

CHAPTER 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 This chapter provides a description of the OPA Phase 1 Site and its setting and the Wider OPA Site and its setting. Further details relevant to the proposed scope of the technical assessments are provided in Chapters 6 – 14.

2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Wider OPA Site

- 2.2.1 The Wider OPA Site, identified on Figure 1.1, is an area of land west of Horton Heath, near Eastleigh, Hampshire. The Site borders Allington Lane to the northwest, part of Burnetts Lane at the eastern boundary and Bubb Lane in the southernmost corner. Fir Tree Lane intersects the Site linking Allington Lane to Horton Heath Village, whilst Chalcroft Solar Park is situated towards the middle of the Wider OPA Site on the western side.
- 2.2.2 Horton Heath Village is located adjacent to the Site on the east boundary. Chalcroft Distribution Park is located immediately south beyond which an active railway line, running between Hedge End and Eastleigh stations, is situated.
- 2.2.3 The Site is approximately 130.9ha in size and is largely comprised of agricultural land, with a few clusters of farm buildings and residences located throughout. The topography is broadly flat with some gentle undulation. The lowest point, at the western boundary, is approximately 22m AOD rising to approximately 29m AOD in the northeast of the Wider OPA Site.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.2.4 Several Public Rights of Way are located within and adjacent to the Wider OPA Site, as identified through Hampshire County Councils Rights of Way map. These broadly run in an east to west direction and are connected by additional north to south footpath links.
- Footpath Route 3 runs from east to west at the southern boundary connecting Allington Lane and Burnetts Lane.
 - Footpath Route 1 runs from Allington Lane through the middle of the site, along the boundary of the Chalcroft Solar Park, to Horton Heath Village.
 - Footpath Route 2 joins these paths providing a north to south link.

- 2.2.5 In the north of the Wider OPA Site, Footpath Route 11 connects Fir Tree Lane to additional Rights of Way outside the Wider OPA Site boundary, eventually linking up with the residential properties at Pavilion Close. Footpath Route 10 is located on the eastern boundary linking routes 11 and 1.

Ground Conditions and Agricultural Land

- 2.2.6 The Wider OPA Site is predominately underlain by Wittering Formation (Sand, Silt and Clay) bedrock with a small area of Earnley Sand Formation (Sand, Silt and Clay) in the southeast corner of the Wider OPA Site. Alluvium (Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel) superficial deposits are associated with the areas underlying on-site watercourses.
- 2.2.7 The underlying Bedrock and Superficial deposits are classified as a Secondary A aquifers which are defined as permeable layers capable of supporting water supplies at a local rather than strategic scale, and in some cases forming an important source of base flow to rivers. The Site does not lie within a groundwater source protection zone (SPZ).
- 2.2.8 Given the Wider OPA Site is predominantly agricultural land it is considered to have limited potential for significant ground contamination, although some localised contamination impacts may be present in the vicinity of the farms on site and adjacent to the distribution park to the south.
- 2.2.9 The majority of the Wider OPA Site is located on Grade 3b agricultural land and contains patches of Grade 4 around Chalcroft Distribution Park. Therefore, development of this land would not impact on the provision of best and most versatile agricultural land in the area. Two small sections of the Site, adjacent to Horton Heath Village and also at the northern boundary, are classified as Grade 3a, however, only form a small part of the Wider OPA Site.

Archaeology and Built Heritage

Archaeology

- 2.2.10 There are no designated Archaeological Assets within the Wider OPA Site.
- 2.2.11 There are no scheduled monuments within 1km of the Wider OPA Site. Extending this to a 5km radius identifies nine scheduled monuments, the nearest of which are listed below:
- Bowl barrow 200m west of Moorgreen House (Reference 1012710), located 1.9km southwest
 - Park pale at Marwell, south of Fisher's Pond (Reference 1012309), located 2.7km north.

