



Questmap Ltd.

Land off Hamble Lane/Sydney Avenue, Hamble

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

September 2023

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

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1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Report Scope and Methodology
- FPCR were commissioned by Questmap Ltd. to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) of Sydney Avenue, Hamble to provide an ecological baseline for the site and determine its ecological importance. - The proposals for the site are a residential development of 6 dwellings and associated infrastructure. - To inform this assessment, an extended phase 1 habitat survey and a desktop study have been undertaken.
Ecological Baseline
- The Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site lies approximately 420m and the Solent Maritime SAC is approximately 1km east of the site. The New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar is located 5.17km west of the site and the River Itchen SAC approximately 8.6km from the site boundary. Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar is located 10.5km away from the site. Five Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are located within 1km of the site. All are sufficiently distant and buffered from the site, and the development proposals are not significant in size and are therefore not expected to be affected by the proposals. - The site is dominated by vegetated garden, overgrown by bramble scrub in places but recently cleared, and residential housing. These represent common and widespread habitats supporting limited botanical and faunal diversity. The site was not considered to have the potential support any protected species.
Residual Effects
- The assessment has demonstrated that in the absence of mitigation, proposals would lead to, at most, minor negative effects significant at a county and local level for a number of the internationally and nationally designated sites. - A combination of intrinsic mitigation, targeted mitigation and compensation detailed within this EcIA have demonstrated that proposals will lead to a negligible effect.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The following Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd on behalf of Questmap Ltd. for the development proposals at Land off Hamble Lane/Sydney Avenue, Hamble, Southampton, Hampshire (Central OS Grid Ref: SU47400721) herein referred to as 'the site'.

2.2 The aim of the EcIA is to:

- provide a summary of the methods and results of all new survey work and refer to previous work to establish an ecological baseline;
- identify and describe all potentially significant ecological effects associated with the proposed development on important ecological features;
- set out the mitigation measures required to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and to address any potentially significant ecological effects;
- provide an assessment of the significance of residual effects;
- identify appropriate enhancement measures and consider biodiversity net gain; and
- set out the requirements for post-construction monitoring.

Site Location and Context

2.3 The site is located in Hamble-le-rice, south-east of Southampton, in a residential setting. The site measures approximately 0.43ha and comprises of a small number of residential houses and associated gardens.

2.4 In the surrounding landscape, the site abuts Hamble Lane to the south and Sydney Avenue to the north. Westwards, over Hamble Road, is a recreation ground and sports facility. To the south lies further urban environs and then Southampton Water, while to the east lies residential environs and the River Hamble. To the north of the site is Hamble Airfield.

Site Proposals

2.5 The proposals are for a residential development comprising of 8 retirement bungalows with associated infrastructure and greenspace, including access road and amenity grassland.

3.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

3.1 Details on relevant national and local policy and legislation for ecology in relation to the development site are provided in Appendix A. The policies and legislation most relevant are:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (CHSR) (as amended) in relation to the European Protected Species (EPS) great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN), bats (all species) and hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*; and European protected sites i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Internationally protected “Ramsar Sites” (collectively known as “Natura 2000 sites”). Annex II bat species of particular relevance in relation to SACs designated for bats.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) in relation to all wild birds (including Schedule 1 species), other animals (notably Schedule 5 species), flora (those listed in Schedules 8 and 9) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- The Environment Act 2021;
- Protection of Badgers Act (PBA) 1992;
- Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 in relation to various priority species and habitats;
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997 made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021;
- Local Planning Policy contained within the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD);
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR) as designated most recently by the NERC Act 2006;
- Non-statutory protected local sites including County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) sites;
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP); and
- Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological information was requested from both statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations including:
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC);
 - Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)
- 4.2 Further inspection of colour 1:25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk) was also undertaken in order to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.
- 4.3 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence, as follows:
- 15km around the application area for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites).
 - 2km around the application area for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and species records (e.g. protected, Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or notable species).
 - 1km around the application site for sites of County Importance (e.g. Biological Heritage Sites Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)).
- 4.4 When handling data, species data were filtered to include records from the previous ten years only.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 4.5 The habitat survey was undertaken by Adam Day, an Associate Ecologist who is experienced in botanical surveys, having achieved a level 4 on the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's (BSBI) Field Identification Skills Competency (FISC), equivalent to tutor level identification skills. The surveys were undertaken during clear weather 16th August 2023. Survey methods followed the extended Phase 1 Survey (JNCC, 2010¹) technique. This involved a systematic walk over of the Site to classify the broad habitat types and identify any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Habitats were broadly mapped in the field using an OS base map using pens or pencils as appropriate.
- 4.6 Where feasible, target notes and species lists were compiled for individual areas and assessments of abundance were made using the DAFOR scale. Vascular plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010)². Whilst the species lists collected should not be regarded as exhaustive, sufficient information was gained during the survey to enable classification and assessment of broad habitat types and identify features likely to be of interest.
- 4.7 Additionally, to aid future Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations UKHab Survey technique as recommended by Natural England³ and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management⁴ were also followed. This involved a systematic walk over of the site to classify the

¹ JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey – a technique for environmental audit. Peterborough: JNCC

² Stace, C.A. (2010). New Flora of the British Isles. (3rd Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

³ Natural England, 2014. *Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities*. (updated 2021) [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications> [Accessed 05/03/2021]

⁴ CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

habitat types present to as detailed a degree as possible, and to identify any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Habitats described in this report following UKHab naming convention, with specific habitat codes provided.

