicant will need to provide

[22] SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital has been carried forward from the previous plan. Planning application 22/00548 was granted in March 2026 – see Citizen Portal Planning - application details for further details. The planning consent was a hybrid consent with outline planning application (all matters reserved except for access) for an up to 70 bed care home; and full planning consent granted for an extension to the Snowden Centre building for healthcare purposes.

sufficient evidence for an appropriate assessment (that is in turn informed by this HRA). In general, in line with the approach taken above for allocations, it is likely to be possible to rule out adverse effects on integrity on the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar for any windfall proposal within 400m if it relates to C2 type use (care homes etc). Each application will need to considered separately and as windfall (by its nature) will be small in scale and localised, cumulative effects are limited.

4.16 In addition, Policy SP11 provides a protective policy with respect to European sites; the wording is clear that development may not always be possible:

Avoidance or mitigation may not be possible in some cases due to the impacts, scale, type, or proximity of the proposed development in relation to the designated site, and so the Authority will assess each case on its merits.

4.17 The general protection afforded by SP11 is important as it ensures development will be checked and any unallocated windfall sites are not able to come forward unless adverse effects on integrity can be ruled out at project level HRA. Monitoring (see Section 11 of the Plan, under Objective 1) includes levels of windfall with the aim of ensuring potential urban edge impacts within 400m are mitigated.

4.18 There is no scope for in-combination effects as the New Forest National Park Authority boundary encompasses almost all areas within 400m of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar.

Solent Maritime SAC and Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar

4.19 **Policy SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside** is an employment allocation relatively close (235m) from the saltmarsh of Southampton Water. The allocation abuts the European site boundary and urban effects are therefore possible, for example:

- Increased noise (disturbance to birds);
- Light pollution (disturbance to birds);
- Spread of invasive plant species;
- Litter.

4.20 Given the employment uses, location and distance from key areas within the European site, risks are potentially relatively slight, but will depend on the type of use and layout of the site. The policy wording ensures that a

masterplan will be produced that sets out all necessary mitigation alongside the layout, planting etc. These elements will need to be assessed at project level and the wording ensures the necessary steps and protective wording are in place.

4.21 Given the low risks, mitigation will be achievable but will be dependent on detailed site design and further information, as such it is necessary to defer to a lower-tier assessment. Project level assessment will be able to identify more precisely the nature, scale and types of urban effects that may be relevant and there will be flexibility in the site design and proposal to enable an adverse effect on site integrity to be mitigated or avoided.

Conclusions: General urban effects

There are three allocations (SP33, SP35 and SP38) that are within 400m of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar; both are for C2 care home use, as opposed to C3 residential use and policy wording ensures measures to mitigate urban edge effects are incorporated where relevant. Any unallocated windfall sites that come forward within 400m will need to be subject to appropriate assessment and the need for this is set out in Policy SP11. Supporting text to SP11 (para 6.14) sets out the need for appropriate assessment in relation to urban edge effects. This approach, in line with the current (adopted plan), along with the very low level of growth and with the overall protection and need for further assessment set out in SP11, ensure all risks are addressed and adverse effects on integrity can be ruled out from the Plan alone. There is no scope for in-combination effects given that the New Forest National Park Authority boundary encompasses almost all areas within 400m.

A further allocation, SP5 is within 400m of Solent Maritime SAC & the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar. This allocation is for employment use only and policy wording ensures a masterplan will be produced that sets out all necessary mitigation alongside the layout, planting etc. Further checks at project level eliminate risks and allow a conclusion of no adverse effects on integrity.

5. Appropriate assessment: Mobile species and impacts to functionally-linked land

Policies identified in the screening

5.1 Likely significant effects were identified for the following policies from the screening:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy** (likely significant effects alone for the Mottisfont Bats SAC);
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** (likely significant effects alone for the Mottisfont Bats SAC);
- **SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford** (likely significant effects alone for the Mottisfont Bats SAC).

Mottisfont Bats SAC

5.2 Mottisfont SAC qualifies for Barbastelle Bat, one of England's rarest bats. Natural England's supplementary conservation advice indicates that trees in the woodlands at Mottisfont are used as a summer maternity roost, with the bats showing a preference toward roosting in deciduous, hardwood trees, particularly Oak, Beech and Sweet Chestnut. The bats also use the site as a foraging area and have known navigation routes through the woodland to (predominantly) riverine areas and subsequent feeding areas in the surrounding landscape.

5.3 The supplementary conservation advice states that the bats forage widely, up to 7km from their maternity roosts, though apparently some individuals may forage further to reach suitable feeding grounds. The advice suggests that Barbastelles prefer pastoral landscapes with deciduous woodland, wet meadows and waterbodies, and will also feed in more open areas such as orchards. In order to reach these foraging areas Barbastelles use linear features such as woodland edges and hedges.

5.4 The supplementary advice sets targets to restore foraging habitat and flightlines in the wider landscape. There are at least three breeding colonies of Barbastelle Bats in the New Forest National Park[23] and recent records from the Nomansland area including the RSPB reserve. There may therefore

[23] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/discover/wildlife/bats/barbastelle-bat/

be some movements or connectivity between the northern parts of the National Park and the Mottisfont Bats SAC. Any loss of hedgerows, linear strips of woodland, pockets of grassland and woodland within the landscape around 7km of the Mottisfont Bats SAC has the potential to undermine the conservation objectives.

5.5 The allocation **SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford** is around 8.7km from the Mottisfont Bats SAC (see Appendix 3) and while distant and outside the 7.5km impact zone, could be within the range used by foraging bats from Mottisfont. An early check of records from Hampshire Bat Group, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Wiltshire Biological Records Centre (see Map 8) show Barbastelle's relatively close to the site. Aerial imagery shows that the site contains open grassland, woodland and linear woodland features. The site also lies relatively close to woodland areas within the New Forest SAC. There is clearly potential for Barbastelles to use the area, either for commuting or foraging. If they are using the area, risks from development would relate to loss of commuting routes and foraging habitat through direct destruction or from disturbance, e.g. through lighting.

5.6 The issue was identified in the HRA report that accompanied the Regulation 18 version of the Plan. Following the Regulation 18 HRA report, the National Park Authority commissioned a study to inform the approach taken in the Plan. This additional work[24] involved a walk-over of the site by a bat expert with experience of Barbastelle, the collation of records and some fieldwork to ascertain whether Barbastelles were using the area. The results confirmed that Barbastelle were present on the site and were likely to be linked to the colony and maternity roost at the nearby Franchises Wood (RSPB). There are also suitable habitat linkages between Landford Corner and Mottisfont Bats SAC and it is therefore feasible that that the allocation could be within the home range of bats originating from the SAC.

5.7 Site enhancements to support the provision of Barbastelle has been recommended within the draft report. These enhancements and considerations include a 20m buffer of the site to preserve existing woodland and hedgerow features, preventing recreational access to these wooded areas, avoiding light pollution to the buffer zones and boundary

[24] A review of Barbastelle Bats in the New Forest and Mottisfont Bats SAC Potential Impacts from Development at Landford Corner. Unpublished report by Ecological Consultancy Services Ltd. June 2026.

features and ensuring that the overall development of the site is within the least impactful area. These have in turn been used to inform the policy wording of SP40 (criterion g):

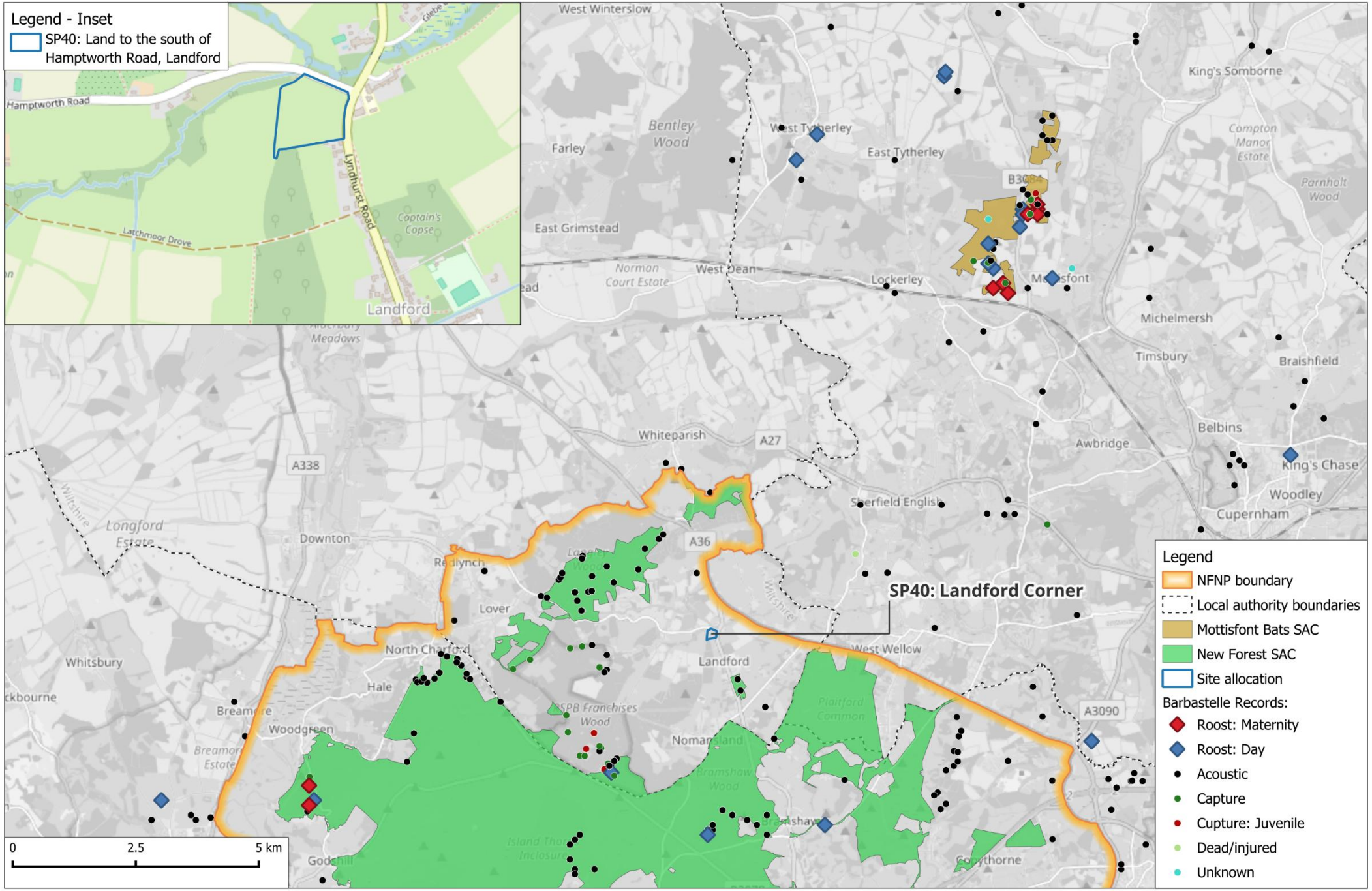
5.8 *further information will be required to demonstrate that potential impacts on the use of the surrounding area by Barbastelle Bats have been addressed. This will inform the appropriate assessment process and should include the results of a robust survey regime, appropriate mitigation, site enhancement measures and a monitoring protocol. Buffer areas of a minimum of 20 metres with no development or lighting will be required in relation to Heath Copse and Smallbrook Meadow.*

5.9 The policy therefore ensures that appropriate project-level assessment is required alongside mitigation measures based on the recommendations within the report.

Conclusion: Mobile species and impacts to functionally-linked land

The HRA has identified likely significant effects with respect to Barbastelle Bats and the Mottisfont Bats SAC. Relevant policies are SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford; SP3 and SP29, which set overall housing numbers and include SP40. Barbastelle bats move widely in the landscape and 7km is typically used to define the area in which the species may roam from a roost to forage. SP40 is over 8km from Mottisfont SAC but there are some Barbastelle colonies within the New Forest and SP40 lies between these and Mottisfont. As such it may be that bats from Mottisfont SAC are moving between colonies and SP40 appears to include potential foraging and commuting habitat. Further evidence commissioned by the National Park Authority suggests that Barbastelle are using the site, potentially originating from a nearby colony within the New Forest. ~Due to the suitable habitats linkages between the Landford allocation, parts of the New Forest and Mottisfont it is reasonable to assume that the location is within the home range of bats that originate from the SAC. Policy wording ensures that appropriate project-level steps are taken to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of the site.

Map 8: Barbastelle records in context of Mottisfont Bats SAC and the northern part of the New Forest



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Barbastelle records collated by Colleen Hope using data extracted by Hampshire Bat Group, Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre.

6. Appropriate assessment: Recreation

Policies identified in the screening

6.1 Likely significant effects were identified for the following policies from the screening:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy** (likely significant effects alone for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** (likely significant effects alone for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC);
- **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC);
- **SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC);
- **SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC);
- **SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC);
- **SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP50: Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC).

6.2 **Policy SP11:** Nature conservation sites of international importance was also screened in, with respect to both the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar as it is a bespoke policy intended

to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site and sets out mitigation measures that need to be considered at appropriate assessment.

Overview of impact

6.3 New housing growth in the various villages around the New Forest, and any tourism development in the area, has the potential to result in more people visiting the countryside. Recreation can result in a number of impacts to the nature conservation interest of sites. These impacts are summarised in a number of general reviews (Liddle, 1997; Buckley, 2004; Lowen *et al.*, 2008; Liley *et al.*, 2010, 2019; Marzano and Dandy, 2012; Ryan, 2012).