Built Heritage

2.2.12 There are no designated built heritage asset located within the Wider OPA Site boundary. However, the Site wraps around the Grade II listed Fir Tree Farm House which is located towards the north western side.

2.2.13 The surrounding area contains various designated heritage assets including four listed buildings in the neighbouring villages of Horton Heath and Fair Oak:

- Rambers Cottage, Grade II listed, located 200m east;
- Saxon Court, Grade II listed, located 280m west;
- The Bush, Grade II listed, located 320m north west; and
- The Cockpit, Grade II listed, located 679m west.

2.2.14 Other listed buildings nearby include:

- West Horton Farm Cottages, Grade II listed, located 0.7km west; and
- Moorgreen Farmhouse, Grade II listed, located 0.9km southeast.

2.2.15 Further details on heritage assets and their assessment are provided within Chapter 7 – Built Heritage.

Flood Risk and Drainage

2.2.16 The closest watercourses to the Wider OPA Site are the tributaries of the River Itchen which flow adjacent to the western and northern boundaries.

2.2.17 The Wider OPA Site is predominately at Very Low risk of flooding from watercourses and from surface water runoff or localised accumulations of surface water as a consequence of an intense rainfall event.

2.2.18 Areas of elevated watercourse and surface water flood risk (Low, Medium and High) are associated with the routes and low lying areas around the on-site watercourses.

2.2.19 Areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 are present along the unnamed Main River which forms the Wider OPA Site's western boundary and Fair Oak Stream which bisects the northern area. The remainder of the Wider OPA Site is defined as Flood Zone 1.

- 2.2.20 Areas of High, Medium and Low surface water flood risk are restricted to the naturally defined channels of the on-site watercourses and a small number of isolated low lying areas within the Wider OPA Site, including the western extent of Fir Tree Lane. The remainder of the Wider OPA Site is at Very Low risk of surface water flooding.
- 2.2.21 The majority of the Wider OPA Site is at Low risk of flooding from groundwater with areas of elevated risk associated with the low lying areas in proximity to on-site watercourses.
- 2.2.22 Only one on-site watercourse, waterbody or wetland area is designated for its nature conservation value. The Fair Oak Stream which bisects the northern area of the Wider OPA Site falls within a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) (Quobleigh Pond and Woods SINC, Fair Oak School Meadow SINC, Wyvern Technical College Meadow SINC and Ponds and Meadow adjacent to Wyvern Technical College SINC).
- 2.2.23 Further details on hydrology, flood risk and drainage and their assessment is provided within Chapter 11 – Hydrology (Including Flood Risk and Drainage).

Nature Conservation

- 2.2.24 The Wider OPA Site largely comprises a series of agricultural field compartments divided by hedgerows with trees. The north of the site is predominantly set to arable crops whilst the southern half is characterised by grass pasture. The hedgerows provide ecological connectivity through the Site, however, the intensively managed arable fields are of limited ecological value.
- 2.2.25 There are no Statutory Designated Sites of nature conservation interest within the Wider OPA Site, although a number are located in the surrounding area.
- 2.2.26 The closest Statutory Designated Site of nature conservation interest is the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is located approximately 1.1km west at its nearest point. This contains the protected habitats of classic chalk stream and river, fen meadow, flood pasture and swamp. Part of the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also located here. Designated as such due to its classic chalk river features supporting species such as Southern Damselfly and Bullhead.
- 2.2.27 The Moorgreen Meadows SSSI is located 1.2km South of the Wider OPA Site and is protected due to its neutral meadows and alder wood, flanking a small tributary of the River Hamble.
- 2.2.28 The Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site lie approximately 4km southeast at the closet point, on the River Hamble. The SPA is designated for its wintering populations of Teal, Dark-bellied Brent Geese, Black-tailed Godwit and Ringed

Plover, as well as breeding populations of Terns (Common, Sandwich, Little and Roseate) and Mediterranean Gull. The Ramsar designation results from being one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland European waters. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the bio-geographical region, as well as supporting an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates.