Habitat Condition Assessments

- 4.8 All habitats/habitat compartments on site have been assessed using the technical guidance document provided by Natural England for use with the biodiversity metric 4.0. The guidance provides a list of criteria for a range of broad habitat types which are used to determine whether habitat fall into a 'poor', 'moderate' or 'good' condition score.

Invasive Plants, Notifiable Weed Species and Other Notable Flora

- 4.9 Consideration has been given as to the presence of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)⁵ and the presence of any notable weeds including those covered under the Weed Act 1959⁶ (where population is significant enough to be considered injurious).

Impact Assessment

- 4.10 The assessment of significant ecological effects has been undertaken in accordance with CIEEM EcIA guidelines⁷. In summary, the process involves:
- **Establish Baseline** – this is based on desk study and field surveys which describes the existing and potential Important Ecological Features (IEFs) within the zones of influence specified.
 - **Determine the Scale of Importance of Ecological Features** - importance is determined using geographical frames of reference: Local, Country, Regional, National and International. This assessment is based on a variety of factors, including statutory protection, statutory designation, conservation status, abundance and rarity.
 - **Assess Significant Ecological Effects** –based on the importance of the ecological feature, magnitude of the effect and sensitivity of the features considered. This is description-based rather than applying a matrix which considers construction and operation effects only where relevant. The assessment assumes the proposed layout, intrinsic mitigation and routine ecological mitigation normally conditioned, and these are outlined clearly.
 - **Mitigation** – This will be based on the mitigation hierarchy – avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement. Any further mitigation measures required will be outlined to ensure residual effects are lowered to a level considered acceptable. Enhancements will seek biodiversity net gain in line with the NPPF. Monitoring will be considered where applicable.
 - **Future Baseline and Residual Effects** – final conclusionary statements for the short, medium and long term.

⁵ Act of Parliament, (1981). The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), London: HMSO.

⁶ Act of Parliament, (1959). The Weed Act 1959. London: HMSO.

⁷ CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine (version 1.1). Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Limitations

- 4.11 This assessment aims to provide baseline ecological data for the Site and as such presents an overview of the habitats and features present during the specific surveys undertaken to date. Due to the transient and complex nature of ecosystems, no investigation can provide a complete representation or prediction of the natural environment present, however every effort has been made to ensure an accurate description of the Site is presented, by following best practice guidance, experience and professional judgement.
- 4.12 The extended phase 1 habitat survey took into consideration the presence of invasive non-native flora species, however this survey did not constitute a full survey for the presence of this group which would come with its own survey requirements.
- 4.13 The phase 1 habitat map (*Figure 3*) has been reproduced from detailed field notes and informed by aerial imagery, OS mapping and site maps provided by the client. The accuracy of this figure is therefore ultimately guided by the accuracy of these sources and can only be relied upon to a certain degree of resolution.
- 4.14 Data provided by third party sources collated during the desktop study is generally made up from a wide range of sources including (but not limited to) those submitted by ecological consultancies, wildlife conservation organisations and volunteers. As such, this data is typically focused on areas of known nature conservation, is reliant upon formal surveys having been undertaken within an area or the presence of an expert within the locality (particularly for invertebrate records) and as such this data can never be fully relied upon as a complete ecological dataset for any given area. Rather, this data is used as a guide to likely presence of notable ecological features and can never be relied upon for likely absence.
- 4.15 Given the transient nature of natural processes, ecological data should never be relied upon for more than two years from completion of surveys.
- 4.16 No other limitations specific to this survey influenced this assessment.

5.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

Desk Study

Statutory Sites

Internationally Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

- 5.1 There are five statutory designated sites of international importance recorded within 15km of the Site boundary. All five sites, along with nationally designated statutory sites and non-statutory designated sites, are shown in *Figure 1*.
- 5.2 The Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site lies approximately 420m south of the Site boundary. This is a unique estuarine system supporting an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. The site qualifies as an SPA due to regularly supporting at least 20,000 wildfowl and supporting 1% or more of the British populations of a number of breeding or overwintering bird species including breeding little tern *Sterna albifrons* and sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis* and overwintering black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*.
- 5.3 The Solent Maritime SAC is located approximately 1km east of the Site boundary. This site supports complex marine and estuarine habitats and is the only site known to support smooth cord-grass *Spartina alterniflora* in the UK and one of only two sites with significant amounts of small cord-grass *S. maritima*. This SAC also contains the second largest aggregation of Atlantic salt meadows in the south and south-wets of England.
- 5.4 The New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar site is approximately 5.17km west of the Site. The New Forest has a large number of Annex I habitats including European dry heaths and *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests. The site is also designated for its populations of southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercurial* and stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*. The New Forest supports nationally important numbers of breeding nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*, amongst other species.
- 5.5 North of the site lies the River Itchen SAC, approximately 8.6km from the Site boundary. The river Itchen is designated for supporting the Annex I habitat 'Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculon fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation'. It is a classic example of a chalk river and supports large populations of southern damselfly and high densities of bullhead *Cottus gobio*.
- 5.6 Approximately 10.5km east of the Site lies Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar. This site supports internationally important numbers of migratory waterfowl including red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* and dark-bellied brent geese. Portsmouth Harbour includes one of the four largest expanses of mudflats and tidal creeks on the south coast of Britain. It forms an unusual intertidal ecosystem rich in invertebrates and with a high density of benthic species.