The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar

Impacts

6.4 Any changes in recreation use could lead to a number of impacts relevant to the European site qualifying features, including damage, contamination, disturbance and increased fire incidence (see Lake, Liley and Saunders, 2020; Liley *et al.*, 2021 for review and discussion in context for the New Forest). Public access/disturbance is recognised by Natural England in the Site Improvement Plan for the Forest as a pressure on the site[25].

6.5 Damage to the habitats for which the New Forest SAC is designated (and the habitats which in turn support the SPA/Ramsar features), can be realised through footfall (or wheels) on individual species, vegetation and soils. Issues relate to vegetation wear, soil compaction and erosion, i.e. largely unintentional consequences from the passage of people, pets and vehicles. These issues relate to plants and soils, but then changes in habitat extent (e.g. through the widening of footpaths and path erosion) and structure can also have consequences for a range of species and trampling can result in direct mortality for some fauna. In addition, damage can be deliberate, for example vandalism.

6.6 Vehicles parking on road verges are a long-standing concern as verge parking can lead to localised damage alongside some roads. Repeated wear will result in bare edges and a loss of vegetation, likely to be of particular concern for those verges with specialist flora such as Small Fleabane *Pulicaria vulgaris* (Lake, Liley and Saunders, 2020). Parking in gateways may

[25] https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5174614971908096

have similar impacts and may also block legitimate access, with implications for emergency services (e.g. responding to fires) and commoning.

6.7 Nutrient levels in soil (particularly nitrogen and phosphorous) are important factors determining plant species composition. On heathland, dog fouling is the equivalent to applying a high level of fertilizer, resulting in a reduction in species richness and the presence of species typically associated with more 'improved' habitats. The impacts of dog fouling can often be seen in the form of grassy edges of paths on many heaths with high levels of access. This can be exacerbated by trampling, which has a lesser effect on species such as grasses, which grow from the base rather than the tip.

6.8 Dogs will typically defecate within 10 minutes of a walk starting, and as a consequence most (but not all) deposition tends to occur within around 400m of a site entrance (Taylor *et al.,* 2005). In addition, most faeces are deposited close to the path, with a peak at approximately 1m from the path edge (Shaw, Lankey and Hollingham, 1995). Dogs will also typically urinate at the start of a walk, but they will also urinate at frequent intervals during the walk. The total volume deposited on sites may be surprisingly large (De Frenne *et al.*, 2022; Harris, 2023).

6.9 Dogs are also being increasingly recognised as an issue with respect to water quality. The tick and flea treatments used on dogs are toxic to a range of invertebrates and have been widely reported from water bodies (e.g. Diepens *et al.*, 2023), including a recent study from the New Forest[26]. Dogs swimming in ponds can also cause contamination through increased turbidity (Denton and Groome, 2017).

6.10 Besides dog fouling, other forms of contamination can include litter, fly tipping and the spread of non-native species, which can be spread on people's clothing or pets' fur. Studies have shown such vectors to distribute a range of non-native species and often over considerable distances (Wichmann *et al.*, 2009; Anderson *et al.*, 2015).

6.11 Fires can be caused accidentally from discarded cigarettes, by sparks from a campfire, BBQs (particularly the disposable BBQs that are placed on the ground), from fireworks, as a result of a controlled fire getting out of control, from discarded bottles in strong sunlight, from children playing with

[26] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-68400630

matches or similar, and even from deliberate arson. As such fire incidence can be directly linked to access. Climate change has meant that major fires tend to be more frequent and more severe (Jolly *et al.*, 2015; Moffat and Gazzard, 2019) and heathland areas are particularly vulnerable. Impacts of fire on heathlands are reviewed by Underhill-Day (2005) and can include direct mortality, loss of habitat, loss of vegetation, damage to soils and vegetation change. Impacts can last many years.

6.12 Disturbance occurs where human activity influences an animal's behaviour or survival. By far the majority of the literature (and there are thousands of studies) focuses on birds (for general reviews see Hockin *et al.*, 1992; Hill *et al.*, 1997; Brawn, Robinson and Thompson III, 2001; Lowen *et al.*, 2008; Whitfield, Ruddock and Bullman, 2008; Showler, 2010; Steven, Pickering and Guy Castley, 2011). The presence of people in the countryside will influence wildlife in many ways. For many species, the people or their pets (e.g. dogs) are a potential threat and as such it is to be expected that the response will be to modify behaviour, for example fleeing.

6.13 Disturbance can have a range of different impacts potentially affecting distribution, breeding success and health. Impacts can be chronic, for example otherwise suitable nesting habitat being completely avoided (e.g. Liley and Sutherland, 2007) or more short-term in nature, for example birds becoming alert and then resuming the initial activity (e.g. Fernandez-Juricic, Jimenez and Lucas, 2001). For both nightjar and woodlark studies have shown recreation use affects the distribution of birds within sites, such that busy areas are avoided (Liley et al. 2006; Mallord et al. 2007; Lowe, Rogers & Durrant 2014). For Dartford warblers, breeding productivity is lower in territories where access levels are high (Murison et al. 2007), this is because disturbed birds nest later in the season. For nightjars there is also evidence of breeding success being lower on busier sites and busier parts of sites (Murison 2002). For woodlarks at least, there are clear population-level impacts as a result of the presence of people on the heaths (Mallord et al. 2007).

6.14 It is often difficult to separate different types of activities as at many sites multiple activities tend to overlap in space and time. Nonetheless, dogs are often identified as having a disproportionate effect (Lafferty, 2001; Thomas, Kvitek and Bretz, 2003; Banks and Bryant, 2007; Taylor, Green and Perrins, 2007; Liley and Fearnley, 2012; Cavalli *et al.*, 2016; Gómez-Serrano, 2021; Harris, 2023); dogs are likely to be perceived as a greater threat, will actively chase birds and are able to track wildlife by smell.

6.15 High levels of access can also have issues for site management and take staff time and resources away from other management duties. Achieving effective conservation grazing on sites with high levels of access can be more challenging as recreational pressure can result in: worrying of animals by dogs, increased incidence of road accidents (although many may not be due to recreation), transfer of diseases, feeding and petting livestock and gateways etc may become blocked, limiting access for commoners. Worrying from dogs can also lead to animals behaving differently and becoming dangerous.

6.16 Visitors who consider the Forest first and foremost as a recreational destination may be less willing to take into account requirements dictated by land use or the wildlife of the Forest (such as keeping dogs under control). Parking charges could lead to the expectation of certain access rights, that certain areas should be primarily available for recreational pursuits or lead to a lack of willingness to see changes required for conservation or pastoral purposes, particularly changes that might result in a perceived loss of amenity.

6.17 As such it is clear there is the potential to undermine the conservation objectives for the New Forest in a range of ways. In particular, in terms of the extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species and the structure and function of qualifying natural habitats or habitats of qualifying features.

Current visitor management

6.18 Recreation patterns and access are not static and change with time. The marked increase in visitors during the Covid pandemic (Caals, Panter and Liley, 2020) highlighted how quickly patterns can change and the unprecedented rise in visits to the Forest and was a preview of how visitor growth could soon manifest itself.

6.19 The National Park has established a Habitat Mitigation Scheme SPD[27] which has been in place since 2012 and was revised in 2020 to address changing visitor pressure in the New Forest National Park. In addition, the recreation management strategy[28] sets out a long-term vision for how recreation is

[27] See https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/document/revised-habitat-mitigation-scheme-spd/
[28] See https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RMS-TOWEB.pdf

managed and promoted in the New Forest National Park. The strategy, alongside the SPD seeks to balance the provision of recreation (and all the benefits this brings) with the negative impacts associated with overcrowding and damage to the nature conservation interests.

6.20 In addition, and more recently some changes have come into force which are relevant:

- **Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)** have been introduced by New Forest District Council supported by Forestry England, the New Forest National Park Authority and the Verderers of the New Forest. The use of barbeques/fires within the Forest, and feeding and petting ponies or donkeys are all banned, with those failing to comply liable to a fixed penalty fine or prosecution.
- **Recreation permissions:** a wide range of activities require permission from Forestry England, including all the activities that would normally not be allowed under the bylaws, such as organised races, charitable events, various training events; orienteering and weddings/blessings, amongst others. These are now covered under a protocol which sets out conditions, scale, locations and other details to ensure the cumulative effects of these permissions can be properly assessed (see Liley *et al.*, 2021 for details and context).
- **Car park charges** were introduced to all 129 Forestry England car parks across the New Forest in April 2026.
- **Parking on road verges across the Forest has received focus,** forming one of the flagship projects for the National Park Authority[29] and Forestry England has an ongoing programme in place where irresponsible parking in areas at risk of damage and erosion is deterred through the use of wooden bollards and ditches.

6.21 These changes mean general recreation use within the New Forest is better managed and particular impacts are addressed. The introduction of parking changes has been accompanied by clear messaging around the cost and difficulties in managing visitor use, helping to ensure visitors are more aware of the general issues. The strategic mitigation and implementation of the parking charges means there is now more staff presence out and about across the Forest.

[29] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/protecting/flagship-projects/higher-level-stewardship-scheme/verges/

Strategic mitigation

6.22 For the New Forest SPA/SAC/Ramsar issues around recreation have long been recognised and addressed by individual local authorities through dedicated, separate mitigation schemes. Detailed guidance for the National Park is set out in an SPD[30] that was developed by the National Park Authority following liaison with Natural England and other relevant partners on the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Steering Group. The key mitigation measures are:

- Access management;
- Alternative recreational greenspace sites and routes outside the designated sites;
- Education, awareness and promotion;
- Monitoring and research.

6.23 A joint commission by local planning authorities around the New Forest, including the National Park Authority, established a zone of influence, evidence for recreation patterns, links to local housing and evidence to support mitigation approaches (Lake, Liley and Saunders, 2020; Liley and Panter, 2020; Liley *et al.*, 2020; Panter and Saunders, 2020). By addressing risks up front, strategic mitigation provides a proactive, cross-boundary, solution that ensures cumulative impacts of growth are taken into account and that the necessary resources and costs are identified.

6.24 Recreation pressure is complex, as the way visitors use a site can change with time and the distribution of the qualifying features can also change. Furthermore, to ensure effectiveness, mitigation needs to include a package of measures that work in an integrated way. For example, educating visitors, reinforcing messages with site-based staff, and providing the right infrastructure to meet visitor needs and influence visitor behaviour could all fit together as part of a mitigation package, but cannot be delivered in a piecemeal way, implemented by individual developments.

6.25 Collective funding is essential for on-site measures, and these can then in turn supported by the provision of the right alternative green infrastructure, i.e. a positive step to create more space for recreation and make a meaningful reduction in visits to the European sites. A strategic approach

[30] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/07/Revised-Habitat-Mitigation-Scheme-SPD-.pdf

also ensures that mitigation can be secured in a way to maximise benefits for local communities and wildlife, ensuring a positive approach that provides for recreation use and ensures long-term protection for the European sites.

6.26 Climate change will impact the distribution of the qualifying features, exacerbate risks such as fire incidence, change recreation patterns and fundamentally change the coast and surrounding habitats. Recreation use will shift over time in response to trends, social media and a range of social factors and as such there is some complexity and inevitable uncertainty around the scale of future risk. Mitigation needs to be flexible to these changes and be able to respond appropriately.

6.27 The need for development to contribute to the strategic mitigation approach is secured in Policy SP11 and supporting text to the Policy provides further detail. With the strategic mitigation scheme fully operational and in place, all risks, alone or in-combination are addressed.

Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC

6.28 Coastal habitats and species are vulnerable to a range of recreation impacts, that could be triggered by additional recreation use linked to displacement. Reviews such as Saunders *et al.* (2000) and Lowen *et al.* (2008) provide context and background. Natural England's site improvement plan for the Solent[31] identifies public access and disturbance as a current threat.

6.29 Many of the impacts are similar to those already identified for the New Forest and Dorset Heaths (see above) and include:

- Damage from trampling/wheels etc leading lead to vegetation wear, soil compaction and erosion (relevant to vegetated shingle, saltmarsh and foredune habitats in particular);
- Contamination from dog fouling and contamination of water from dogs swimming (potentially relevant to saline lagoons);

[31] This plan covers the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and the Solent Maritime SAC as well as some additional SPA sites. See: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752#:~:text=The%20SIP%20consists%20of%20three,containing%20contextual%20information%20and%20links.

- Impacts of disturbance to birds a key concern for breeding terns (Liley, Saunders and Rush, 2023) and wintering waterbirds (Liley, Stillman and Fearnley, 2010; Liley *et al.*, 2023) with mitigation for recreation (associated with new housing growth) estbalished through Bird Aware Solent;
- Increased fire risk (potentially a low risk, but can be relevant to reed beds);
- Impacts to management, such as challenges with livestock grazing.

6.30 The above have the potential to undermine the conservation objectives of the Solent Maritime SAC with respect to distribution of the feature, extent and structure and function. For the Solent and Southampton Water SPA the supplementary conservation advice sets targets for the qualifying features to reduce the frequency, duration and/or intensity of disturbance.

Strategic mitigation

6.31 For the Solent, strategic mitigation has been long established through the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership and delivered by Bird Aware Solent[32]. The scheme was established in 2017 (Bird Aware Solent, 2017), underpinned by a large body of evidence relating to visitor use and bird disturbance (Stillman *et al.*, 2009, 2012; Fearnley, Clarke and Liley, 2010, 2011; Liley, Stillman and Fearnley, 2010; ABP Marine Environmental Research Ltd., 2012) which has since been regularly reviewed and updated (Liley *et al.*, 2023; Bird Aware Solent, 2024), with the update extending the strategy to cover summer breeding birds, (see Liley, Saunders and Rush, 2023). The scheme covers the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar as well as Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA/Ramsar and Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar. The partnership comprises all 15 local planning authorities whose areas fall within 5.6km of the European sites and the current strategy has been devised to mitigate housing across these authorities that comes forward in the period through to 2050.