2.2.29 An area of the Solent Maritime SAC is located approximately 4km southeast of the Wider OPA Site. This SAC is designated for its estuaries, spartina swards and Atlantic salt meadows.

2.2.30 Further details on ecological sites and habitats and their assessment are provided within Chapter 10 – Ecology.

Landscape Character

2.2.31 The Wider OPA Site comprises large arable fields, generally bounded by natural features such as hedgerows, tree belts and watercourses. The South and North of the Wider OPA Site do have distinctly different landscape characters. These characters are separated by Foxwood watercourse and tree belt which crosses the site East to West.

2.2.32 At the South, the land is open and rolling, with exceptionally large fields framed by weak hedgerows. As a result, views across the South of the Wider OPA Site are long with significant intervisibility from a range of places within and without the site.

2.2.33 At the Eastern edge, the settlement of Horton Heath is visible – starting as a dispersed line of cottages along Burnetts Lane and becoming much more formal as it meets the settlement edge of the existing village.

2.2.34 To the West and North, the Southern half of the site is framed by strong, tall tree lines which largely screen the site from longer views.

2.2.35 To the North, the Wider OPA Site is very enclosed. It comprises smaller fields which are enclosed by very strong and well-established treelines. From the far North, viewed from Allington Lane, there are long distance views into the site, although these are heavily filtered by existing treelines. However, the remaining fields are almost entirely self-contained with no visibility from one field to the next, or to external spaces. The Eastern-most field actually includes the highest point on the entire site. However, it is entirely concealed from external view by the height of the tree and woodland belts which enclose it.

2.2.36 Natural England locates the Wider OPA Site within National Character Area (NCA) 128: South Hampshire Lowlands.



2.2.37 As stated in the National Character Area Profile: *“The South Hampshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) is a lowlying plain between the chalk hills of the Hampshire and South Downs and Southampton Water. Its highest point is an outlying chalk ridge – Portsdown Hill – but the bedrock geology is mostly open marine, estuarine and freshwater Tertiary deposits. The NCA is dominated by the city and port of Southampton and its adjoining towns and suburbs – 29 per cent of the area is urban. In the more rural areas, it is a mixture of farmland, particularly pasture, and woodland.*

Some 18 per cent of the land cover of the NCA is woodland, of which almost half is designated ancient woodland, a legacy of the Forest of Bere, a Royal Hunting Forest that once covered the area. Today the most significant blocks of woodland are West Walk near Wickham, Botley Wood at Swanwick and Ampfield Wood near Romsey.

Although a high percentage of the area is urban, the NCA has considerable biodiversity interest. Southampton Water is internationally recognised for its importance for breeding and overwintering waterfowl and waders and for its wetland habitats such as mudflats and salt marshes. Three Natura 2000 designations cover parts of the area – Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation.”

2.2.38 Further details on the assessment of local landscape character are provided in Chapter 14 – Landscape and Visual.

Air Quality and Noise and Vibration

2.2.39 EBC currently has four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) following the recognition of poor air quality in the borough. The closest of which is the A335 Eastleigh AQMA No.1 located approximately 2.9km to the west. The full locations of these AQMAs are listed below:

- Eastleigh – Through Eastleigh along the A335 – Southampton Road and West along Leigh Road;
- Hamble Lane – In Old Netley;
- M3 – Through Eastleigh along the M3 from Dove Dave Road in the South to Boyatt Lane in the North; and
- High Street, Botley – Along the A334 through Botley.

- 2.2.40 EBC have not identified the Horton Heath area as being at risk of exceeding air quality objective levels, therefore no specific monitoring or modelling has been undertaken for this location by the Council.
- 2.2.41 The Chalcroft Distribution Centre is located to the south of the site, however a review of the Envirocheck data for the area has confirmed that there are no activities on this site which may result in the potential for elevated levels of air quality pollutants.
- 2.2.42 The railway line which borders parts of the southern end of the Site may produce audible noise in nearby areas of the Proposed Development, particularly in periods of low road traffic movements. Additional noise sources in the vicinity include Chalcroft Distribution park and the network of roads in the surrounds.
- 2.2.43 Further details on air quality and noise and their assessments is provided within Chapter 11 – Noise and Vibration and Chapter 7 – Air Quality.