Nationally Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

- 5.7 All the SSSI's within 2km of the Site are components of the above internationally designated sites.

SSSI Risk Impact Zones

- 5.8 Part of the Site sits within Natural England's SSSI Risk Impact zone for the following proposals:

- All Planning Applications: All planning applications (except householder) outside or extending outside existing settlements/urban areas affecting greenspace, farmland, semi natural habitats or landscape features such as trees, hedges, streams, rural buildings/structures.
- Residential: Residential development of 50 units or more.
- Notes 1: Strategic solutions for recreational impacts are in place. Please contact your Local Planning Authority as they have the information to advise on specific requirements.
- Notes 2: NUTRIENT IMPACT AREA. For new development with overnight accommodation Reg 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 must be applied and additional measures required. LPA to refer to Natural England's Nutrient Neutrality advice.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.9 There are five non-statutory designated sites located within 1km of the Site boundary, all Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Petters Copse SINC is designated for supporting ancient semi-natural woodland and is located 380m south of the Site boundary West Wood (Royal Victoria Country Park) SINC, approximately 480m north-west of the Site, is designated for supporting ancient semi-natural woodland, wet woodland and "fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent)". Netley and Hamble Shore SINC is located approximately 570m south-west of the Site boundary and is designated for supporting "semi-natural coastal and estuarine habitat(s)". Hamble Common West SINC is located approximately 716m south-east of the Site and is designated for supporting "areas of heathland which are afforested or have succeeded to woodland". Approximately 933m north-east of the Site boundary lies Mercury Marsh SINC which is designated for supporting "semi-natural coastal and estuarine habitat(s)".

Protected/Notable Species

- 5.10 A number of species records from the previous ten years were provided for the area by HBIC. These largely included a range of bird species including the following that are listed on WCA Sch.1: Mediterranean gull, black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*.
- 5.11 Other protected species recorded include a large number of stag beetle records, a variety of bat species (mostly recorded within West Wood SINC) and records of slow worm *Anguis fragilis* and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*.
- 5.12 The locations of protected/notable species records provided by HBIC are shown on *Figure 2*.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 5.13 The locations of the habitats described below are illustrated in *Figure 3: Phase 1 Habitat Plan*.

Vegetated Garden

- 5.14 The Site was managed as a garden up until very recently when management of the Site ceased. The Site then became overgrown in many areas with bramble, although the Site was cleared of most vegetation in 2023 prior to the walkover. For the purpose of reporting and biodiversity net gain (BNG) calculations, the Site is considered vegetated garden.

- 5.15 This habitat included a number of scrub/shrub species, not all native, including frequent bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and Buddleia *Buddleja davidii*. A small number of trees were present including Holm oak *Quercus ilex*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. Herbaceous flora was limited and included occasional dandelion *Taraxacum* sp. and ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and rare cleavers *Galium aparine*, nipplewort *Lapsana communis* and green alkanet *pentaglottis sempervirens*. Grass species were limited to rare Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* perennial-rye grass *Lolium perenne* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*.

Protected and Notable Species

- 5.16 Due to the small size of the Site and the very limited habitats within the Site boundary, the Site is not considered to have the potential to support any protected or notable species/groups. Although there are a number of stag beetle records within 200m of the Site boundary, there is no deadwood present on Site to support this species.

Likely Future Baseline Conditions

- 5.17 Where proposals do not proceed, it is considered that habitats on Site would likely remain in the same condition as described. As the Site is not managed it can be assumed that the bramble scrub that dominates the Site will remain.
- 5.18 Without significant changes in habitats, the Site will likely continue to support no protected or notable species.

Summary of Important Ecological Features

- 5.19 The walkover survey and desk-study have demonstrated that the proposals have the potential to effect a range of important ecological features. These are summarised in *Table 1* and assigned a geographic context based on survey results, relevant legislation and policy.

Table 1: Important Ecological Features On-Site and within Local Area

Important Ecological Feature	Relevant Legislation/ Policy	Geographic Scale	Rationale
SPAs/SACs/Ramsars	NPPF	International	Five of these sites are located within the search area for Statutory Designated Sites of International Importance designated for their biodiversity value.
SSSIs	NPPF, Local Plan	National	The only SSSI's located within the search area for Statutory Designated Sites of National Importance designated for their biodiversity value are those that comprise of the previously mentioned internationally designated sites.
SINCs	NPPF, Local Plan	County	Five SINCs are located within the search area for Non-Statutory Designated Sites of biodiversity value.

Where NPPF = National Planning Policy Framework 2019; CHSR = Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

6.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Development Proposals and Intrinsic Mitigation

- 6.1 The proposals are for outline planning permission for the development of the site for eight new homes, creation of new access, landscaping and associated works to facilitate the development.
- 6.2 The proposed scheme includes the following intrinsic ecological avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures:
- 0.268ha of green infrastructure is proposed, constituting 61% of the total Site area. This will provide opportunities for habitat creation, including modified grassland and tree planting.
 - New hedgerow planting around residences throughout the Site.
 - Proposals include additional tree planting within the development area, with them included along within GI areas around the Site peripheries.

