

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)
Screening Matrix and Appropriate Assessment Statement

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

HRA drafting date:	29 April 2024
HRA completion date:	4 June 2024 Updated to latest report references 9 April 2026
Application reference:	F/23/96631
Application address:	Land between Burnetts Lane and Fir Tree Lane, Horton Heath, Eastleigh
Application description:	Construction of an internal distributor road and associated footways, cycleways, lighting, landscaping and SuDS basins, and diversion of Public Rights of Way footpaths FOHHF 701 and 702 as part of the One Horton Heath development (proposal constitutes EIA development) Works include: • Internal Distributor Road (IDR) approximately 1.6km in length. • Shared use paths associates with the IDR. • Soft landscaping and tree planting associated with the IDR. • Sustainable drainage features associated with the IDR. • River corridor improvement by means of culverted crossings. • Installation of strategic utility service networks within the IDR corridor. • Ecological and biodiversity enhancements within the IDR corridor.
Lead Planning Officer:	Nick Parker
Case Officer:	Dawn Errington
Please note that all references in this assessment to the 'Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019'.	

Stage 1 - details of the plan or project	
European site potentially impacted by planning application, plan, or project:	Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site; River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC); New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar; and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Although the above Ramsar sites are not subject to the Wild Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive, or the Habitats Regulations, they are given the same protection as SPAs and SACs (NPPF paragraph 176(b)). The assessment, therefore, also addresses the relevant Ramsar criteria for which this site is designated.
Is the planning application directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (if yes,	No. The project consists of construction of a road, associated footways and cycleways, water crossings, drainage and landscaping.

Applicant should have provided details)?	
Are there any other projects or plans that together with the planning application being assessed could affect the site (Applicant to provide details to allow an 'in combination' effect to be assessed)?	Yes. Planning application F/23/96631 as considered here is regarded as a separate 'project' for the purposes of Regulation 63(1)(a). It is a separate planning application for full planning permission, although it also falls within the boundaries and the description and scope of the development proposed in the outline application number O/20/89498 ("Outline: Phased mixed-use development comprising severable and separate phases of development (as per the Phasing Plan) consisting: • Up to 2,500 residential units in total (across The Lower Acre, Quobleigh Breach, The Upper Acre, Round Copse, The Holme, The Homestall, Chalcroft Farm and The Folds phases and partially within Chalcroft Outfarm Works phase); • A Local Centre (and supporting secondary local centres) on land up to 3.1ha comprising mixed-use residential/retail/leisure/community/employment/day nursery/food establishment uses (Local Centre Phase); • Further non-residential floorspace on land up to 5ha comprising of office, commercial and industrial uses and general industrial and storage & distribution uses (Chalcroft Outfarm works and Fir Tree Farm Hub phases and partially within the Chalcroft Farm phase); • A 3FE Primary School (Primary School Phase); • Public open space including formal sports facilities and informal provisions (across Green Infrastructure Phases); • Allotments, ecological, landscape and sustainable drainage works; • key infrastructure and utilities provision including new roads, footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; • Vehicular access from Allington Lane, Fir Tree Lane and Burnetts Lane with improvements to the existing road junction at Fir Tree Lane/Burnetts Lane; and • Site preparation and demolition works All Matters Reserved Except Access. This application is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment" additionally, separate planning applications for full planning permission have also been permitted for the first phase of the residential development and link road within the wider site of the current outline application: application number F/20/89500 (Erection of 381 residential units with public open space, hard and soft landscape works, internal roads, footway/cycleways, associated parking spaces, substation, SuDS and associated infrastructure (This application is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment) and F/21/91185 - Construction of road between Allington Lane and Burnetts Lane with associated footway, cycle paths, water crossings, drainage and landscaping (This application is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment).

Stage 2 - HRA screening assessment

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

River Itchen SAC

The River Itchen qualifies as a SAC for its supporting of the Annex I habitat *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculus fluitantis and Callitriche Batrachion vegetation* (rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by watercress).