OPA Phase 1 Site

- 2.2.44 The OPA Phase 1 Site (as shown on Figure 1.3) is a parcel of land located south west of Horton Heath, near Eastleigh within the county of Hampshire. Eastleigh is located approximately 7km north west of the Site with the city of Southampton located approximately 8km south. Southampton Airport is located approximately 3km west of the OPA Phase 1 Site. The OPA Phase 1 Site centres Grid Reference SU489163.
- 2.2.45 The OPA Phase 1 Site is located to the southernmost extent of the Wider OPA Site (see Figure 1.2) and includes part of Burnetts Lane to its eastern border and an unnamed track and agricultural fields to its northern border. Chalcroft Farm is to the west of the OPA Phase 1 Site, whilst Round Copse borders the south west of the OPA Phase 1 Site beyond which lies Chalcroft Business Park. Immediately to the south of the OPA Phase1 Site lies the access infrastructure junction from Burnetts Lane which will connect the OPA Phase 1 Site to the Wider OPA.
- 2.2.46 The OPA Phase 1 Site is approximately 7.3ha in size and is comprised of agricultural land. Vegetation is generally restricted to field boundaries in the form of hedgerows. These run through the centre of the OPA Phase 1 Site as well as to the northern, southern and western borders.
- 2.2.47 Levels generally fall from the southeast towards north and west of the site, and range from approximately 29.66m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the southeast to approximately 19.8m AOD in the north.

- 2.2.48 As such, the Site falls within the area characterised in the Eastleigh Borough Council Character Assessment as 'Horton Heath Undulating Farmland'. This describes the unifying features as *'predominantly agricultural landscape, with gentle undulation of the landform and the pattern of medium sized fields, generally bounded by good hedging with mature trees'*
- 2.2.49 To the immediate east of the OPA Phase 1 Site, along Burnetts Lane, lie several residential dwellings beyond which are agricultural fields. To the north east of the OPA Phase 1 Site is Horton Heath; a rural village which forms part of the civil parish of Fair Oak and Hedge End. The village comprises mostly residential properties, further east of this is the East Horton Golf Club.
- 2.2.50 Land beyond the western boundary is comprised of agricultural fields. Further west of this lie agricultural fields and the Seddul Bahr Industrial Estate. Beyond this is the Itchen Valley Country Park and the Southampton Airport.
- 2.2.51 To the north west of the OPA Phase 1 Site are also agricultural fields as well as various clusters of spaces being used for industrial and commercial purposes, which are accessed via Allington Lane. These include a garden centre, car garage and repair facilities, audio visual equipment hire service and a timber merchant.
- 2.2.52 North of the OPA Phase 1 Site is the Chalcroft Solar Park. North of the Solar Park is Quobleigh Woods, beyond which the large village of Fair Oak is located. This comprises residential properties along with the Fair Oak Village Hall, Wyvern College, Fair Oak Infants Schools and the Lapstone Playing Fields.
- 2.2.53 To the south west of the Site is Chalcroft Distribution Park, with an active railway line running south of this. Beyond this the M27 motorway can be accessed. This is adjacent to the town of Hedge End.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.2.54 As identified through Hampshire County Council's Rights of Way map, West End Footpath 3 runs to the northern and eastern boundaries of the OPA Phase 1 Site.