Biodiversity Net Gain and Habitat Enhancements

- 6.3 The development framework has been assessed using the DEFRA Metric Version 4.0. Details of this assessment are provided in Appendix D. Based on proposing habitats that are readily achievable and common place in residential development of this type, the BNG calculations will result in a 50.74% gain in habitats. This will be achieved through the creation of modified grassland habitat and the planting of small, urban trees. An 100% gain in hedgerows will be achieved due the absence of hedgerows within the baseline and creation of a number of native hedgerows. The baseline habitats are shown in *Figure 4: Baseline Habitats*, the habitats being retained in *Figure 5: Habitat Retention* and the proposed habitats within *Figure 6: proposed Habitats*.

Core Documents

- 6.4 The following lists the core documents that will secure the mitigation and enhancement measures described in this report. They can be secured through appropriately worded pre-commencement planning conditions, attached to the application to be submitted and discharged prior to the commencement of works.
1. Construction and Environmental Management Plan for Ecology (CEMP: Ecology): This pre-commencement document contains the necessary Method Statements to ensure protected species are not unlawfully harmed during ground clearance, earthworks and during construction. The document will include an Ecological Constraints and Mitigation Plan drawing that clearly shows the location of constraints and details mitigation required, where necessary.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on Important Ecological Features

- 6.5 The status of the important ecological features (IEFs) identified on site have been reviewed against the proposals and intrinsic mitigation to determine whether there are any impact pathways and whether any of these will lead to a likely significant effect, these are assessed in *Table 2*. The requirement for additional mitigation measures above the intrinsic mitigation has been considered for each of the IEFs where they can reduce the scale of negative effects or encourage a positive effect.

Table 2: Assessment of Effects on Important Ecological Features

IEF: Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar	
Assessment of Impacts	The proposals are small in scale representing 6 dwellings across 0.4ha of proposed built environment. Whilst there may be some increase in visitor pressure, it is considered extremely unlikely to lead to a significant effect due to the small size of the development. The Site is in close proximity, within 600m, of a number of other green-spaces and parks including Mount Pleasant recreation ground and Royal Victoria Park. This should help to alleviate pressure from the SPA/Ramsar.
Mitigation	The site is located within 500m of the Solent and Southampton Water SAC, SPA and Ramsar site. As per Policy DM11 of the adopted Eastleigh Local Plan, all development within a 5.6km Zone of Influence of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership sites may be permitted if a financial contribution through Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy is made. In combination effects should be mitigated where appropriate. In this instance the low numbers of units provided are unlikely to significantly contribute to in-combination impacts on the protected site. These proposals are for eight new one bed homes. The Solent Bird Aware schedules annual prices for contributions towards mitigation. The contributions from 1st April 2023 are as follows: • 1 bedroom property £443 • 2 bedroom property £639 • 3 bedroom property £834 • 4 bedroom property £980 • 5 bedroom property £1150 • Flat Rate £740 The proposals will therefore be required to contribute a sum of £3,544 to mitigate for the potential increased recreational impacts on the Solent and Southampton statutory protected site.
Predicted Effect	Minor Negative to Negligible Effect at a County Scale
Residual Effects	Negligible
IEF: Solent Maritime SAC	
Assessment of Impacts	The Solent Maritime SAC is located approximately 1km east of the site. Although a zone of influence has not been formally established for this designated area, the main threat/pressure has been assessed as an increase in nitrogen inputs. Nutrient (nitrogen) neutrality is discussed within section 6.6 and 6.7, including calculating the nitrate load of the development. A financial contribution will be made to mitigate for the net increase in nitrates.
Predicted Effect	Minor Negative Effect at a County Scale
Predicted Effect	Negligible
IEF: The New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar	
Assessment of Impacts	Eastleigh Borough currently has no agreed financial mitigation strategy for impacts arising on the New Forest SPA. Whilst the site is significantly further by road than the 13.8km ZOI recommended by Footprint Ecology in their strategic review of impacts on the SPA, it is within that ZOI in a straight line over Southampton water. Therefore, it is likely that some form of recreational payment will be required. This should be agreed with the LPA prior to consent being granted through a section 106 agreement.
Predicted Effect	Minor Negative to Negligible Effect at a County Scale
Residual Effects	Negligible
IEF: River Itchen SAC	

Assessment of Impacts	The River Itchen SAC is located approximately 8.6km north of the site and does not have a formal zone of influence. In addition to the small size of the development and the intervening distance between the site and the SAC, the location of the designated site situated upstream will avoid any indirect or direct significant effect on the SAC designation.
Predicted Effect	Negligible
IEF: Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar	
Assessment of Impacts	Portsmouth Harbour SPA has been excluded from consideration because it is over 5.6km away, the zone of influence for this site, and therefore unlikely to be impacted.
Predicted Effect	Negligible
IEF: SSSI's	
Assessment of Impacts	All SSSI sites within 2km of the site boundary are designated in relation to the SPA/SAC sites considered above and as such the same mitigation strategy applies to these.
Predicted Effect	Minor Negative to Negligible Effect at a County Scale
Predicted Effect	Negligible
IEF: SINC's	
Assessment of Impacts	Most of the SINC's within 2km of the site are within or adjacent to the SPA and SAC sites considered above and are separated from the proposed development by the residential environs of Hamble. These SINC's include marshy and estuarine habitats, as well as woodland and areas of grassland. The site itself does not include any SINC areas, and the impacts on these sites are likely to be mitigated through the agreed pathways for statutory designated sites as agreed above.
Predicted Effect	Negligible

Nitrogen neutrality in relation to statutory designated sites

- 6.6 Natural England requires developments within south Hampshire, including the borough of Eastleigh, to quantify the nitrate load generated by the proposed development and mitigate any increase in nitrates. As such, a nutrient budget has been completed for this proposal, which results in a net increase of 6.62kg TN/year which, in the absence of mitigation, could impact the Itchen SAC and Solent SPA sites. The metric is included within this submission.
- 6.7 To mitigate any impacts, the developer will make a financial contribution to an approved mitigation scheme. HIWWT offer NN offsetting and Eastleigh Borough Council have a nitrate credit scheme that could be used. This financial contribution would be securable through a S106 agreement with the provider and LPA.