6.32 The Solent mitigation scheme only relates to birds and does not have specific mitigation that addresses recreation impacts to habitats (i.e. features of the Solent Maritime SAC). Nonetheless, there is clearly overlap as measures to influence visitor behaviour will also be relevant to habitats and the breeding bird interest also overlaps with the habitat features of the SAC (vegetated shingle, saltmarsh etc). Areas where habitat damage might be a concern (e.g.

[32] https://birdaware.org/solent/

from trampling or dog fouling) are also areas important for birds and will be covered through the mitigation. Given the scale of growth proposed in the Plan and its dispersed nature (meaning recreation use is also likely to be dispersed around the coast), it should therefore be sufficient to rely on the Bird Aware strategy to address impacts to the Solent Maritime SAC.

6.33 As with the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, the need for development to contribute to the strategic mitigation approach is secured in Policy SP11 and supporting text to the Policy provides further detail. With the strategic mitigation scheme fully operational and in place, all risks, alone or in-combination are addressed.

Conclusions: Recreation

Strategic mitigation schemes provide the means to rule out adverse effects from recreation and ensure cumulative impacts are addressed. Compliance with these schemes is secured through Policy SP11. The level of growth within the Plan and the locations for that growth are such that the mitigation is sufficient and no additional mitigation is likely to be needed.

7. Appropriate assessment: Water quality

Policies identified in the screening

7.1 Likely significant effects were identified for the following policies from the screening, as they promote development within a nutrient catchment where some form of nutrient neutrality is required:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy** (likely significant effects alone for the Solent Maritime SAC, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the River Avon SAC)
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** (likely significant effects alone for the Solent Maritime SAC, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the River Avon SAC)
- **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent Maritime SAC and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar).
- **SP50: Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use** (likely significant effects in-combination for the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC).

7.2 In addition, SP3, SP29 and the following allocations were screened in alone for impacts to nearby European sites as a result of run-off and the potential for contamination:

- **SP5 Land to north of Fawley Waterside** (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar);
- **SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital** (the New Forest SAC and the New Forest Ramsar);
- **SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway** (the New Forest SAC and the New Forest Ramsar).

7.3 Also relevant is **Policy SP11: Nature conservation sites of international importance** which sets out mitigation requirements for nutrient neutrality.

Wastewater and nutrient neutrality

7.4 Wastewater or sewage can be very damaging to water bodies as it can contain large amounts of nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrates), ammonia, bacteria, harmful chemicals and other damaging substances. Issues arise where sewage treatment technology to adequately reduce levels of phosphorus and harmful chemicals is not in place, where leakages occur from privately owned septic tanks and, in wet weather, storm overflows can discharge untreated sewage. Poorly installed domestic washing machines and even washing cars at home can, in places, also add to the pollution load. Outcomes can include increased turbidity, algal blooms, reduced dissolved oxygen and an overall increase in the nutrient status of receiving waterbodies. Simply, increases in housing increase pressure on the sewage network and the volume of wastewater.

7.5 The pollution of inland and coastal waters has received greater recognition in recent years and the significance of such potential impacts and the need to mitigate has been given emphasis by Natural England's advice to local planning authorities. Natural England have advised that new development affecting vulnerable water bodies must achieve 'nutrient neutrality', i.e. avoid any net increase in nitrate and/or phosphate pollution. Whilst this relates primarily to the disposal of foul water, run-off from hard surfaces can also be a factor. This reflects contemporary case law (the Dutch case) which makes clear that where water quality targets of European sites are not being met, further inputs of pollutants should not be allowed.

7.6 Both the River Avon SAC and the Solent are covered by Natural England's advice and a need for nutrient neutrality. Any development involving the potential for overnight accommodation within the National Park will therefore need to ensure nutrient neutrality.

7.7 For the avoidance of any doubt, while the Avon catchment for nutrients does overlap with the National Park boundary, the Plan does not include any allocations within the Avon catchment and none of the Defined Villages are within the catchment. As such risks for the River Avon SAC will only relate to windfall that is outside the Defined Villages and as such any growth will be very low, if any.

7.8 Advice, further links and details on mitigation requirements are set out on the National Park website[33]. These include reference to the updated national guidance and tools for addressing nutrient neutrality, issued by National Government in 2024. These reflect upgrades to certain wastewater treatment works required by 2030 under the provisions of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023.

7.9 Policy SP11 sets the requirement that applications for net dwellings and other forms of overnight accommodation will be expected to demonstrate nutrient neutrality. The Policy also covers other forms of new development. This ensures all development is mitigated.

7.10 It is the responsibility of the applicant/developer to find suitable and sufficient nutrient mitigation solutions. The Solent Mitigation Partnership website[34] provides a means for developers to buy credits and also provides background information and context. In addition, the Partnership for South Hampshire's website[35] also provides details of other available mitigation sites. The Solent Mitigation Partnership ensures strategic and efficient delivery of mitigation and ensures there is sufficient mitigation options in the pipeline to accommodate growth.

7.11 The Solent Mitigation Partnership[36] has reviewed the nutrient budget for the Local Plan and checked that sufficient mitigation is available. Their nutrient

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[33] https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/guidance-on-applying/supporting-documents/nutrient-mitigation/

[34] https://solentmitigationpartnership.co.uk/buy-credits/

[35] https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.push.gov.uk%2Fwork%2Fmitigation-schemes-available-to-developers%2F&data=05%7C02%7CMaria.Court%40newforestnpa.gov.uk%7Cfbf5b94010a64c8a77fd08dd3f879cb8%7Cfb5d1c469fad4de681de8d5370f9919d%7C0%7C0%7C638736573858064977%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=TulbwCO%2BvlaxnjG%2BWxWbSR3HYQmLMfYoHHYYIAGDST4%3D&reserved=0

[36] Document and figures produced by Solent Mitigation Partnership for the NFNPA in July 2026

demand calculation (Table 3) includes allocations in the Plan and estimated windfall that is predicated to come forward. This gives an overall picture of the potential nutrient demand related to housing development for the relevant catchments. Nutrients associated with new development within the New Forest National Park Authority could enter the Solent via the New Forest Rivers or the Test ('Test & Itchen sub-catchment), and for these areas it is necessary to achieve nutrient neutrality in relation to Nitrogen only.

Table 3: Nutrient need associated with the Plan. Figures are for total nitrogen ('TN'). Figures provided by the Solent Mitigation Partnership. Columns reflect the different sub-catchments for the Solent area. The Test and Itchen are grouped into the same sub-catchment, however it should be noted the New Forest NPA is only relevant to the Test.

	0-5 years (Kg/TN/Yr)		5+ years	
	New Forest Rivers	Test & Itchen	New Forest Rivers	Test & Itchen
Allocations	131.5	17	29.2Kg	394
Windfall	81.8	219.3	163.6	227.2
Total	**213.3**	**236.3**	**163.6**	**621.2**
Overall Total	**1234.4**			

7.12 Based on the above figures, the Solent Mitigation Partnership have advised that sufficient mitigation is available for the first 5 years of the Plan period. Furthermore, the current rate of mitigation schemes coming online is expected to continue and be able to meet future demand. This is informed by the investment strategy of the Solent Mitigation Partnership who received funding from MHCLG to create large-scale nutrient mitigation sites to enable housing delivery. Beyond the next 5 to 10 years, it is likely that mitigation will be supplemented by enhancements to regional WwTW. Mandated through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023.

7.13 As such, the Solent Mitigation Partnership conclude that sufficient nutrient mitigation credits will be available to satisfy the development needs of the NFNPA across all of the Local Plan allocations. The schemes can be relied on to mitigate the levels of growth proposed, mitigation is achievable, deliverable and can be secured for the duration of the impact. As development will be nutrient neutral there can be no scope for residual effects and no risk of cumulative impact.

Individual allocations and issues with run-off and drainage

7.14 Likely significant effects were identified for two allocations (SP5 and SP38) alone, due to their proximity to European sites. For these sites there are specific local risks with run-off and contamination linked to surface water flows from the allocation site onto the European site, including from construction. SP3 and SP29 were similarly identified as triggering likely significant effects, as these policies include the specific allocations above and also set overall levels of growth that includes windfall and unallocated sites.

7.15 These risks can only be fully assessed at project level and suitable mitigation, where necessary, secured through design. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS), layout, landscaping and boundary works will determine the degree of risk.

7.16 Policy wording for SP33 and SP38 identifies the need for mitigation for urban edge effects, landscaping and boundary treatments.

7.17 The supporting text for SP5 at Fawley highlights the site was previously a Ministry of Defence fuel storage facility, which was decommissioned and largely dismantled during the 1960s. It has subsequently operated as a waste recycling and transfer facility. More recently, the site has been subject to unauthorised importation and deposition of household waste beyond the scope of the permitted waste recovery and transfer activities. Despite limited historic remediation, waste remains both above and below ground, presenting potential risks to soils and groundwater. Policy SP5 requires a masterplan to ensure redevelopment fully mitigates its impacts, the policy specifically identifies that development proposals should explore opportunities to enhance and restore the watercourse along the eastern boundary and states that the development will deliver comprehensive remediation of the whole site.

7.18 These site-specific requirements, combined with the blanket protection afforded by SP11 (which will cover unallocated windfall sites) ensure adverse effects on integrity should be fully mitigated and impacts avoided. **Policy SP7: Safeguarding and improving water resources**, while not specifically mitigating impact in relation to European sites, also is clear that development will not be permitted if it would risk harm to the quality of water resources. The policy states that Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be integrated into development and that surface water from

new development will not be permitted to discharge into the foul or combined sewer network, to minimise the risk of sewer flooding.

Conclusions: Water Quality

Nutrient neutrality is required for all new net dwellings and other forms of overnight accommodation (Policy SP11) and this ensures impacts from wastewater and nutrient enrichment are addressed for all relevant sites (River Avon SAC and Solent Coast European sites). There is no scope for residual effects or cumulative impact. Direct run-off (surface water) is a potential concern for a small number of allocations in proximity to European sites. Specific policy wording for these allocations ensures risks will be addressed in the detailed design of the sites and their layout. Policy SP11 ensures any windfall sites are subject to HRA and project level assessment – once details are available – to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations.

8. Appropriate assessment: Water quantity

Policies identified in the screening

8.1 Likely significant effects were identified for the following policies from the screening:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC, the New Forest Ramsar, the River Itchen SAC and River Avon SAC).
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC, the New Forest Ramsar, the River Itchen SAC and River Avon SAC).

8.2 All new allocations and those yet to be granted planning permission were also screened in, in-combination, with respect to water quantity and the same European sites.

8.3 Also relevant is Policy SP7 which requires new homes to meet either a water efficiency standard of 100 litres maximum daily allowable usage per person, or any future national standards, whichever is lower. While this is not mitigation and as such not screened in for appropriate assessment, it is relevant in that it will make a small contribution to reducing water demand from new development.

Overview of impact

8.4 Where European sites are dependent on water to support the qualifying features then changes in the water levels or flow have the potential to undermine the conservation objectives. Impacts could result from increased abstraction or changes to surface water flow. Increasing the extent of impermeable surfaces can result in changes to the volume and speed of run-off, changing flow dynamics. Combined sewage outflows will discharge excess water into watercourses, with further impacts to flow.

River Basin Management Plans and role of the Environment Agency

8.5 It is the role of the Environment Agency to make sure that abstraction is sustainable and does not damage the environment. Water abstraction is managed through a licensing system originally introduced by the Water Resources Act 1963.

8.6 The Environment Agency oversees the publication of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). These set the legally binding locally specific environmental objectives that underpin water regulation. They set out how the management of water bodies will be undertaken, the roles of relevant bodies and the steps undertaken to ensure environmental targets are met.

8.7 The most recent RBMPs were updated in 2022, with separate plans covering the South-west[37] (which includes the catchment of the River Avon) and the South-east of England[38]. The two plans commit the Environment Agency to assess all licence applications and only issue licences that adequately protect and improve the environment; where necessary each should be subject to an individual HRA. The Agency will only grant replacement licences where the abstraction is environmentally sustainable, and abstractors can demonstrate they have a continued need for the water, and it will be used efficiently. In addition, for existing licences, the Agency will prioritise actions to protect and improve European sites and address the most seriously damaging abstractions during this plan period. All abstractors in surface water and groundwater bodies where serious damage is occurring or could occur without action should expect that their licences will be constrained over the next six years. Both relevant RBMPs were subject to HRA[39] neither of which identified any likely significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Water companies

8.8 The Water Act 2003 introduced a legal requirement into the Water Industry Act 1991 for water companies to prepare, publish and maintain Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs). These take place on a five-year cycle and set out how public water supply will be maintained over a minimum of 25 years in a way that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

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[37] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/south-west-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022

[38] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/south-east-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022

[39] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/635246fae90e07768c1a73a2/South_west_river_basin_management_plan_2022_HRA.pdf and https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/635246848fa8f554c876f7ea/South_east_river_basin_management_plan_2022_HRA.pdf

8.9 South West Water cover the Bournemouth Water Resource Zone, which extends as far east as Lymington and includes parts of the National Park area. The most recent WRMP (dated 2024) was subject to HRA[40], which concluded that adverse effects can be avoided or fully mitigated for all but one of the options included in the WRMP and all European sites. The exception was one of the options included in the Plan (a new strategic reservoir, Cheddar 2, which is unlikely to be relevant to the New Forest area). The WRMP simply highlights that further assessment of this will be required during option development, as insufficient details are available at the present time.