It also qualifies for its designation by supporting the following species listed in Annex II of the Directive:

- Southern Damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*;
- Bullhead *Cottus gobio*;
- White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*;
- Brook Lamprey *Lampetra planeri*;
- Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar*; and
- Otter *Lutra lutra*.

Conservation objectives

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

The SAC also contains one component of the River Itchen SSSI. The SSSI has broadly the same qualifying features as the SAC and additionally breeding water bird populations, freshwater invertebrate species and assemblages, water voles and other wetland habitats.

Potential Impacts	Comments
Impacts from construction activities	The majority of the Secondary Spine Road site is modified grassland containing high proportions of silt and clay which when disturbed (e.g. during the cultivation of arable land, cattle poaching of stream banks or during construction operations) can give rise to fine particle sediment in surface water run-off into the watercourses to which the site drains. The Road crosses Foxwood Stream and its tributaries which are ordinary Watercourses draining onto Moorgreen Stream and onwards into the River Itchen SAC to the south of Chickenhall Lane Wastewater Treatment Works.

	Development of the Road within or close to the ordinary watercourses that drain the application site would be likely to have the most immediate effects on mobilising and conveying fine particle sediments. This includes the construction of the three proposed river crossings. Not only does the excavation and disturbance of the ground present risks of fine particle sediment mobilisation and run off, but other construction related activities such as the temporary stockpiling of topsoil and subsoil which could wash away if unconsolidated and unprotected and wheel washing facilities for plant and vehicles leaving the construction site. There is also the potential for spillages/other pollution events to occur during the construction period which if allowed to enter the water courses on site could be conveyed into the River Itchen SAC. It is necessary to incorporate appropriate measures and control the types of construction methods used and nature of operation of the construction process via a CEMP. <u>It is necessary therefore to screen in impacts from construction activities on the River Itchen SAC into the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Increased recreational disturbance	Construction of the spine Road as a standalone project will not result in any increase in residential development or associated recreational pressures. In addition, recreational disturbance is not identified in the Standard Data Form or Site Improvement Plan as a threat or pressure to the conservation objectives of the River Itchen SAC. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from recreational disturbance on the River Itchen SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts on water quality and pollution	The standalone link road project will not result in any net increase in accommodation, and therefore does not need to demonstrate nutrient neutrality. The River Itchen is designated because of its riverine habitat, its Southern damselfly and its bullhead fish; but it also has as qualifying features the white-clawed crayfish, brook lamprey, Atlantic salmon and otter. The Itchen SAC is at risk from increased sediments ("fines") with salmon in particular being very sensitive. Impacts identified from sediments include: • Excessive fine sediments are lethal to spawning fish species such as salmon; and exposure to fine sediment during incubation lowers the fitness of those salmon alevins that survive hatching; • Chalk streams are very sensitive to even minor increases in fine sediment concentrations because their riverbeds are

	unable to flush fines from gravels – hence the long tradition of cleaning gravel beds in these rivers; • The rate and amount of fine sediments that accumulate in spawning fish nests in riverbed gravels are directly related to the concentration and total load of fine sediment in the river; • Fine organic matter is more lethal than inorganic fine sediment for incubating salmonid embryos, and the finest sediments (clays) are much more lethal than larger particles To ensure that there is no increase in sediment load arising from the road during operation, the associated SuDS features must function efficiently to minimise the likelihood of sediment transport through carriers into the Itchen SAC. Efficient function requires an appropriate management regime for the SuDS to be produced, agreed and implemented. <u>It is necessary therefore to screen in impacts on water quality and pollution on the River Itchen SAC into the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts resulting from water abstraction	The link road as a Standalone project will not impact the River Itchen SAC through water abstraction. Impacts relating to surface water flow and wastewater flow from the construction and operation of the road are addressed in the section on water quality. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from water abstraction on the River Itchen SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts from atmospheric pollution	Construction of the road itself will not generate any new operational vehicular traffic, and construction traffic would result in emissions below AADT thresholds. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on the River Itchen SAC from atmospheric pollution from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Introduction of non-native/invasive plant species	Ecological survey work for the wider Outline application site (O/20/89498) identified Himalayan balsam, rhododendron and laurel as being present, predominantly in the north of the site at Quobleigh Woods. Japanese Rose and Japanese knotweed were also recorded in two discrete locations, one of which is in reasonably close proximity to the road. For construction of the road, the main risk is from the spread of Japanese Knotweed a result of disturbance of plants causing seed to be released into the Foxwood Stream and onwards to the River Itchen SAC. Works proposed within Foxwood Stream area include a road crossing. Without adequate controls, these works have the potential to cause the spread of Japanese Knotweed.