Habitats

- 6.8 Habitats present on site are dominated by low ecological value bramble scrub and vegetated garden. The loss of these low ecological value habitats should not be considered a constraint from a habitat perspective.
- 6.9 Post development there is a 50.74% net gain in habitats and 100% net gain in hedgerows. This is achieved by the creation of modified grassland throughout the development and 39 urban trees. 174m of native hedgerow planting provides the hedgerow gains. This will be secured through a protective covenant to ensure that they are maintained for the life of the development within the residential zones.

- 6.10 Emorsgate EL1 flowering lawn mix will be used on all lawn areas and landscape planting mixes will include species that provide nectar and berry sources.
- 6.11 All green infrastructure proposals including BNG enhancements should be secured through a suitably worded condition for a Landscape Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that includes habitat creation, management and monitoring specifications.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The walkover survey and desk-study identified a range of important ecological features within the Sites zone of influence. The impacts on these were assessed against the proposals for a residential development on land off Hamble Lane/Sydney Avenue, Hamble for 8 dwellings and associated infrastructure.
- 7.2 The assessment has demonstrated that in the absence of mitigation, proposals would lead to, at most, **minor negative effects non-significant at a county and local level** on internationally and nationally designated sites, mainly due to intervening distance and the small scale of the development. With a combination of mitigation, compensation and enhancement detailed within this EcIA, have demonstrated that the proposals will lead to **negligible effects** for the majority of IEFs.
- 7.3 The BNG calculation using the metric 4.0 has concluded that for habitats there will be a net gain of 50.74%, and an 100% net gain for linear feature such as hedgerows. The development will include areas of modified grassland and tree planting, along with the retention of vegetated garden and housing.

APPENDIX A: RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Legislative Framework

1.1 The applicable legislative framework is summarised as follows:

- Environment Act 2021;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC);
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) (WCA);
- The EC Birds Directive (Directive 79/409/EEC) as translated into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- The EC Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) as translated into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); and
- The Protection of Badgers Act (1992).

Habitats

1.2 The degree to which habitats and species receive consideration within the planning system relies on many mechanisms, including:

- Inclusion within a specific policy, for example veteran trees, ancient woodland and linear habitats within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), or local planning policies;
- A non-statutory site designation (e.g. Local Wildlife Site);
- Habitats considered as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity and species considered as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006); and
- Habitats identified as being a Priority Habitat and species identified as being a Priority Species within the local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Protected/Notable Species

1.3 Principal pieces of legislation protecting wild species are Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (UK Exit). Some species, for example badgers, also have their own protective legislation (Protection of Badger Act 1992). The impact that this legislation has on the Planning system is outlined in ODPM 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.

1.4 This guidance states that as the presence of protected species is a material consideration in any planning decision and it is therefore essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent to which they are affected by proposals, is established prior to planning permission being granted. Furthermore, where protected species are present and proposals may result in harm to the species or its habitat, steps should be taken to ensure the long-term protection of the species, such as through attaching appropriate planning conditions for example.

1.5 In addition to protected species, there are those that are otherwise of conservation merit, such as those listed as SPI for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under the NERC Act 2006. These are recognised in the NPPF which advises that when determining planning applications, LPA's should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a set of principles including:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be encouraged.

Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policy for England. As such, the NPPF must be a material consideration for local authorities when considering planning decisions. The following relate to ecology/biodiversity:

Policy 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

170. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

171. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

172. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

174. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

176. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Area of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

177. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Local Planning Policies

- 1.7 Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) includes the following policies of relevance:

Strategic policy S1, Delivering sustainable development

“1. To be sustainable, new development in the Borough should:

- a. meet community needs without compromising the identity of the Borough or its individual settlements, or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;

b. enhance social equality by ensuring equal and easy access to a range of community facilities and services and by promoting the development of employment, education and skills training opportunities;

c. maintain and help to grow a high-performing local economy that benefits the Borough, south Hampshire and the wider economy, without adverse impact on south Hampshire's city, town and other centres, the quality of the local environment or local transport networks;

d. have regard to the potential impacts of climate change, and the need to limit greenhouse gas emissions including through carbon sequestration and by promoting measures to design buildings and spaces which are adaptable to predicted climate change, and restrict development in areas at risk from flooding, minimise energy use and encourage the generation of renewable energy, and by minimising emissions from motorised transport, industrial activity and domestic uses;

e. minimise the need to travel longer distances and, where travel is necessary, prioritise more sustainable forms of transport, such as active travel, other alternatives to car use, or a combination of active travel and other alternatives to car use;

f. avoid impacts on the Hamble and Itchen catchments and associated flora and fauna species by preserving water quality and flows from development and safeguarding potential yield of local water resources used for public water supplies having regard to the impacts of abstraction;

g. seek opportunities to optimise density of new development and redevelopments;

h. use resources wisely and minimise the generation of waste in the construction, occupation and use of buildings;

i. maintain local environmental quality, including avoiding damage to, and where possible enhancing, the existing valued urban and rural environments in the Borough and heritage assets;

j. have regard to the purposes of the South Downs National Park, including regarding its status as an International Dark Night Skies reserve; and

k. maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development to achieve an environmental net gain.