8.10 Southern Water is responsible for other parts of the National Park area. Southern Water, in their representations at Regulation 18, have confirmed in all instances where they are the water supplier for a given allocation, that there is capacity to accommodate the number of dwellings at each, in terms of water supply.

8.11 Southern Water's WRMP[41] states that much of the water supplied in the area around the New Forest comes from underground sources, the Test and the Itchen. The HRA[42] concluded that for virtually all of the WRMP options, there were no adverse effects on any European sites, however it did also recognise that there were some residual uncertainties associated with some options within the WRMP. In these instances, the WRMP does provide substantial time for any uncertainties linked to these options to be resolved and (if necessary) the option set aside and replaced in future WRMP cycles.

8.12 The issues in terms of abstraction are more strategic in nature compared to some other impact pathways and relate to the overall levels of growth and whether these can be supported without harm to European sites (including any potential new infrastructure that might be required). According to government guidance[43], the National Park Authority can defer to the HRAs for the relevant WRMPs and rely on its conclusions if there is no information or evidence that may lead to a different conclusion, if the previous

[40] https://www.bournemouthwater.co.uk/siteassets/documents/about-us/wrmp/sww-dwrmp24-appendix-7-sea-report-dec23-annex-h-hra.pdf
[41] https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/2p5o0k0c/technical-report.pdf
[42] https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/b45jc3w1/annex-18-habitat-regulations-assessment-report.pdf
[43] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site#make-decision-making-quicker

assessment is relevant, thorough and correct, the conclusions are rigorous and there is no new case law that might be relevant.

Conclusions: Water quantity

The provision of domestic water supplies to new development and the implications for European sites tend to be strategic in nature compared to some other impact pathways and relate to the overall levels of growth and whether these can be supported (including any potential new infrastructure that might be required), without harm. Water Resource Management Plans (WRMP) for the relevant water companies provide reassurance that adequate resources are available and mitigation options are available that will not lead to adverse effects on integrity for any European site. The National Park Authority can defer to the WRMP HRAs and rely on their conclusions, and as such impacts can be ruled out for water quantity.

9. Appropriate assessment: Air quality

Policies identified in the screening

9.1 Likely significant effects were identified for the following policies from the screening:

- **SP3: Spatial Strategy** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).
- **SP29: New residential development in the National Park** (likely significant effects in-combination for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).

9.2 All new allocations and those yet to be granted planning permission were also screened in, in-combination, with respect to air quality and the same European sites.

Overview of impact

9.3 The primary impact mechanism for air quality relates to increased traffic emissions. Development is typically associated with increased traffic and emissions which can increase the airborne concentration of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and ammonia (NH_3), and the subsequent rate of nitrogen deposition from the atmosphere. This can lead to the nutrient enrichment and acidification of soils, encouraging more tolerant ruderal species at the expense of sensitive plant, lower plant and invertebrate communities. In high concentrations, ammonia can result in direct toxic effects on vegetation, a factor which may also be true of NO_x. Larger animals, such as small mammals and birds are considered immune to direct effects but can be vulnerable to change in their supporting habitats. Furthermore, it can exacerbate the effects of other factors such as climate change or pathogens, for example.

9.4 Air quality impacts decline with distance away from the road, and it is therefore only where a road goes through a European site or is within 200m of the site, that impacts are likely (see Natural England, 2018 and CIEEM, 2021 for background and discussion on the application of the 200m distance). The New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar is bisected by numerous roads (see Map 7), which include the A36 and M27.

Findings from previous HRA work and more recent surveys

9.5 The HRA work undertaken for the existing adopted New Forest National Park Authority Local Plan, and New Forest District Council's Local Plan identified uncertainties around the potential for in-combination effects of traffic and impacts to the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. The two Local Plans together proposed around 11,000 new homes for the period 2016-2036. The HRAs were able to conclude no adverse effects on integrity on the basis of commitments in the Local Plans to monitor and, if necessary, mitigate adverse effects on the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. A mitigation strategy (Kite *et al.*, 2018) was produced with a detailed regime to monitor air quality concentrations and habitat condition at representative locations.

9.6 The results from the initial monitoring (in 2021) are summarised by Atkins (2022) and more recent monitoring results (data collected in 2024) by AtkinsRealis (2026). Future monitoring is scheduled to be carried out at the same fixed-point monitoring locations in 2027. Monitoring has included air quality and vegetation monitoring at carefully selected locations. Data are collected at different distances from the road, with the expectation that if traffic is a key driver for air quality effects, impacts will decline with distance from the road.

9.7 The monitoring results show that:

- NO_x concentrations decrease with distance from the road but remain below the critical level of NO_x at all monitoring locations.
- NH_3 average concentrations were below the critical level of NH_3 (based on the more reliable ALPHA samplers) and there was no trend in distance from the road.
- N deposition rates exceeded the critical load at all monitoring locations and decreased with distance from the road.

9.8 The 2026 monitoring report states that: "*Given the results of the air quality monitoring from both the 2021 and 2024 surveys, it is therefore likely that, if traffic emissions are currently contributing to adverse effects on the New Forest SAC, N dep would be the key factor. That is not to say that traffic emissions are not contributing to any adverse effects associated with the exceedance of NH_3 levels, rather that other sources of that pollutant (such as agriculture) are likely to be playing a more important role*."

9.9 The habitat monitoring did not indicate any impacts of traffic emissions on the sampled heathland or woodland qualifying features of the SAC. The only

significant trends that were observed in relation to distance from the road were more likely to be linked to other influences such as the intensity of grazing or past management.

9.10 The report concluded that the air quality and habitat monitoring study provide no indication that the New Forest SAC is being adversely affected by local traffic emissions 45m or more from the road.

Impact of proposed level of growth within the Plan

9.11 The National Park Authority has not commissioned a transport assessment or commissioned traffic modelling, due to the small scale of planned new development proposed (around 950 net dwellings to 2043).

9.12 As such, there is no prediction of traffic increase along specific roads. The dispersed nature of the allocations within the Plan and the specific locations mean many allocations will have limited implications for traffic flows (see Map 9 for context). For example, **SP34: Land at Keller's Lane, Ashurst**; **SP39: Land to the West of Winsor Road, Winsor** and **SP5: Land to the north of Fawley Waterside** are in locations where traffic is likely to flow along the eastern side of the National Park Authority area, towards Totton and away from the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. Similarly, **SP38: Land to the west of Brighton Road, Sway** is in the south-west of the National Park Authority, on the edge of the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and traffic movements are likely to be into Sway and towards Christchurch, thereby away from the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar.

9.13 Typical traffic flows associated with rural dwellings could in in the region of 6-8 two-way trips per dwelling per day, and therefore 950 dwellings could possibly generate up to 7,600 daily trips. These will be spread across a range of roads, many of which will not cross the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. There is a 40mph speed limit for many of the roads that are relevant and slow traffic flows (e.g. tourism related) will tend to deflect use to roads that are outside the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar.

9.14 This low level of traffic increase needs to be considered in light of the increasing uptake of electric vehicles with zero emissions, good rail connections and increasing focus away from car dependency[44].

[44] See for example the Hampshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/hampshire-local-transport-plan-4-2024.pdf

9.15 As such it is not possible to derive predictions for future vehicle use associated with the Plan, however risks are likely to be low, dispersed across multiple roads and to decrease with time.

Mitigation

9.16 The National Park Authority will continue with the approach in the current adopted plan of monitoring and undertaking mitigation, as triggered by monitoring results. This approach ensures that there is a means of addressing the uncertainty around changing patterns of vehicle use and the impacts of growth.

9.17 The National Park Authority will work with neighbouring authorities, in particular New Forest District Council, where the much more significant levels of growth proposed and scale mean that HRA work has addressed the in-combination effects of increased road transport on the strategic road network.

9.18 SP11 demonstrates a commitment to monitor the impacts from increased road transport and their associated emissions across the New Forest designated sites:

9.19 *The National Park Authority will continue to work with partners to monitor the in-combination effects of increased road traffic and the associated emissions on the New Forest's designated sites. If the monitoring results indicate potential impacts on site integrity avoidance and mitigation measures will be required for development to be permitted. This may include a proportionate contribution from new development to support the implementation of measures.*

9.20 The Plan includes a monitoring indicator (under Objective 1 in Section 11) relating to air quality, working with neighbouring authorities to monitor changes in air quality on the New Forest's internationally designated sites. The monitoring will establish the trend of movement in critical levels of pollutants and work with partners on a strategic mitigation package if such an approach is necessary.

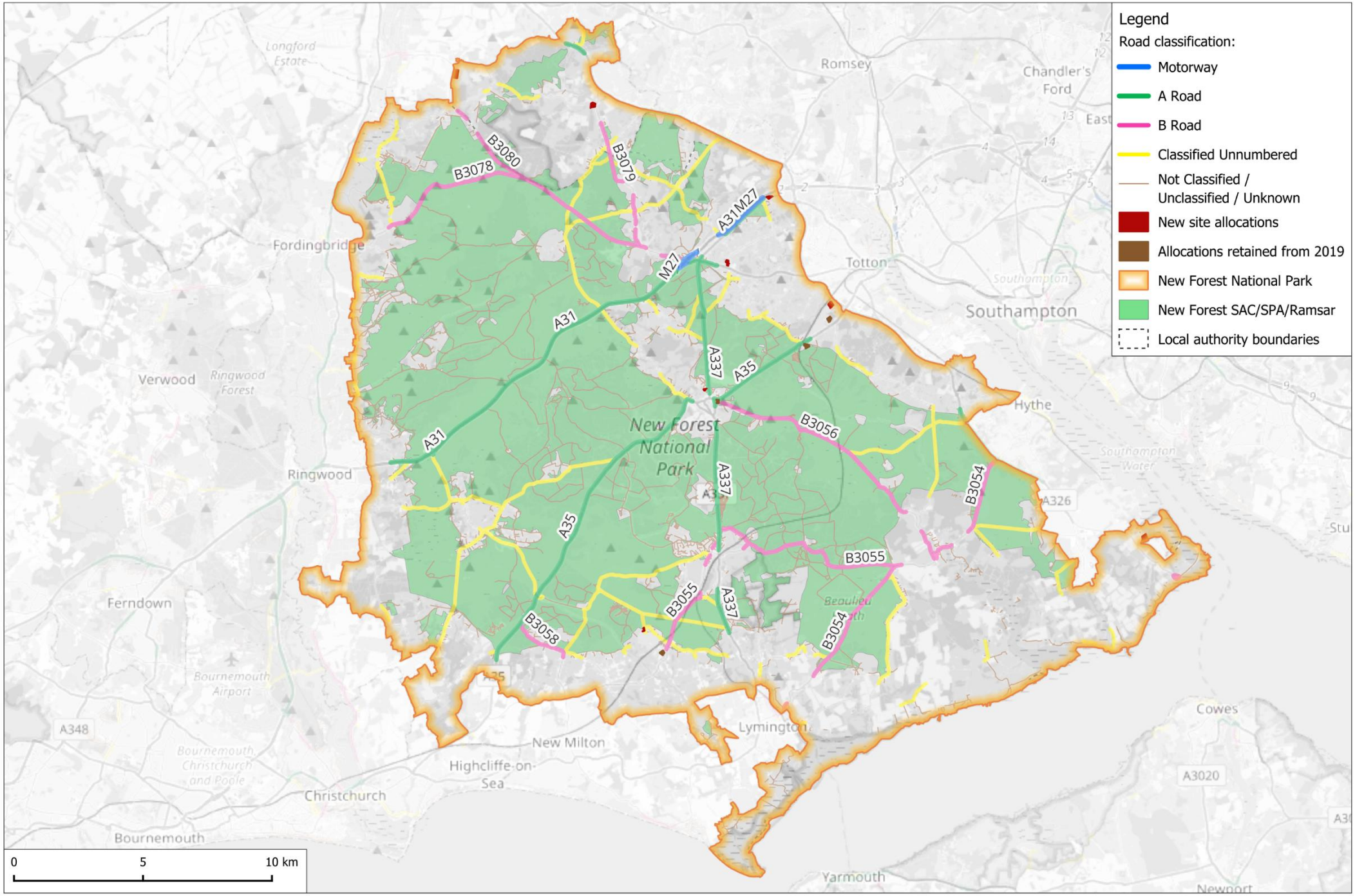
Conclusions: Air Quality and the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar

Risks from air pollution associated with increased traffic are likely to be low, dispersed across multiple roads and to decrease with time. The National Park Authority has not commissioned a transport assessment or commissioned traffic modelling, and it is not possible to derive predictions for future vehicle use associated with the Plan. However, the National Park Authority can defer to HRA work undertaken by neighbouring authorities which includes the in-combination effect of development within the New Forest National Park.

The National Park Authority will continue working with neighbouring authorities to monitor changes in air quality on the New Forest's internationally designated sites and changes in habitat and vegetation alongside roads. This approach was established as part of the assessment work for the previous local plan. If the monitoring results provide any indication that the New Forest SAC is being adversely affected by local traffic emissions, this will then trigger the need for mitigation, in line with the current mitigation plan.

The approach is secured in policy SP11 and secured with neighbouring authorities.

Map 9: Roads within the New Forest National Park within 200m of a European site



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10. Integrity test

10.1 The New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 2024 – 2043 Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) has been subjected to an appropriate assessment according to the statutory provisions laid out in the Habitats Regulations 2017, as amended.