Ground Conditions and Agricultural Land

- 2.2.55 British Geological Survey (BGS) mapping indicated the OPA Phase 1 Site to be located on Wittering Formation, with the most westerly edge (outside of the OPA Phase 1 Site) of the land surveyed being underlain by River Terrace Deposits and Alluvium associated with a tributary of the River Itchen over Wittering Formation. Within the land associated with the OPA Phase 1

proposals, more sandy layers were encountered, and clay soils were noted to be predominately sandy clay. A small parcel in the south east of the OPA Phase 1 Site was shown to be located on Early Sand Formation overlying Wittering Formation. The soils underlying the OPA Phase 1 Site are classified as a Secondary 'A' Aquifer.

2.2.56 The OPA Phase 1 Site is not within a Source Protection Zone and there are no potable groundwater abstractions within 1km of the OPA Phase 1 Site.

2.2.57 No surface water features are found within the OPA Phase 1 Site.

2.2.58 Given the OPA Phase 1 Site is predominantly agricultural land it is considered to have limited potential for significant ground contamination, although some localised contamination impacts may be present in the vicinity of the farms on site and adjacent to the distribution park to the south.

2.2.59 With regards to contamination, the OPA Phase 1 Site is not located on or in close proximity to any of the identified 'farm hubs' within the Wider OPA. Therefore, the risks from current and historical agricultural activities is considered to be low.

2.2.60 The majority of the OPA Phase 1 Site is located on Grade 3b agricultural land and contains patches of Grade 4 around Chalcraft Distribution Park. Therefore, development of this land would not impact on the provision of best and most versatile agricultural land in the area. Two small sections of the OPA Phase 1 Site, adjacent to Horton Heath Village and also at the northern boundary, are classified as Grade 3a, however, only form a small part of the OPA Phase 1 Site.

Cultural Heritage (including Archaeology and Built Heritage)

Archaeology

2.2.61 The OPA Phase 1 Site is not located within an Area of Archaeological Significance (AAS). There are also no designated Archaeological Assets or Scheduled Monuments within the OPA Phase 1 Site or the immediate surrounding (within 1 km).

2.2.62 There are no scheduled monuments within 1km of the OPA Phase 1 Site. Extending this to a 5km radius identifies nine scheduled monuments, the nearest of which are listed below:

- Bowl barrow 200m west of Moorgreen House (Reference 1012710), located 1.9km southwest
- Park pale at Marwell, south of Fisher's Pond (Reference 1012309), located 2.7km north.



Built Heritage

- 2.2.63 There are no designated built heritage assets within the OPA Phase 1 Site and it does not fall within a conservation area.
- 2.2.64 The built heritage resource concerning the OPA Phase 1 Site is very limited. A number of Grade II Listed Buildings are situated within the wider surrounding landscape, with the nearest comprising Moorgreen Farmhouse and an associated granary, c. 870m to the south-west (Appendix 9.1, Figure 4). These assets are effectively screened from the OPA Phase 1 Site by the Chalcroft Business Park and railway embankments, and do not share any visual or experiential associations with the OPA Phase 1 Site.
- 2.2.65 Further details on heritage assets and their assessment are provided within Chapter 9 – Built Heritage.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 2.2.66 The OPA Phase 1 Site is predominately at Very Low risk of flooding from watercourses (located entirely in Flood Zone 1) and from surface water runoff or localised accumulations of surface water as a consequence of an intense rainfall event.
- 2.2.67 Areas of elevated surface water flood risk (Low, Medium and High) are associated with the low lying areas adjacent to the existing access track, hedgerow which bisects the OPA Phase 1 Site and around the on-site watercourses.
- 2.2.68 A number of drainage features and watercourses are present within the OPA Phase 1 Site. An ordinary watercourse bisects the northern area of the OPA Phase 1 Site and flows from southeast (adjacent to Burnetts Lane) to west (running north of Chalcroft Farm, and south of the Solar Farm and eventually into an unnamed 'Main River' to the north west of the OPA Phase 1 Site). The OPA Phase 1 Site falls within the wider catchment of the River Itchen. No other water bodies are identified in the OPA Phase 1 Site.
- 2.2.69 The OPA Phase 1 Site currently comprises largely undeveloped greenfield land. In its undeveloped state the surface water runoff from the OPA Phase 1 Site drains into the on-site watercourses by overland and subsurface flow. The existing access track which connects to Chalcroft Farm drains into the adjacent drainage ditches and the ordinary watercourse described above by overland flow.
- 2.2.70 No public surface water sewers are identified on the OPA Phase 1 Site.