2. Applicants are encouraged to undertake pre-application consultation with the relevant statutory and non statutory consultees.

3. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

4. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant

to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- a. any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- b. where specific policies in that Framework or other international or national legislation indicate that development should be restricted.”

Strategic policy S9, Green infrastructure

“1. Through new development and other initiatives the Borough Council will seek to achieve the provision, retention and/or enhancement of the following forms of multi-functional green infrastructure, including provision of:

- a. landscape scale strategic links across the Borough boundary, to and between the Borough’s settlements, the countryside, the coast, and the major areas of open space including the country parks (see strategic policy S12);
- b. interlinked publicly accessible open space through new and existing development including for example formal sports facilities and informal amenity spaces and cemeteries (see policies DM32-DM34, Chapter 5 and detailed proposals in Chapter 6); 25 www.eastleigh.gov.uk/biodiversity 48 Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 April 2022
- c. green infrastructure incorporated into all new development with multifunctional spaces connected by primary, secondary and tertiary green links;
- d. interconnected urban green infrastructure within the fine grain of existing and new development including green, cycle ways, paths and linkages between community facilities and open spaces to link community facilities;
- e. green stepping stones such as street trees, green roofs and walls, pocket parks and urban copses (see policy DM1, Chapter 5);
- f. connected habitats linking the network of designated sites and existing priority habitats, taking account of the Hampshire ecological network map (see policy DM11, Chapter 5);
- g. incorporation of historic buildings and landscapes, including historic parks and gardens within the wider Green Infrastructure to protect their setting (see policy DM12, Chapter 5); and
- h. opportunities for local food growing including allotments, community orchards and farms (see policies DM32 to DM34, Chapter 5 and detailed proposals in Chapter 6)”

Policy DM1, General criteria for new development

“1. All new development should (as relevant):

- a. not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance: i. residential amenities of both new and existing residents; the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside and the coast;
- ii. biodiversity (avoiding significant adverse impacts); and

- iii. the significance of heritage assets;
- b. make efficient use of the site, maximise opportunities to increase density and have regard to potential development opportunities on adjoining land;
- c. take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood, and be compatible with adjoining uses and be well integrated with these in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views. Where adjoining development is poor in urban design terms, new development should contribute to improving the character of the area;
- d. not involve the loss of or damage to trees, woodlands, hedgerows, ponds, priority habitats or other landscape features of value to the character of the area, for appearance or biodiversity unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value, (recognising that some species and habitats may be irreplaceable);
- e. include a landscape scheme covering the design and layout of external space;
- f. protect and enhance public rights of way and National Trails and provide fully connected green infrastructure that interlaces the development and connects into the wider network;
- g. provide satisfactory management arrangements for all landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement;
- h. incorporate provision for people with disabilities and create accessible communities that cater for all;
- i. incorporate design measures to inhibit criminal and anti-social behaviour;
- j. incorporate provision for on-site waste management; and
- k. include provision for public art associated with new large scale development in accordance with the Council's adopted Public Art Strategy"

Policy DM11, Nature conservation General Approach

"1. The Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers, and will determine planning applications, to:

- a. protect, conserve and enhance all:
 - i. international, national and local nature conservation designations; and
 - ii. networks of natural habitats and features, including the Local Ecological Network, Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links, watercourses, wetland complexes, woodland trees, and trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character; and facilitate their adaptation to climate change wherever possible;
- b. assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
- c. seek a net gain of biodiversity on all development sites (including sites for redevelopment) through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and

features of nature conservation interest compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough, having regard to local geodiversity and soils; and

d. contribute to major elements of the PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy and other strategies for the provision and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure including green routes, ecological networks and biodiversity enhancements (see strategic policy S9).

International Designations

2. Development which is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to adversely affect the integrity of an international or European nature conservation site will not be permitted subject only to imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing any necessary compensatory measures in the absence of alternative solutions. A 'project level' Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required where there are likely significant effects or uncertainty. Any mitigation measures required to ensure no adverse impact must be implemented at the appropriate time.

3. The Council will work with PfSH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement with developers a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of international and European sites from the direct and indirect effects of development. Within Eastleigh Borough this will include:

a. implementing:

- i. the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (requiring contributions from residential developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent Special Protection Area to the Strategy); and
- ii. the interim and any future New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy if required; or alternative agreed site specific measures to address recreational disturbance;

b. preserving the water quality and flows within the Itchen and Hamble, Southampton Water and Solent;

c. protecting the River Itchen SAC, in particular the maintenance and where appropriate restoration of habitats and qualifying species to favourable conservation status (as defined by article 1 of the Habitats Directive); and

d. seek contributions towards measures set out in the Southern Damselfly Conservation Strategy (or other strategy) specifically to deliver biodiversity net gain.

National and Local Designations

4. Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there are no alternative solutions;
- b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;
- c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;
- d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

e. if there are any residual adverse effects which cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site and any broader impacts on national and local designations.