10.2 Likely significant effects were identified for general urban effects and the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. There are no allocations relating to C3 residential use within 400m of the SPA/SAC/Ramsar, in line with the current (adopted plan). This approach ensures any growth within 400m is very limited. There are three allocations within 400m of the SAC/SPA/Ramsar for C2 care home use. The type of use, combined with policy wording to ensure mitigation for urban edge effects (e.g. boundary treatments) mean adverse effects on integrity can be ruled out for these three allocations, one of which has been granted outline planning permission. The type of use, lack of SPA/Ramsar interest, habitat (predominantly wooded) and location mean risks are very low. Any unallocated windfall sites that come forward within 400m will need to be subject to appropriate assessment and the need for this is set out in Policy SP11. Supporting text to SP11 (para 6.14) sets out the need for appropriate assessment in relation to urban edge effects. All risks are therefore addressed and adverse effects on integrity can be ruled out from the Plan alone. There is no scope for in-combination effects given that the New Forest National Park Authority boundary encompasses almost all areas within 400m.

10.3 Likely significant effects were also identified in relation to general urban effects and the Solent Maritime SAC & the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar. A single allocation (SP5) for employment use, is within 400m of Solent Maritime SAC & the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar. Policy SP11 provides general protective wording and the need for appropriate assessment. Specific policy wording for SP5 ensures a masterplan will be produced that sets out all necessary mitigation alongside the layout, planting etc. This ensures development will only proceed subject to further checks at project level, once the full details are available and necessary design elements complete. As such this wording eliminates risks and allows, at a Plan level, a conclusion of no adverse effects on integrity, alone or in-combination.

10.4 The HRA has identified likely significant effects with respect to a particular allocation (SP40) and Barbastelle Bats associated with the Mottisfont Bats SAC. These bats move widely in the landscape and while the allocation is distant (and outside the distance any impact may be normally assumed), there are known roosts outside the SAC in relative proximity. The issue was identified as part of the Regulation 18 HRA. Given the location and characteristics of the allocation site, the National Park Authority subsequently commissioned a barbastelle expert to check the allocation site, collate local records and identify potential next steps. The work indicated that Barbastelle are present at the site and a number of recommendations were made regarding mitigation measures that might be necessary (along with further, more detailed survey work). The mitigation requirements have in turn been fed through into policy, which ensures the development will be subject to project level HRA and identifies the mitigation measures likely to be necessary. As such, the adverse effects on integrity are ruled out alone and there is no risk of cumulative effects given the specific nature and location of the allocation.

10.5 Likely significant effects from recreation were identified for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and the Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC. Policy SP11 secures mitigation through the strategic mitigation schemes, that have been designed to address the scale of growth across multiple local authorities within defined zones of influence. The schemes address the total growth within the Plan and also the cumulative effects with neighbouring authorities. As such adverse effects on integrity can be ruled out from recreation for the New Forest and Solent SPA/Ramsar sites, alone or in-combination.

10.6 The Solent mitigation scheme only relates to birds and does not have specific mitigation that addresses recreation impacts to habitats (i.e. features of the Solent Maritime SAC). Nonetheless, there is clearly overlap as measures to influence visitor behaviour will also be relevant to habitats and the breeding bird interest also overlaps with the habitat features of the SAC. Given the scale of growth proposed in the Plan and the relatively dispersed nature of that growth, it is reasonable to rely on the Bird Aware strategy to address impacts to the Solent Maritime SAC.

10.7 Nutrient neutrality is required within the Plan (in Policy SP11) for all new net dwellings and other forms of overnight accommodation, and this ensures impacts from wastewater and nutrient enrichment are addressed for all relevant sites (River Avon SAC and Solent Coast European sites). With any

such development being nutrient neutral, there can be no cumulative effects and adverse effects on integrity from wastewater can be ruled out alone or in-combination.

10.8 Direct run-off (surface water) was identified as a potential concern for a small number of allocations in proximity to European sites. Specific policy wording for each of these ensures development will only proceed subject to further checks at project level, once the full details are available and necessary design elements complete. Policy SP11 ensures any windfall sites are subject to HRA and project level assessment, once details are available to allow an assessment to be undertaken. As such adverse effects on integrity at Plan level can be ruled out, alone or in-combination.

10.9 WRMPs for the relevant water companies provide reassurance that adequate resources are available and mitigation options are available that will not lead to adverse effects on integrity for any European site. The National Park Authority can defer to the WRMP HRAs and rely on their conclusions, and as such impacts can be ruled out for water quantity.

10.10 Air quality was screened in for the Plan in-combination, for the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. Risks relate to increased traffic and the cumulative effects of traffic across the National Park and neighbouring authorities. The National Park Authority has not commissioned a transport assessment or commissioned traffic modelling, and it is not possible to derive predictions for future vehicle use associated with the Plan. Risks from air pollution associated with increased traffic are likely to be low, dispersed across multiple roads and to decrease with time. As such, the National Park Authority has committed in policy SP11 to work with partners and continue to monitor in-combination effects of increased road traffic and the associated emissions on the New Forest's designated sites. Policy SP11 is clear that If the monitoring results indicate potential impacts on site integrity, avoidance and mitigation measures will be required for development to be permitted. This ensures a 'watching brief' and that development will not come forward if monitoring identifies risk. This approach relates to the cumulative, in-combination effects of traffic and therefore means adverse effects on integrity can be ruled out from air quality, alone or in-combination.

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Appendix 1: Summary of European sites

Summary of European sites and their interest features. Links in the site column relate to the conservation objectives page on the Natural England website for each site. # in the interest features column denotes an interest feature for which the UK has a special responsibility. Qualifying features are drawn from the Natural England designated site view; descriptions reflect text on the designated sites view page or that used in other relevant documents (such as the site improvement plan).

European site	Qualifying features	Description
Avon Valley Ramsar	Gadwall, Anas strepera - Wintering Mixed floodplain habitats Wetland invertebrate assemblage Wetland plant assemblage	The site encompasses the lower reaches of the River Avon and its floodplain between Bickton and Christchurch. The River Avon displays wide fluctuations in water level and parts of the valley are regularly flooded in winter. The Avon valley has a greater range of habitats and a more diverse flora and fauna than any other chalk river in Britain. The valley includes one of the largest expanses of unimproved floodplain grassland in Britain, including extensive areas managed as hay meadow.
Avon Valley SPA	Bewick's swan, *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* - A037, nb Gadwall, *Mareca strepera* - A051, nb	See above Ramsar description.
Briddlesford Copses SAC	S1323 Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteini*	The Briddlesford Copses complex of woodlands represents the most varied, structurally diverse and speciesrich cluster of ancient broadleaved woodland on the Isle of Wight and supports an important breeding population of the rare Bechstein's bat Myotis bechsteinii. The bats use holes and crevices in mature trees for roosting and the interconnecting woodlands for feeding. The majority of the Briddlesford Copses and much of its neighbour Firestone Copse have a coppice with standards structure. The remainder of the site consists of high forest.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
Chichester & Langstone Harbours Ramsar	Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* - Passage Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* - Wintering Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* - Wintering Estuary Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* - Wintering Redshank *Tringa totanus* - Passage Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* - Passage Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* - Wintering Waterbird assemblage - Wintering	See SPA description below.
Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA	Bar-tailed godwit, Limosa lapponica - A157, nb Common tern, Sterna hirundo - A193, b Curlew, Numenius arquata - A160, nb Dark-bellied Brent goose, Branta bernicla bernicla - A675, nb Dunlin, Calidris alpina alpina - A672, nb Grey plover, Pluvialis squatarola - A141, nb A195 (B) Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* A054 (NB) Pintail *Anas acuta* A069 (NB) Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* A162 (NB) Redshank *Tringa totanus* A137 (NB) Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* A144 (NB) Sanderling *Calidris alba* A191(B) Sandwich tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* A048 (NB) Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* A056 (NB) Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* A704 (NB) Teal *Anas crecca*	Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA covers two large, estuarine basins. Urban development surrounds the west of Langstone Harbour, whereas farmland surrounds the majority of Chichester Harbour. Together, with neighbouring Portsmouth Harbour, the area forms one of the most sheltered intertidal areas on the South Coast of England. Both Chichester and Langstone Harbours contain extensive intertidal mudflats and sandflats with areas of seagrass beds, saltmarsh, shallow coastal waters, coastal lagoons, coastal grazing marsh and shingle ridges and islands. These habitats support internationally and nationally important numbers of overwintering and breeding bird species. At low tide the mudflats are exposed, the water is drained by channels and creeks which meet to form narrow exits into the Solent. The sediments support rich populations of intertidal invertebrates, which provide an important food source for overwintering birds. Several small freshwater streams flow into the harbours; however, these contribute relatively little freshwater input compared to the tidal flows.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	A169 (NB) Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Waterbird assemblage A050 (NB) Wigeon *Mareca penelope*	There are more than 300 ha of seagrass beds (*Zostera noltii* and *Zostera marina*) in the SPA which are an important food source for dark-bellied Brent geese. Overwintering birds also feed and roost in the saltmarsh areas, which are dominated by cordgrass (*Spartina*) swards, as well as on coastal grazing marsh. The shingle ridges and islands within the site provide important nesting habitat for three species of tern during the summer breeding season. Adult terns use the shallow coastal waters in the harbours and the wider Solent to forage for small fish to feed themselves and their chicks. Areas outside the SPA contain important supporting habitats for the birds, including coastal grazing marsh, amenity grassland and agricultural land.
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar	Fens and fen meadows (including Alkaline Fens, Molinia meadows, Calcareous Fens) Northern Atlantic wet heaths Southern Atlantic wet heaths Valley mires (and associated spring fed mires, bog pools, soakaways and transitions to swamp and saltmarsh) Wetland invertebrate assemblage Wetland plant assemblage	Extensive and fragmented, these heathland areas are centred around the estuary of Poole Harbour and are adjacent to the urban conurbation of Bournemouth and Poole. The heathland contains numerous examples of wet heath and acid valley mire, habitats that are restricted to the Atlantic fringe of Europe. These heath wetlands are among the best of their type in lowland Britain. There are also transitions to coastal wetland and fen habitat types. The wetland flora and fauna includes a large assemblage of nationally rare and scarce species, especially invertebrates.
Dorset Heathlands SPA	A224(B) *Caprimulgus europaeus*: European Nightjar A246(B) *Lullula arborea*: Woodlark A302(B) *Sylvia undata*: Dartford Warbler A082(NB) *Circus cyaneus*: Hen Harrier A098(NB) *Falco columbarius*: Merlin	The Dorset heathlands is an extensive lowland heathland area in southern England. Formerly a single tract divided only by river valleys it is now fragmented. The heathlands comprise a wide range of different habitat types related to variation in soils, hydrology, water chemistry and land use history.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes SAC	H4030 European dry heaths H2150# Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*) H7230 Alkaline fens H2110 Embryonic shifting dunes H2190 Humid dune slacks H6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* H2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes") H3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) H7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion H4020# Temperate Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica ciliaris* and *Erica tetralix* H7210# Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* H9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains H91D0# Bog woodland S1044 *Coenagrion mercuriale*: Southern damselfly S1166 *Triturus cristatus*: Great crested newt	See SPA text above.
Dorset Heaths SAC	H4030 European dry heaths H7230 Alkaline fens H6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*	See SPA text above.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	H7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion H7210# Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* H9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains S1044 *Coenagrion mercuriale*: Southern damselfly S1166 *Triturus cristatus*: Great crested newt	
Emer Bog SAC	H7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs	The site comprises an extensive valley bog together with associated damp acidic grassland, heathland and developing woodland over Bracklesham Beds in the Hampshire Basin. Emer Bog is an excellent example of a valley bog with a rich flora and fauna which includes most typical bog species. Emer Bog is not only unique in Hampshire, but unparalleled in lowland England as an example of a young ologotrophic /mesotrophic basin mire. To the south and west of Emer Bog, the site includes remnants of former common land, now acidic grassland.
Great Yews SAC	H91J0 *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles	Great Yews SAC is situated on gently sloping ground on the upper Chalk south of Salisbury, Wiltshire and comprises an extensive area of almost pure yew woodland with around 300 old trees, including many large and impressive individuals. The site has a long history as yew woodland and demonstrates the full structural and functional range expected of yew stands.
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC	H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts H6210# Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on	Jurassic and Cretaceous sea cliffs recognised as a World Heritage Site overlooking the English Channel in Dorset. The outstanding geology supports extensive swathes of calcareous grassland with early spider orchid and the endemic early gentian; sea cliff vegetation on hard rocks and a diversity of

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) S1654 *Gentianella anglica*: Early Gentian	habitat on seepage rich slumping clays. A highly ephemeral drift line is present on sandy shingle throughout the site.
Isle of Wight Downs SAC	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts H4030 European dry heaths H6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*), (note that this includes the priority feature 'important orchid rich sites') S1654 Early gentian *Gentianella anglica*	The Isle of Wight Downs SAC is located at either end of the east-west running chalk spine of The Isle of Wight. In the west, it notably takes in the high exposed white chalk cliffs and cliff top grassland of West High and Tennyson Downs and the iconic Needles headland, and Ventnor Downs with their spectacular coastal views to the east. Chalk grassland is the dominant habitat typically supporting a very rich ecology and a number of rare species including often locally abundant Early Gentian, one of only a small number of endemic plants to the British Isles. It is also noted as being exceptional for its diversity and abundances of butterflies.
Mottisfont Bats SAC	S1308 Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*	The Mottisfont woodlands contain a mix of woodland types including hazel coppice with standards, broadleaved plantation and coniferous plantation which the bats use for breeding, roosting, commuting and feeding. A colony of barbastelle bats is associated with this site and is the sole reason for the SAC designation. The evidence suggests that trees in the woodlands are used as a summer maternity roost, with the barbastelles showing a preference toward roosting in deciduous, hardwood trees, particularly Oak, Beech and Sweet Chestnut. The bats also use the site as a foraging area and have known navigation routes through the woodland to (predominantly) riverine areas and subsequent feeding areas in the surrounding landscape.
Poole Harbour Ramsar	Criterion 1: The site is the best and largest example of a bar-built estuary with lagoonal characteristics (a natural harbour) in Britain. Criterion 2: The site supports two species of nationally rare plant and one nationally rare alga. There are at least three British Red	Poole Harbour is a bar-built estuary covering an area of nearly 4000 hectares. The Harbour occupies a shallow depression in the acidic, tertiary deposits towards the south-western extremity of the Hampshire Basin and has been formed over the last 5000 years by a rise in sea level. The unusual micro-tidal