	It is necessary therefore to screen in impacts from non-native/invasive plant species on the River Itchen SAC into the <u>Appropriate Assessment</u>.
Impacts on land used by species outside the European site boundaries for which the species are a qualifying interest feature	Otters are a qualifying feature of the River Itchen SAC. While there is no recent evidence of otter activity within the application site, there is historic evidence of such use and it is considered that the application site is functionally linked to the River Itchen SAC for this reason. Therefore, the application site can be said to be functionally linked to the River Itchen SAC for the purposes of assessing the potential effects of the proposed development on otter. Noise and vibration from construction activities would have the effect of disturbing otters if they entered certain areas of the application site during the planned build programme for the link road. Whilst otters are largely nocturnal, they do regularly feed and move during the daytime and will sometimes rest up in a 'couch' in a secluded location which could include for example the banks of the watercourses on the application site. Works associated with bridging the watercourse during construction of the road could act as temporary barriers to movement and dispersal of otters through the wider landscape. It is necessary therefore to screen in impacts on otters as a <u>qualifying interest feature of the River Itchen SAC into the Appropriate Assessment</u>.

Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar

Solent and Southampton Water qualifies as a SPA for its breeding and wintering bird species. As breeding species, the site contains Common Tern, Little Tern, Mediterranean Gull, Roseate Tern and Sandwich Tern. Over wintering birds include Black-tailed Godwit, Dark-bellied Brent Goose, Ringed Plover and Teal.

Solent and Southampton Water also qualifies as a Ramsar site under four criteria, including:

- Supporting many wetland habitats such as saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reedbeds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs.
- Supporting an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates.
- Supporting avian assemblages of international importance.
- Regularly supporting 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of water bird (in this case, dark-bellied Brent goose).

Conservation objectives

Subject to natural change, ensure that the integrity of the SPA site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring the extent and distribution, the structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features and the population of each of the qualifying features.

SPAs classified under the EU Birds Directive and SACs designated under the EU Habitats Directive together form the Natura 2000 network. The Habitats Directive establishes the need to properly protect these sites and identifies that this should be carried out having regard to defined 'conservation objectives'. Ramsar sites were established as part of a global convention on important wetland areas; as such, on their own, they are not part of the EU protected sites. Therefore, Ramsar sites do not have agreed conservation objectives as a requirement of EU legislation. However, Ramsar sites are generally contiguous with a number of wetland SPAs and their underlying SSSIs.

While Ramsar sites do not have defined (per EU Habitats Directive) conservation objectives, it is a requirement that any protection and management measures in place for SSSIs, SPAs, and SACs that are contiguous with Ramsar sites adequately cover Ramsar interests where those interests are wider than other underlying UK / EU designation or classification. (<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmhansrd/vo001113/text/01113w12.htm> para 12)

The key way in which this is secured through UK planning policy is through NPPF 2019 paragraph 176 which explicitly states that Ramsar sites must be considered in the same way as EU sites.