Priority habitats, protected and priority species and the local ecological network

5. Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on priority habitats, protected or priority species, or on the local ecological network unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there are no alternative solutions;
- b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;
- c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;
- d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and
- e. if there are any residual adverse effects, the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the adverse effects on priority habitats, priority and protected species, and the local ecological network.

Irreplaceable habitats

6. Development will not be permitted if it results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

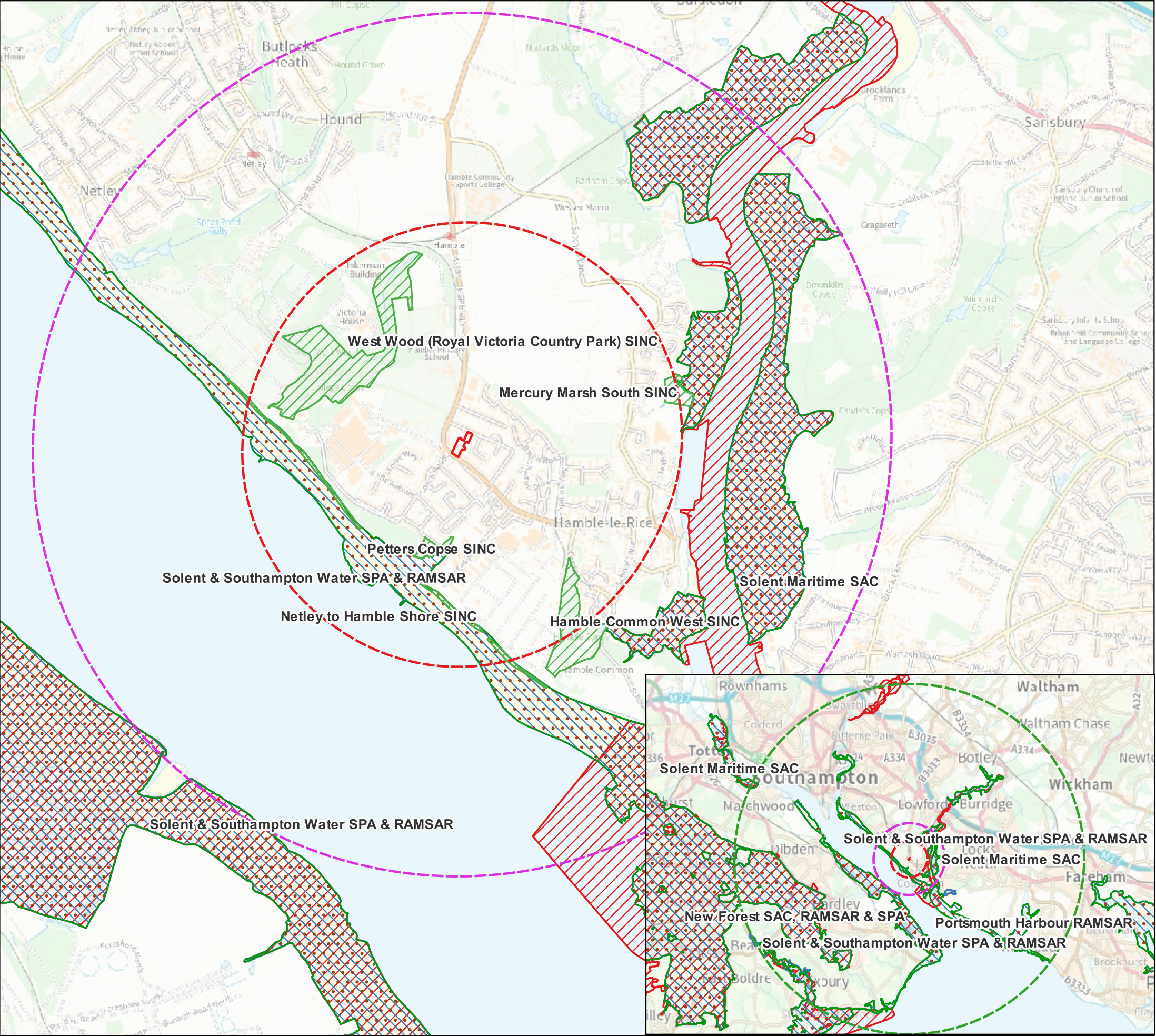
Buffers

7. Buffers free from development will be provided to designated sites to avoid/mitigate impacts, including recreational impact and impacts on edge habitats, and to maintain dark skies.

Surveys

8. Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there have been thorough habitat and species surveys;
- b. the great crested newt strategic survey and strategy have been considered in all developments within 500m of a great crested newt pond; and
- c. the strategic bat trapping survey has been considered in all developments within the locality of a woodland or connected habitat networks.”