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	data book invertebrate species. Criterion 3: The site includes examples of natural habitat types of community interest - Mediterranean and thermo Atlantic halophilous scrubs, in this case dominated by *Suaeda vera*, as well as calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus*. Transitions from saltmarsh through to peatland mires are of exceptional conservation importance as few such examples remain in Britain. The site supports nationally important populations of breeding waterfowl including Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo* and Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*. Over winter the site also supports a nationally important population of Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*.	regime means that a significant body of water is retained throughout the tidal cycle. The site therefore exhibits many of the characteristics of a lagoon. There are extensive intertidal mudflats supporting internationally important numbers of waterfowl in winter. These are fringed on the landward side by saltmarshes or reedbeds. The river valleys of the lower Frome and Piddle support grazing marsh which is also important for wintering waterfowl. Much of the catchment along the western and southern shores comprises the internationally important Dorset heathlands and there are unusual transitions from saltmarsh to valley mire. The Harbour is separated from Poole Bay by the internationally important Studland dunes and the site includes Littlesea, a large dune slack lake also important for wintering wildfowl.
Poole Harbour SPA	A026 *Egretta garzetta*; Little Egret (NB) A034 *Platalea leucorodia*; Eurasian Spoonbill (NB) A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common Shelduck (NB) A132 *Recurvirostra avosetta*; Pied Avocet (NB) A156 *Limosa limosa islandica*; Black-tailed Godwit (NB) A176 *Larus melanocephalus*; Mediterranean Gull (B) A191 *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich Tern (B) A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common Tern (B) Waterbird assemblage	Poole Harbour is a large natural harbour comprising of extensive tidal mudflats and saltmarshes, together with associated reedbeds, freshwater marshes and wetland grassland. It has a narrow entrance and a small tidal range and as a result, although classified as an estuary (several rivers flow into it) it has many of the qualities of a large lagoon.
Porton Down SPA	A133 (B) Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*	The designated site is important for chalk grassland and heath, with scrub, ancient and plantation woodland, a large juniper population, lichens, rare flowering plants, butterflies and other invertebrates, and breeding birds, including stone-curlew. Porton Down is home to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), part of the Ministry of Defence, employing more than 3,000 scientists. It was created 100 years ago in response to gas

European site	Qualifying features	Description
		attacks in World War One. The site is not generally accessible to the general public.
Portsmouth Harbour SPA	A616 (NB) Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica* A675 (NB) Dark-bellied Brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla* A672 (NB) Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina* A069 (NB) Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*	Portsmouth Harbour is a large, industrialised estuary. Together with the adjacent Chichester and Langstone Harbours, it forms one of the most important sheltered intertidal areas on the south coast of England. The SPA is composed of extensive intertidal mudflats and sandflats with seagrass beds, areas of saltmarsh, shallow coastal waters, coastal lagoons and coastal grazing marsh. At low tide the extensive mudflats are exposed, the water drained by channels and creeks uniting to form a narrow exit into the Solent. There is comparatively little freshwater input to Portsmouth Harbour. The largest input is the River Wallington, which flows into Fareham Creek in the north-west of Portsmouth Harbour. The estuarine sediments support rich populations of intertidal invertebrates, which provide an important food source for overwintering birds. There are approximately 77 ha of seagrass beds in Portsmouth Harbour, which are found mainly in the north-west of the harbour. These beds include both Zostera marina (found on the low shore) and Zostera noltii (on the upper to mid shore). The seagrass beds are amongst the most extensive in Britain and are an important food source for dark-bellied Brent goose. The saltmarsh areas are mainly comprised of cordgrass (Spartina) swards and provide feeding and roosting areas for overwintering birds. Areas outside the SPA contain important supporting habitats for the birds that use the site, including coastal grazing marsh and agricultural land.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar	Assemblage of species associated with intertidal habitats Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* - Wintering Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla* - Wintering Dunlin *Calidris alpina* - Wintering Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* - Wintering	
Prescombe Down SAC	H6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*), (note that this includes the priority feature 'important orchid rich sites') S1065 Marsh fritillary, *Eurodryas aurinia* S1654 Early gentian, *Gentianella anglica*	Prescombe Down is a botanically rich downland site in south Wiltshire, with a flora characteristic of the south and south-west chalk grassland. The site consists of a deep, forking, coombe system eroded into an escarpment of the Upper Chalk. The steep sides of the dry valleys exhibit a variety of aspect which is reflected in the species composition of the turf. The calcicolous NVC community represented at Prescombe Down is CG2 *Festuca ovina - Avenula pratensis* grassland. The site also includes areas of the mesotrophic grassland community MG5 *Cynosurus cristatus - Centaurea nigra* and transitions between the two. Prescombe Down holds a significant population of Early Gentian. It is likely to be one of the two largest populations in Britain and in some years the site may have the highest population of this species. The downland also supports a rich butterfly community, including scarce species such as Adonis blue *Polyommatus b*elargus and marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*.
River Avon SAC	H3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation S1016 *Vertigo moulinsiana*: Desmoulin`s Whorl Snail S1095 *Petromyzon marinus*: Sea Lamprey S1096 *Lampetra planeri*: Brook Lamprey	The River Avon SAC is one of the richest chalk rivers in Europe. It is important for its fish population, invertebrate, which include populations of Desmoulins Whorl Snail and its in-river plant community habitat as well as bankside habitats.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	S1106 *Salmo salar*: Atlantic Salmon S1163 *Cottus gobio*: Bullhead	
River Itchen SAC	H3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with *R. fluitantis* S1044 Southern Damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale* S1092 Freshwater Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* S1096 Brook Lamprey *Lampetra planeri* S1106 Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* S1163 Bullhead *Cottus gobio* S1355 Otter *Lutra lutra*	The Itchen typifies the classic chalk river and shows a greater uniformity in physical characteristics along its entire length than other rivers of this type. Since the river is mainly spring-fed, there is only a narrow range of seasonal variation in physical and chemical characteristics. The water is of high quality, being naturally baserich and of great clarity; and its temperature is relatively constant, with dissolved oxygen levels at or near saturation.
Salisbury Plain SAC	H5130 Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calc grasslands H6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia), (note that this includes the priority feature 'important orchid rich sites') S1065 Marsh fritillary, Eurodryas aurinia	Salisbury Plain SAC is located in central Wiltshire. Salisbury Plain is an extensive and open rolling chalk plateau, with Parsonage Down on the southern edge of this and Porton Down to the south-west. The three constituent sites are located on chalk geology, cut by the tributaries of the Hampshire Avon. The soils are generally alkaline and free-draining, apart from places with overlying clay-with flints and long-term rainwater leaching and lessivage, which are more acidic. The defining habitat type is chalk grassland, also some secondary and ancient woodland is present. Juniper scrub is significant on parts of Salisbury Plain and much of Porton Down. Salisbury Plain is managed as part of an extensive military Training Area (SPTA). Porton Down forms part of the wider Porton Down Defence Science & Technology Laboratory (Dstl). Parsonage Down is part of a National Nature Reserve run by Natural England.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
Salisbury Plain SPA	Hen harrier, Circus cyaneus - A082, nb Hobby, Falco subbuteo - A099, b Quail, Coturnix coturnix - A113, b Stone-curlew, Burhinus oedicnemus - A133, b	See SAC text above.
Solent and Dorset Coast SPA	A191 (B) *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich Tern A193 (B) *Sterna hirundo*; Common Tern A195(B) *Sterna albifrons*: Little Tern	Proposals to classify this SPA were approved in 2020. The SPA encompasses coastal areas used by feeding terns. Conservation objectives for the site are not available yet.
Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC	H1150 Coastal lagoons	The Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC encompasses a series of coastal lagoons, including percolation, isolated and sluiced lagoons. The site includes eight lagoons in the marshes in the Keyhaven to Lymington area, one lagoon at Farlington Marshes in Langstone Harbour, four lagoons located behind the sea-wall at Bembridge Harbour and one lagoon at Gilkicker, near Gosport. Each lagoon has its own unique conditions with salinities varying from brackish to hypersaline and substrates ranging from soft mud to muddy sand with a high proportion of shingle. These sheltered conditions support a diverse fauna including large populations of three notable species: the nationally rare foxtail stonewort (*Lamprothamnium papulosum*), the nationally rare lagoon sand shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*) and the nationally scarce starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*).
Solent & Southampton Water Ramsar	Black-tailed godwit, Limosa limosa - Breeding Common tern, Sterna hirundo - Breeding Dark-bellied brent goose, Branta bernicla - Wintering Estuary Little tern, Sternula albifrons - Breeding Ringed plover, Charadrius hiaticula - Wintering	See SPA text below.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	Roseate tern, Sterna dougallii - Breeding Sandwich tern, Thalasseus sandvicensis - Breeding Sheltered channel between island/mainland Teal, Anas crecca - Wintering Waterbird assemblage - Wintering Wetland invertebrate assemblage Wetland plant assemblage	
Solent & Southampton Water SPA	A616 (NB) Black-tailed godwit, *Limosa limosa islandica* A193 (B) Common tern, *Sterna hirundo* A675 (NB) Dark-bellied Brent goose, *Branta bernicla bernicla* A195 (B) Little tern, *Sterna albifrons* A176 (B) Mediterranean gull, *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* A137 (NB) Ringed plover, *Charadrius h*iaticula A192 (B) Roseate tern, *Sterna dougallii* A191 (B) Sandwich tern, *Thalasseus sandvicensis* A704 (NB) Teal, *Anas crecca* Waterbird assemblage	The Solent and Southampton Water is located in one of the only major sheltered channels in Europe, lying between a substantial island (the Isle of Wight) and the mainland, on the south coast of England. It stretches from Hurst Spit to Hill Head across Hampshire, and on the north coast of the Isle of Wight from Yarmouth to Whitecliff Bay. This area is a complex major estuarine system consisting of coastal plain estuaries including the Yar, Medina, King's Quay Shore, and the Hamble. Bar-built estuaries including Newtown Harbour and Beaulieu also occupy the Special Protection Area (SPA). The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their unusual tidal regime, including double tides and long periods of tidal stand at high and low tide. The Solent and Southampton Water is composed of extensive intertidal mudflats and sandbanks, inter- and subtidal rock, areas of saltmarsh, coastal lagoons, coastal reed beds, shingle banks, and grazing marsh. Estuarine sediments within the site support rich populations of invertebrates that provide an important food source for wintering birds. The Solent as a whole exceeds 90,000 waders annually and the mudflats, coastal lagoons, shingle and saltmarsh provide vital feeding and roosting grounds for these. The shingle banks also provide important breeding grounds for terns. The

European site	Qualifying features	Description
		Solent also supports 10-13% of world's population of dark-bellied Brent geese, and 30% of the UK population. Besides using the mudflats and grazing marshes to feed, they also rely on farmland with cereals and pasture, and amenity grasslands outside the SPA boundary.
Solent Maritime SAC	H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time H1130 Estuaries H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide H1150 Coastal lagoons H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines H1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks H1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand H1320 Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*) H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) H2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ('White dunes') S1016 Desmoulin's whorl snail, *Vertigo moulinsiana*	The Solent Maritime SAC is a complex site encompassing a major estuarine system on the south coast of England. The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their unusual tidal regime, including double tides and long periods of tidal stand at high and low tide. As a result, the Solent Maritime SAC is a unique suite of functionally linked estuaries and dynamic marine and estuarine habitats. The site has the largest number of small estuaries in the tightest cluster anywhere in Great Britain, with examples of coastal plain estuaries (Yar, Medina, King's Quay Shore and Hamble) and bar-built estuaries (Newtown Harbour, Beaulieu, Langstone Harbour, Chichester Harbour). It is located in one of the only major sheltered channels in Europe, lying between a substantial island (the Isle of Wight) and the mainland. Sediment habitats within the site include extensive areas of intertidal mudflats and sandflats, often supporting eelgrass (*Zostera* species), subtidal sandbanks, saltmarsh and natural shoreline transitions such as drift line vegetation. The Solent Maritime SAC is of particular interest as it is the only site to support all four species of cordgrass (*Spartina*) found in the UK, including the rare native small cordgrass (*Spartina maritima*).