- 2.2.71 The OPA Phase 1 Site is predominately underlain by Wittering Formation (Sand, Silt and Clay) bedrock with a small area of Earnley Sand Formation (Sand, Silt and Clay) in the southeast corner of the Site. Alluvium (Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel) superficial deposits are associated with the areas underlying on-site watercourses.
- 2.2.72 The underlying Bedrock and Superficial deposits are classified as a Secondary A aquifers which are defined as permeable layers capable of supporting water supplies at a local rather than strategic scale, and in some cases forming an important source of base flow to rivers.
- 2.2.73 It is considered that groundwater could be shallow on the site and shallowest in proximity to the on-site watercourses.
- 2.2.74 The majority of the OPA Phase 1 Site is at Low risk of flooding from groundwater with areas of elevated risk associated with the low lying areas in proximity to on-site watercourses.
- 2.2.75 Further details on hydrology, flood risk and drainage and their assessment is provided within Chapter 11 – Hydrology (Including Flood Risk and Drainage).

Nature Conservation

- 2.2.76 There are no Statutory Designated Sites of nature conservation interest within the OPA Phase 1 Site, although a number are located in the surrounding area.
- 2.2.77 The closest Statutory Designated Site of nature conservation interest is the River Itchen SSSI which is located approximately 2.1km west at its nearest point. This contains the protected habitats of classic chalk stream and river, fen meadow, flood pasture and swamp. Part of the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also located here. Designated as such due to its classic chalk river features supporting species such as Southern Damselfly and Bullhead.
- 2.2.78 The Moorgreen Meadows SSSI is located 1.2km south of the OPA Phase 1 Site and is protected due to its neutral meadows and alder wood, flanking a small tributary of the River Hamble.
- 2.2.79 The Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site lie approximately 4km southeast at the closet point, on the River Hamble. The SPA is designated for its wintering populations of Teal, Dark-bellied Brent Geese, Black-tailed Godwit and Ringed Plover, as well as breeding populations of Terns (Common, Sandwich, Little and Roseate) and Mediterranean Gull. The Ramsar designation results from being one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland European waters. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the bio-geographical region, as well as supporting an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates.

- 2.2.80 An area of the Solent Maritime SAC is located approximately 4km southeast of the OPA Phase 1 Site. This SAC is designated for its estuaries, spartina swards and Atlantic salt meadows.
- 2.2.81 The Phase 1 OPA Site is dominated by large areas of intensively grazed, improved grassland enclosed by mature, species rich hedgerows. The areas of grassland to the north of the Chalcroft Farm access track are marginally more diverse owing to the presence of a wet ditch feature and a less intensive grazing regime.
- 2.2.82 The hedgerows in this area are also mature and species rich. Round Copse designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) lies to the south west that has been designated for its ancient woodland habitats. A patch of the vulnerable mousetail (*Myosurus minimus*) lies adjacent to the Chalcroft access track at the disturbed gateway into the eastern field, which is a notable record for the county.
- 2.2.83 Low levels of bat activity, comprise largely of common and widespread species, have been recorded across the OPA Phase 1 Site during both transect and automated detector surveys. No trees or buildings are present that would support bat roosts. A small population of great crested newt is present in Chalcroft Farm, the associated terrestrial habitat extends into OPA Phase 1. Breeding birds observed on site are all common with the exception of a family of Linnet recorded in the northern hedgerow, however this species was not confirmed as breeding on site. No badger activity was recorded on site during surveys in 2020. No dormouse activity has been recorded in the OPA Phase 1 Site
- 2.2.84 Further details on ecological sites and habitats and their proposed assessment are provided within Chapter 10 – Ecology.