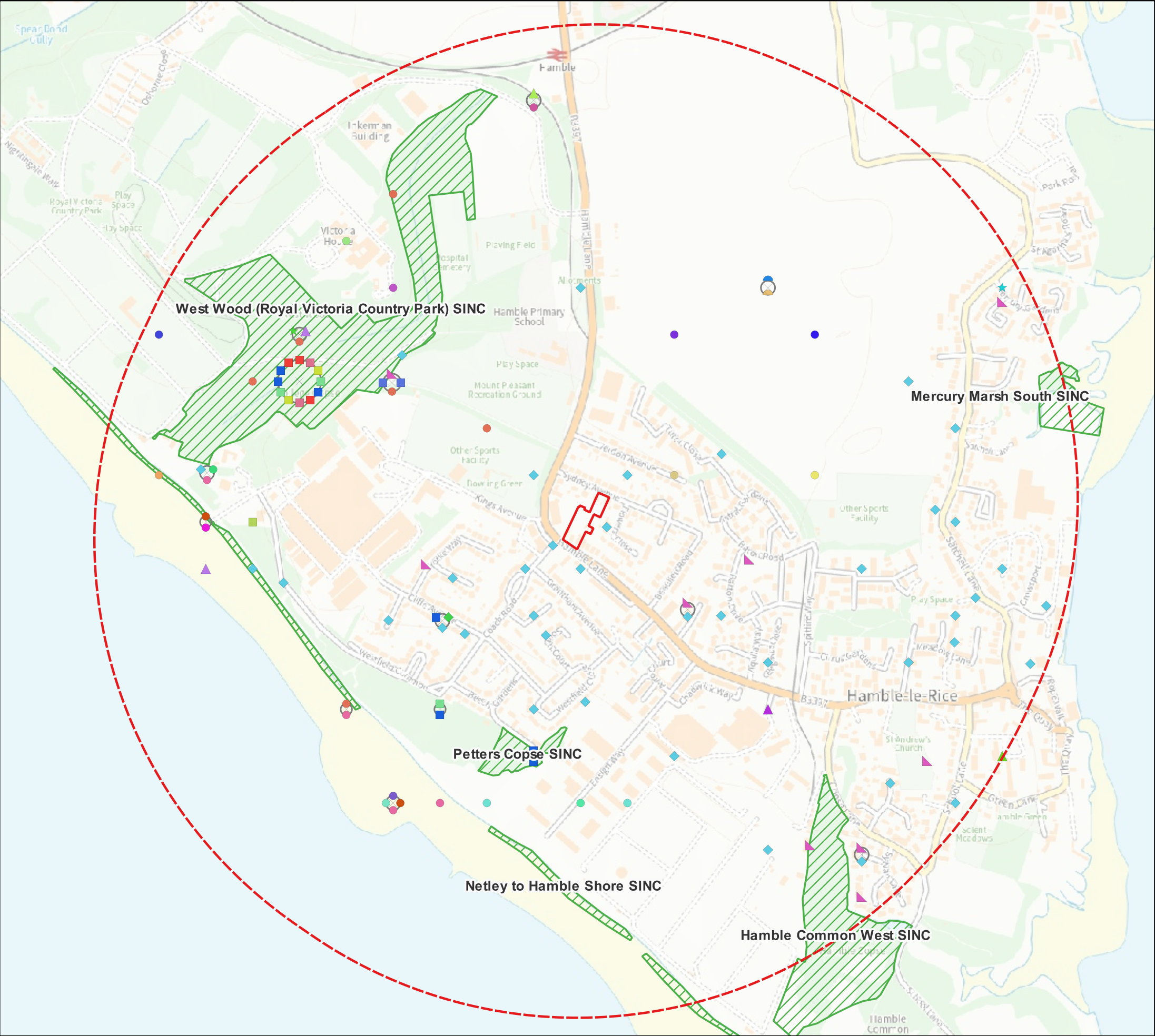


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Key

- Site Boundary
- 1km buffer
- 2km Buffer
- 10km Buffer
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- RAMSAR Sites
- Special Protected Area (SPA)



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Key

- Site Boundary
 - 1km buffer
 - Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Bats**
- Brown Long-eared Bat
 - Common Pipistrelle
 - Natterer's Bat
 - Noctule Bat
 - Pipistrelle Bat species
 - Soprano Pipistrelle
 - Whiskered Bat
- Amphibians & Reptiles**
- Common Lizard
 - Slow-worm
- Mammals (no Bats)**
- West European Hedgehog
- Birds**
- Dartford Warbler
 - Firecrest
 - Great Northern Diver
 - Herring Gull
 - Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
 - Linnet
 - Little Egret
 - Mediterranean Gull
 - Reed Bunting
 - Siskin
 - Skylark
 - Starling
- Invertebrates**
- Silver-washed Fritillary
 - Stag Beetle
- Plants**
- Butcher's-broom
 - Common Calamint
 - Great Lettuce
 - Navelwort
- Species Records**
- Japanese Knotweed
 - Rhododendron



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Key

 Site Boundary

Habitats

 Buildings/hardstanding

 Gardens (lawn and planting)



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Key

 **Site Boundary**

Baseline Habitats

 **Developed land; sealed surface**

 **Vegetated garden**



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Key

 **Red Line Boundary**

Proposed Habitats

 **Developed land; sealed surface**

 **Modified grassland**

 **Vegetated garden**

Proposed Hedgerows

 **Native hedgerow**

Proposed Trees

 **Proposed Small Urban Tree**



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Key

 Red Line Boundary

Habitat Retention

 Retained

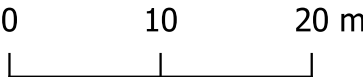
 Lost

Hedgerow Retention

 Created

Individual Tree Retention

 Created





client
Questmap

project
Land off Hamble Lane/Sydney Avenue,
Hamble

drawing title
HABITAT RETENTION

scale @ A3
1:500

drawn
REM

issue date
21/11/2023



Figure 6