European site	Qualifying features	Description
		The Solent Maritime SAC also includes a number of coastal lagoons, sand dunes at East Head and at the time of designation supported a population of the rare Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*).
South Wight Maritime SAC	H1170 Reefs H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts H8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves	The South Wight Maritime SAC runs the full length of the south coast of the Isle of Wight, from the impressive sea stacks of the Needles in the west to Bembridge Point in the east. South Wight Maritime was designated as a SAC in recognition of its outstanding reef marine habitats and pristine sea cave systems. This European Marine Site is a dynamic site that boasts a variety of different types of reef including chalk, limestone, sandstone, clay/mudstone, greensand bedrock and boulder reef. South Wight Maritime SAC is also the only known location of subtidal chalk caves in the UK. These sea caves are of ecological importance with many hosting algal communities which are restricted to this type of habitat. The site's geological variety continues landward with Cretaceous hard cliffs, semi-stable soft cliffs and mobile soft cliffs featuring along its length. The exposed chalk cliff tops to the west support important assemblages of nationally rare lichens, including *Fulgensia fulgens*. The vegetation communities within the site include a mixture of acidic and mesotrophic grasslands, with some scrub and maritime species such as thrift (*Armeria maritima*). These cliffs are minimally affected by sea defence works and together they form one of the longest lengths of naturally developing soft cliffs on the UK coastline.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
Studland to Portland SAC	H1170 Reefs	The site is important for the outstanding diversity of its Annex 1 reef habitats. The site is situated on the south Dorset coast and extends from the Isle of Portland in the west to Swanage Bay in the east. Bedrock reef is the dominant reef type throughout the Studland to Portland SAC. It occurs in a variety of complex geomorphologic forms, including exposed chalk bedrock; exposed shales and clays; limestone and cementstone ledges; flat bedrock; areas of fragmented rock; and rugged limestone boulders providing deep gullies and overhangs This mosaic of reef habitats support a diverse range of marine life including cup corals, sponges, anemones, nudibranchs and hydroids. Dense mussel Mytilus edulis beds are found to occur on bedrock associated with strong currents off the eastern side of Portland Bill. Mytilus edulis also occurs in high numbers in the infralittoral zones of the eastern reefs amongst kelp forests.
The New Forest Ramsar	Criterion 1: Valley mires and wet heaths are found throughout the site and are of outstanding scientific interest. The mires and heaths are within catchments whose uncultivated and undeveloped state buffer the mires against adverse ecological change. This is the largest concentration of intact valley mires of their type in Britain. Criterion 2: The site supports a diverse assemblage of wetland plants and animals including several nationally rare species. Seven species of nationally rare plant are found on the site, as are at least 65 British Red Data Book species of invertebrate. Criterion 3: The mire habitats are of high ecological quality and diversity and have undisturbed transition zones. The invertebrate fauna of the site is important due to the concentration of rare and	The New Forest is an area of semi-natural vegetation including valley mires, fens and wet heath within catchments whose uncultivated and undeveloped state buffer the mires against adverse ecological change. The habitats present are of high ecological quality and diversity with undisturbed transition zones. The suite of mires is regarded as the *locus classicus* of this type of mire in Britain. Other wetland habitats include numerous ponds of varying size and water chemistry including several ephemeral ponds and a network of small streams mainly acidic in character which have no lowland equivalent in the UK. The plant communities in the numerous valleys and seepage step mires show considerable variation, being affected especially by the nutrient content of groundwater. In the most nutrient-poor zones, *Sphagnum* bog-mosses, Cross-Leaved Heath, Bog Asphodel, Common Cottongrass and similar species predominate. In more enriched conditions the communities are more fen-like.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	scare wetland species. The whole site complex, with its examples of semi-natural habitats is essential to the genetic and ecological diversity of southern England.	
The New Forest SPA	A072(B) *Pernis apivorus*: European honey-buzzard A082(NB) *Circus cyaneus*: Hen Harrier A099(B) *Falco subbuteo*: Eurasian Hobby A224(B) *Caprimulgus europaeus*: European Nightjar A246(B) *Lullula arborea*: Woodlark A302(B) *Sylvia undata*: Dartford Warbler A314(B) *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*: Wood Warbler	The New Forest is a large and complex ecosystem and one of the largest remaining relatively wild areas in the South of England attracting enormous numbers of visitors each year. The SPA supports an extensive and complex mosaic of habitats which hold internationally important populations of breeding and over-wintering birds.
The New Forest SAC	H7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs H7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion H3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) H3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* H4030 European dry heaths H6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) H7230 Alkaline fens H9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion roboripetraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*) H9130 *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests H9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy	The New Forest is a large and complex ecosystem and one of the largest remaining relatively wild areas in the South of England attracting enormous numbers of visitors each year. The New Forest SAC supports an extensive and complex mosaic of habitats including wet and dry heaths and associated bogs and mires, wet and dry grasslands, ancient pasture woodlands, frequent permanent and temporary ponds and a network of streams and rivers. These habitats support an exceptional variety of flora and fauna including notable species such as southern damselfly, stag beetle and great crested newt.

European site	Qualifying features	Description
	plains H91D0# Bog woodland H91E0# Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae*) S1044 *Coenagrion mercuriale*: Southern damselfly S1083 *Lucanus cervus*: Stag beetle S1166 *Triturus cristatus*: Great crested newt	

Appendix 2: Screening for likely significant effects

The table below sets out a policy-by-policy initial screening, based on draft policies shared on 18th May 2026. Grey shading indicates chapter headings (provided in the table for context and ease of navigation). Blue shading indicates that the policy has been screened in for likely significant effects and will require further assessment.

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
1	***Introduction and background***	**Introductory text.**			
2	***Profile of the New Forest***	**Introductory text.**			
3	***Vision and Objectives***	**Sets out overarching objectives for the plan.**	**Introductory text. Screened out.**		
4	***Spatial Strategy and Development Principles***				
	SP1: Supporting sustainable development	General policy wording around principles of sustainable development.	General policy wording. Screened out.		
	DP2: General development principles	General policy around design and principles of development.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP3 Spatial Strategy	Policy sets out the scale of growth within the plan period.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects relating to urban effects alone (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar), Mobile species and functionally linked land (Mottisfont Bats SAC); recreation alone (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar,	Provision of 950 homes, approximately 50 per annum and the strategic allocation for employment at Fawley Waterside. Focus for growth is the defined villages: Ashurst; Brockenhurst; Lyndhurst; Sway; Cadnam – Bartley;

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
				Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar); water quality alone (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC, River Avon SAC), water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	Landford and Redlynch. Given this spatial distribution, likely significant effects ruled out for recreation for Avon Valley SPA/Ramsar and the Dorset Heaths SAC/SPA/Ramsar as no growth to west of National Park.
	SP4: Major development in the National Park	General policy setting criteria for major development within the New Forest National Park.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		Overriding public interest will be needed to support any major development within the National Park, with consideration of the criteria set out within this policy.
	SP5: Land to north of Fawley Waterside	Allocation.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects alone in relation to urban effects (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar); likely significant effects alone for water quality (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar) and air quality (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar)	Site particularly close to the Solent however Shoreline Management Plan sets out long term intention to hold the line along this section of coast, so no risks from coastal squeeze. Checks of aerial imagery indicate habitat not suitable for SPA/Ramsar birds as it is clearly dominated by scrub and trees, therefore no risk of loss of supporting habitat and area is not mapped with the Solent Wader and Brent Goose Strategy. Potential risks from proximity relate to urban effects (which include disturbance

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
					from noise and light pollution) and water quality. As policy relates to employment use only, no likely significant effects from recreation to New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar (which is over 2km distant).
	SP6: Infrastructure Provision and developer contributions	Strategic policy describing criteria for developer contributions within the National Park.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		
5	***Climate Change***				
	SP7: Safeguarding and improving water resources	General principles to safeguard water quantity within the Local Plan area in the context of development.	Policy listing general criteria for testing the sustainability of proposals. Screened out.		Policy is likely to be beneficial in reducing risks associated with water quality and water quantity, but is a general policy rather than specific mitigation and therefore does not need to be screened in for consideration at appropriate assessment.
	SP8: Flood risk	General criteria for developments in relation to flood risk.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP9: Sustainable Construction	General principles of development in the context of sustainability.	Policy listing general criteria for testing the sustainability of proposals. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
	SP10: Renewable Energy	General policy setting out criteria for renewable energy in developments.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		Policy likely to have positive environmental effects. Policy wording also ensures that planning permission will not be granted for renewable energy developments that will have an adverse impact to European sites. This reflects general wording rather than specific mitigation and therefore does not need to be screened in for consideration at appropriate assessment.
6	*Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment*				
	SP11: Nature conservation sites of international importance	Policy sets out the duty to comply with the Habitat Regulations and the need to contribute to existing mitigation and any future strategies.	Policy relates to mitigation and upholding the conservation objectives of European Sites. Policy screened in.	Policy relates to the Solent & Southampton Water SPA and New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar.	Policy relates to mitigation measures. In accordance with People vs Wind screened in for further assessment.
	SP12: The natural environment - nationally, regionally and locally important sites	Policy sets out general criteria for development designed to conserve sites of local and national importance.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		Environmentally positive policy, which relates to mitigation for locally and nationally important sites for nature conservation. Mitigation of such sites is outside the remit of the habitat regulations and this assessment and therefore further assessment is not required.

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
	SP13: Biodiversity Net Gain	Policy sets the target and criteria for BNG in relation to development, either on-site or off-site delivery as required.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		
	SP14: Landscape character	Policy sets out objectives where development that conserves the natural and cultural heritage of the New Forest will be favourable.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		
	SP15: Green & Blue Infrastructure	Policy which sets out general aspiration for connectivity between designated sites and habitats, connecting open spaces and reducing recreational pressure.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		Policy sets general aspiration for enhancing recreation outside of European sites, however the scope of this is not provided and therefore further assessment is not required.
	DP16: Open space	Strategic policy relating to the enhancement of open spaces and criteria regarding development where there is a net loss of open spaces.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		
	DP17: Recreational horse keeping	Policy listing criteria for keeping horses.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
	DP18: Field shelters and stables	Policy listing criteria for the construction of shelters and stables.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP19: Maneges	Policy listing criteria for the outdoor training or schooling of horses.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP20: Coastal Development	Policy listing criteria for small-scale coastal developments.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP21: Coastal Change Management Area	Policy sets out the CCMA area and criteria for use, development and infrastructure within the area.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		
	SP22: Tranquillity	General policy with aims for development to reduce adverse effects on tranquillity such as noise and light reduction and not encroaching on areas with high tranquillity value.	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		
	SP23: Dark skies	General policy with aims for development to reduce the impacts of light pollution and	Policy could not have any conceivable adverse effect on sites. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
		any other visually obtrusive man-made features.			
7	***Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment***				
	SP24: The historic and built environment	Policy describes aspiration for development should protect, maintain or enhance the sites and features within the historic and built environment of the New Forest.	Policy does not lead to development. Screened out.		
	DP25: Heritage assets	Policy sets out objectives where development that conserves the heritage features, and for historic and cultural environment will be supported.	Policy does not lead to development. Screened out.		
	DP26: Local Distinctiveness	Policy states that only developments that maintain the Local Distinctiveness will be supported.	Policy does not lead to development. Screened out.		
	DP27: Design principles	Policy sets out the general principles for the design, size and materials to be used for new developments.	Policy does not lead to development. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
	DP28: Residential character of defined villages	Policy which ensures that defined villages are conserved in their character and heritage.	Policy does not lead to development. Screened out.		
8	***Vibrant Communities***				
	SP29: New residential development in the National Park	Policy sets out the scale of new development within the Local Plan period.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to urban effects alone (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar); Mobile species and functionally-linked land alone (Mottisfont Bats SAC); recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC); water quality alone (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC, New Forest SAC/Ramsar, River Avon SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	Approximately 950 dwellings expected to come forward within the Plan period, with 285 dwellings expected on new site allocations. Within the Defined Villages (see SP3), it is expected that approximately 20 dwellings per annum will be built.
	SP30: Specialist housing for older people (Use Class C2)	Policy identifies the need for specialist housing, which will be enabled within the Defined Villages and in	General statement of policy. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
		accordance with the settlement hierarchy.			
	SP31: The size of new dwellings	Policy sets out the permitted development size and conditions attached to dwellings over a defined limit.	General statement of policy. Screened out.		
	SP32: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst	Existing allocation carried forward for around 60 residential dwellings.	Policy already granted planning permission, therefore screened out.		Existing allocation carried forward; application has full planning permission (ref 21/00472) but not yet built. Mitigation secured in relation to nutrient neutrality and recreation. Allocation is more than 1km from New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar so no risk of urban effects. Allocation forms part of the Plan and cumulative impacts of the Plan best assessed through Policies SP3 and SP29.
	SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital	Existing allocation for a mixed-use development, of approximately 30 residential care units and an extension to existing hospital buildings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to urban effects alone (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar); recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC); water quality alone (New Forest SAC/Ramsar), in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination	Existing allocation for a mixed-use development, of approximately 30 residential units and an extension to existing hospital buildings. Planning application (ref 22/00548) granted outline consent in early 2026 for a C2 care home with circa 70 rooms. HRA of the application identified likely significant effects in relation to water quality (run-off and nutrient neutrality) and urban effects. Consultation responses from

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
				(New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	Natural England identified risks from recreational disturbance. Site is adjacent to New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar.
	SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst	Allocation for approximately 70 new dwellings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC); water quality in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	New allocation. Site is more than 1km from New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar so no risk of urban effects or increased run-off onto New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar.
	SP35: Land at the former Lyndhurst Park Hotel	Allocation approximately 50 residential dwellings and potential for tourism uses.	Policy already granted planning permission, therefore screened out.		Existing allocation for mixed-use development (79 dwellings and a small number of commercial units, ref 24/00629FULL) with full planning permission and development commenced. Site abuts New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar. Outside 5.6km zone of influence for recreation and the Solent (Bird Aware Solent strategy). Allocation forms part of the Plan and cumulative

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
					impacts of the Plan best assessed through Policies SP3 and SP29.
	SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst	Allocation for approximately 50 residential care dwellings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to urban effects alone (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar); recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar); water quality in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	New allocation. Site is 60m from the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, so clearly potential for urban effects, however screened by housing, adjacent parts of the designated site are the golf course and the site is proposed for care home use, all of which potentially reduce risks. Screened in on a precautionary basis. Outside 5.6km zone of influence for recreation and the Solent (Bird Aware Solent strategy).
	SP37: Land south of Church Lane, Sway	Existing allocation carried forward for around 40 residential dwellings and 1 hectare of informal greenspace.	Policy already granted planning permission, therefore screened out.		Existing allocation for mixed-use development with full planning permission (ref 21/00743) and development commenced. Site 320m from the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar at closest point, however all development is outside the 400m zone. HRA report by applicant identified likely significant effects in relation to recreational disturbance (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar), pollution/run-off (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar) and

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
					nutrient enrichment from wastewater discharge (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC). Allocation forms part of the Plan and cumulative impacts of the Plan best assessed through Policies SP3 and SP29.
	SP38: Land to west of Brighton Road, Sway	Allocation for approximately 30 residential care dwellings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to urban effects alone (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar); recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC); water quality alone (New Forest SAC/Ramsar) in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	New allocation. Site abuts New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar so clear potential for urban effects and increased run-off. Policy wording suggests site will entirely include C2 use and therefore recreation is screened in on a precautionary basis given the nature of the development. Policy wording also suggests phasing of delivery to reduce potential impacts from water abstraction.
	SP39: Land to west of Winsor Road, Winsor	Allocation for approximately 55 residential dwellings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar, Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC); water quality in-combination (Solent &	New allocation. Beyond 400m from the New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and separated by road, fields etc., so no risk of urban effects or increased run-off. Note policy wording to ensure nutrient neutrality in relation to the Solent.