Landscape Character

- 2.2.85 Natural England locates the OPA Phase 1 Site within National Character Area (NCA) 128: South Hampshire Lowlands.
- 2.2.86 As stated in the National Character Area Profile: *“The South Hampshire Lowlands National Character Area (NCA) is a lowlying plain between the chalk hills of the Hampshire and South Downs and Southampton Water. Its highest point is an outlying chalk ridge – Portsdown Hill – but the bedrock geology is mostly open marine, estuarine and freshwater Tertiary deposits. The NCA is dominated by the city and port of Southampton and its adjoining towns and suburbs – 29 per cent of the area is urban. In the more rural areas, it is a mixture of farmland, particularly pasture, and woodland.*

- 2.2.87 *Some 18 per cent of the land cover of the NCA is woodland, of which almost half is designated ancient woodland, a legacy of the Forest of Bere, a Royal Hunting Forest that once covered the area. Today the most significant blocks of woodland are West Walk near Wickham, Botley Wood at Swanwick and Ampfield Wood near Romsey.*
- 2.2.88 *Although a high percentage of the area is urban, the NCA has considerable biodiversity interest. Southampton Water is internationally recognised for its importance for breeding and overwintering waterfowl and waders and for its wetland habitats such as mudflats and salt marshes. Three Natura 2000 designations cover parts of the area – Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation.”*
- 2.2.89 Further details on the assessment of local landscape character are provided in Chapter 13 – Landscape and Visual.

Air Quality and Noise

- 2.2.90 EBC currently has four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) following the recognition of poor air quality in the borough. The closest of which is the A335 Eastleigh AQMA No.1 located approximately 2.9km to the west. The full locations of these AQMAs are listed below:
- Eastleigh – Through Eastleigh along the A335 – Southampton Road and West along Leigh Road;
 - Hamble Lane – In Old Netley;
 - M3 – Through Eastleigh along the M3 from Dove Dave Road in the South to Boyatt Lane in the North; and
 - High Street, Botley – Along the A334 through Botley.
- 2.2.91 EBC have not identified the Horton Heath area as being at risk of exceeding air quality objective levels, therefore no specific monitoring or modelling has been undertaken for this location by the Council.
- 2.2.92 The Chalcroft Distribution Centre is located to the south of the OPA Phase 1 Site, however a review of the Envirocheck data for the area has confirmed that there are no activities on this site which may result in the potential for elevated levels of air quality pollutants.
- 2.2.93 The railway line which borders parts of the southern end of the OPA Phase 1 Site may produce audible noise in nearby areas of the OPA Phase 1 proposals, particularly in periods of low road traffic movements. Additional noise sources in the vicinity include Chalcroft Distribution park and the network of roads in the surrounds.

2.2.94 Further details on noise and air quality and the proposed assessments are provided within Chapter 7 – Air Quality and Chapter 12 – Noise and Vibration.

2.3 SUMMARY OF SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

2.3.1 The following have been identified as the key sensitive receptors that could be affected, either directly, or indirectly by the Proposed Development:

- Occupiers of existing dwellings in proximity to the Wider OPA Site and OPA Phase 1 Site and local roads;
- The local population in respect of local services, schools, employment opportunities, etc.;
- Users of local roads, transport services and public rights of way/bridleways both on and in proximity to the Site;
- Ecological habitats and species present both on and in proximity to the Wider OPA Site and OPA Phase 1 Site;
- Surface and groundwater regimes both on and in proximity to the Wider OPA Site and OPA Phase 1 Site, including site drainage characteristics;
- The landscape character of the Wider OPA Site and OPA Phase 1 Site.
- Sensitive receptors that would be introduced to the Wider OPA Site and OPA Phase 1 Site as a result of the Proposed Development, including site workers and future residents, school children, tenants and other site users who would be present during the later phases of construction.