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
				Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC, River Avon SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	
	SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford	Allocation for approximately 30 residential dwellings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar), mobile species alone (Mottisfont Bats SAC); water quality in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	New allocation. Site is beyond 1km from the New Forest SPA/Ramsar and just over 600m from New Forest SAC, so no risk of urban effects or increased run-off. Outside 5.6km zone of influence for recreation and the Solent (Bird Aware Solent strategy). Likely significant effects triggered for mobile species on a precautionary basis as while allocation some distance from Mottisfont, it is in a relatively rural area, there are important bat roots in the vicinity and allocation includes woodland and a woodland corridor. Site could function as corridor or foraging area. Potential risks from lighting and noise. Further checks will be necessary to avoid adverse effects, as stated in policy wording.
	SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch	Allocation for approximately 50 residential dwellings.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to recreation in-combination (New Forest	New allocation for approximately 50 residential dwellings. On edge of catchment for River Avon SAC and the

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
				SAC/SPA/Ramsar); water quality in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	Solent so nutrient issues could relate to either catchment (nutrient neutrality must be demonstrated as included in policy wording). Outside 5.6km zone of influence for recreation and the Solent (Bird Aware Solent strategy). Well over 1km from nearest part of New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar and therefore no risks from urban effects or run-off.
	SP42: Affordable Housing provision within the Defined Villages and on allocated sites	Policy sets out the affordable housing requirement per development allocations within the Local Plan.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP43: Rural Exception Sites	Policy sets general criteria for development outside of defined settlement boundaries.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		Policy supports small-scale development that meets very specific requirements. As policy sets general criteria and does not include specific locations or quantum there can be no likely significant effects. Should any application be made for such development, project level assessment would be required and compliance with SP11.
	DP44: New Forest Commoners' dwellings	Policy states the conditions for which new commoners dwellings may be permitted.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		Policy supports development that meets very specific requirements. As policy sets general criteria and does not include specific locations or quantum there can be no likely significant effects. Should any application be made for such

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
					development, project level assessment would be required and compliance with SP11.
	DP45: New Forest Estate Workers' Dwellings	Policy states conditions for which new workers dwellings (e.g. forestry, estate and agricultural workers) may be permitted.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		As policy sets general criteria and does not include specific locations or quantum there can be no likely significant effects. Should any application be made for such development, project level assessment would be required and compliance with SP11.
	DP46: New dwellings for agricultural and forestry workers	Policy states conditions for which new works (forestry or agricultural) dwellings will be supported.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP47: Removal of agricultural occupancy conditions	Policy suggests the conditions under which agricultural or commoning occupancy terms would be removed from a dwelling.	Policy does not lead to development. Screened out.		
	SP48: Self and Custom House Building	General policy wording to enable self-build / custom house building within the National Park.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		Policy enables development of self-build homes, however does not give a defined area and therefore no further assessment is required.
	SP49: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Policy sets conditions for which provision of sites to accommodate gypsies and	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		Policy suggests provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in line with National guidance. The anticipated need for such

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
		travellers or travelling showpeople will be permitted.			sites within the New Forest is 12 sites by the end of the plan period (2043) and 6 sites by the end of 2029. It is not clear within this policy where these will be located and therefore no need to screen in for appropriate assessment.
	SP50: Allocation of land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh for Travelling Showpeople's use	Allocation of 6 Travelling Showpeople's plots for mixed-use, including residential, business and storage subject to the conditions set out within the policy.	Policy may have an adverse impact on sites alone. LSE. Screened in.	Screened in for likely significant effects in relation to recreation in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar); water quality in-combination (Solent & Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC); water quantity in-combination (New Forest SAC, New Forest Ramsar, River Itchen SAC) and air quality in-combination (New Forest SAC/SPA/Ramsar).	New allocation for six travelling showpeople's plots near Netley Marsh. Allocation is within 2km from the New Forest Sac/SPA/Ramsar so there are risks from recreation. Water quality and quantity risks identified in relation to the Solent & the New Forest European sites.
	DP51: Replacement dwellings	Policy lists general conditions for the replacement of dwellings, including those that are in a slightly different position to the original dwelling.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP52: Extensions to dwellings	Policy sets the criteria for when an extension to dwellings will be permitted.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
	DP53: Outbuildings	Policy lists general conditions for which the construction of domestic outbuildings will be permitted.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP54: Local Community facilities	Policy ensures a commitment to retain existing community facilities and will support the development of new facilities where there is a clear benefit.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
9	***Thriving local economy***				
	SP55: Maintaining and improving business floorspace	Policy outlines where small-scale economic development will be supported.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP56: Redevelopment and extension to existing employment buildings	Policy outlines where the extension of existing employment buildings or intensification of employment premises will be supported.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP57: The land-based economy	The Local Plan aims to support to continuation of commoning, farming and forestry to retain the culture	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
		and land-based businesses within the New Forest.			
	DP58: New agricultural and forestry related development	Policy sets criteria for the permission to develop new agricultural and forestry buildings, structures and linked development.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP59: Re-use of farm buildings	Policy lists general criteria for the change in use of farm buildings.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP60: Loss of local retail facilities	Policy lists general criteria for the change in use or loss of retail facilities.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP61: Retail development outside of the defined settlement boundaries	Policy confirms that small-scale convenience shops and farm shops will be permitted in-keeping with the rural and cultural setting.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP62: Sustainable tourism development	Policy states that development that enhances and supports the special qualities of the National Park will be supported.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	DP63: Holiday parks and camp sites	Policy states that extensions or new holiday	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		

	Policy	Description	Screening outcome	Relevant European Sites	Notes
		parks/camping sites will only be permitted where they are moved or set away from sensitive features.			
	SP64: Telecommunications and digital infrastructure	Policy listing general criteria for digital infrastructure provision to ensure that the scale and design is appropriate to the setting and meets the needs of local communities and businesses.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
10	***Transport and Access***				
	DP65: Transport infrastructure	Policy gives general principles for new transport infrastructure.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
	SP66: Sustainable transport and access	Safer transport and access will be promoted across the New Forest, with support and access to services provided where appropriate. General criteria to achieve this is listed.	Policy listing general criteria. Screened out.		
11	***Monitoring and Implementation***				

Appendix 3: Distances to European sites and allocations

The table below sets out the distances (in km) from each allocation (including those already granted planning permission) to each European site. All European sites within 20km of the National Park boundary are included.

European site	SP5: Land to the north of Fawley Waterside	SP32: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst	SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital	SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst	SP35: Land at former Lyndhurst Park Hotel	SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst	SP37: Land south of Church Lane, Sway	SP38: Land to the west of Brighton Road, Sway	SP39: Land to the weat of Winsor Road, Winsor	SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford	SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch	SP50: Allocation of Land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh
Briddlesford Copses SAC	13.5	27.9	27.9	28.3	29.3	30	27	27.9	32.3	40.3	45	30.3
Dorset Heaths SAC	31	22.1	21	22.3	17.1	16.7	12.5	12.6	19.4	16.3	12.7	21.2
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes SAC	45.3	39.3	38	39.7	34	33.9	26.7	26.5	37.9	39.2	37.6	39.2
Emer Bog SAC	19.6	10.6	12	10.1	15.6	15.5	25.1	24.6	11.2	13.5	18.8	10
Great Yews SAC	39.8	25	24.7	24.8	23.2	22.5	29.1	28	20.5	13.3	7.9	22.7
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC	45.7	40.7	39.3	41.1	35.4	35.4	27.4	27.3	39.6	41.8	40.7	40.7
Isle of Wight Downs SAC	18.6	25.2	24.3	25.8	22.4	23	13.3	14.4	27.7	34.6	36.9	27.1
Mottisfont Bats SAC	28	15.4	16.3	14.8	18.3	17.9	28.2	27.4	12.9	8.7	11.8	13.4
Prescombe Down SAC	52	37.5	37	37.3	34.9	34.3	38.9	37.8	33	26.3	20.8	35.3
River Avon SAC	25.5	11.3	10.6	11.2	8.5	7.8	12.1	11.6	7.1	6.2	2	9.4
River Itchen SAC	12.5	10.1	11.3	9.8	15.4	15.6	23.1	22.9	13.4	18.9	24.4	11.1
Salisbury Plain SAC	39.4	26.1	26.6	25.6	27.3	26.8	36.3	35.3	22.4	14.9	13.1	23.8
Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC	14.7	16.8	15.8	17.4	14	14.6	6.3	7.5	19.2	26.4	29.4	18.6
Solent Maritime SAC	0.2	2.5	3.8	2.2	7.9	8.1	5.9	7	5.5	12	17.3	3.3
South Wight Maritime SAC	19.9	25.4	24.3	26	21.9	22.4	12.4	13.5	27.3	33.8	36	27
Studland to Portland SAC	44.9	40	38.7	40.5	34.8	34.8	26.7	26.7	39.1	41.3	40.3	40.1

European site	SP5: Land to the north of Fawley Waterside	SP32: Land at Whartons Lane, Ashurst	SP33: Land at Ashurst Hospital	SP34: Land at Knellers Lane, Ashurst	SP35: Land at former Lyndhurst Park Hotel	SP36: Land at Calpe Avenue, Lyndhurst	SP37: Land south of Church Lane, Sway	SP38: Land to the west of Brighton Road, Sway	SP39: Land to the weat of Winsor Road, Winsor	SP40: Land to the south of Hamptworth Road, Landford	SP41: Land to the east of The Ridge, Redlynch	SP50: Allocation of Land at Ringwood Road, Netley Marsh
The New Forest SAC	2.6	1	0	1.5	0	0.1	0.3	0	0.4	0.9	1.3	1.7
Avon Valley SPA	30.7	18.5	17.5	18.6	14	13.5	12	11.6	15.1	12.7	9.8	17.1
Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA	20.1	33.1	33.7	33.1	36.9	37.4	39.2	39.9	37.5	44.2	49.6	35.1
Dorset Heathlands SPA	31	22.1	21	22.3	17.1	16.7	12.5	12.6	19.4	16.3	12.7	21.2
New Forest SPA	2.6	1	0	1.5	0	0.1	0.3	0	0.4	1.7	1.4	1.7
Poole Harbour SPA	44	37.2	35.9	37.6	31.8	31.7	25	24.8	35.5	36.4	33.9	36.9
Porton Down SPA	39.4	26.1	26.6	25.6	27.3	26.8	36.3	35.3	22.4	14.9	13.1	23.8
Portsmouth Harbour SPA	11.1	23.9	24.5	23.9	27.7	28.2	30.3	30.9	28.3	35.2	40.6	25.9
Solent & Southampton Water SPA	0.2	2.5	3.8	2.2	7.9	8.1	3.9	4.9	5.4	11.2	16.7	3.3
Solent and Dorset Coast SPA	1.1	3	4.2	2.7	8.3	8.5	6.3	6.9	6.1	12.8	18.1	3.8
Avon Valley Ramsar	30.7	18.5	17.5	18.6	14	13.5	12	11.6	15.1	12.7	9.8	17.1
Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar	20.1	33.1	33.7	33.1	36.9	37.4	39.2	39.9	37.5	44.2	49.6	35.1
Dorset Heathlands Ramsar	32.5	23.1	22.2	23.2	18.4	18.2	13.4	12.9	19.4	16.3	12.7	21.5
New Forest Ramsar	2.6	1	0	1.5	0	0.1	0.3	0	0.4	1.7	1.4	1.7
Poole Harbour Ramsar	44	37.2	35.9	37.6	31.8	31.7	25	24.8	35.5	36.4	33.9	36.9
Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar	11.1	23.9	24.5	23.9	27.7	28.2	30.3	30.9	28.3	35.2	40.6	25.9
Solent & Southampton Water Ramsar	0.2	2.5	3.8	2.2	7.9	8.1	3.9	4.9	5.4	11.2	16.7	3.3