Potential Impacts	Comments
Impacts from construction activities	Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar are located approximately 4km from the site, downstream of the River Itchen SAC. The majority of the Road site is modified grassland containing high proportions of silt and clay which when disturbed (e.g. during the cultivation of arable land, cattle poaching of stream banks or during construction operations) can give rise to fine particle sediment in surface water run-off into the watercourses to which the site drains. The Road crosses over Foxwood Stream and its tributaries (ordinary Watercourses draining onto Moorgreen Stream) and onwards draining into the River Itchen SAC to the south of Chickenhall Lane Wastewater Treatment Works. Development of the Road within or close to the ordinary watercourse and its tributaries that drain the application site would be likely to have the most immediate effects on mobilising and conveying fine particle sediments. This includes the construction of the three proposed river crossings. Not only does the excavation and disturbance of the ground present risks of fine particle sediment mobilisation and run off, but other construction related activities such as the temporary stockpiling of topsoil and subsoil which could wash away if unconsolidated and unprotected and wheel washing facilities for plant and vehicles leaving the construction site. There is also the potential for spillages/other pollution events to occur during the construction period which if allowed to enter the water courses on site could be conveyed into the River Itchen SAC.

	It is possible that any pollution/spillage event that is generated during construction that entered the River Itchen could then be conveyed downstream to the SPA/Ramsar although the distance means that some degree of buffering from impacts is likely. However, it is necessary to incorporate appropriate measures and control to surface water run-off and spillages via a CEMP. <u>It is necessary therefore to screen in impacts from construction activities on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA into the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Increased recreational disturbance	Construction of the Link Road as a standalone project will not result in any increase in residential development or associated recreational pressures. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from recreational disturbance on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts on water quality and pollution	There are no implications for Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar sites resulting from water quality or pollution issues as a result of the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on water quality and pollution on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA into the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts resulting from water abstraction	There are no implications for Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar sites resulting from water abstraction as a result of the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts resulting from water abstraction on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts from atmospheric pollution	Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar are located approximately 4km from the site and will not be impacted by any atmospheric pollution generated during construction of the road. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from atmospheric pollution on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Introduction of non-native/invasive plant species	There are no implications for Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar sites from non-native/invasive plants as a result of this application. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from non-native/invasive plants on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>

Impacts on land used by species outside the European site boundaries for which the species are a qualifying interest feature	No qualifying species for Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar sites will be impacted through construction of the link road. It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on qualifying features of Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar from the <u>Appropriate Assessment</u>.
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Solent Maritime SAC

The Solent Maritime SAC qualifies for its designation by supporting the following habitats that are listed in Annex 1 of the Directive and are the primary reason for the selection of the site.

- Estuaries;
- Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*); and
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

It also qualifies for its designation by supporting the following Annex 1 Habitats

- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time;
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide;
- Coastal lagoons (a priority feature);
- Annual vegetation of drift lines;
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks;
- Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand; and
- Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes").

The site also qualifies for its designation by supporting Desmoulin's Whorl Snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* which is listed in Annex 2 of the Directive.

Conservation objectives

The conservation objectives for Solent Maritime SAC are listed as follows:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species; and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Sixteen component SSSI occur within the area designated as a SPA: Bouldnor and Hamstead Cliffs SSSI, Chichester Harbour SSSI, Eling and Bury Marshes SSSI, Hurst Castle and Lymington River Estuary SSSI, Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI, King's Quay Shore SSSI, Langstone Harbour SSSI, Lee-on-the Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI, Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes SSSI, Lower Test Valley SSSI, Medina Estuary SSSI, Newtown Harbour SSSI, North Solent SSSI, Thorness Bay SSSI, Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI and Yar Estuary SSSI. Of these component SSSIs only Lower Test Valley SSSI, Eling and Bury Marshes SSSI and Upper Hamble and Woods SSSI are considered to be within the potential Zone of Influence.

Potential Impacts	Comments
Impacts from construction activities	The Solent Maritime SAC is sufficiently distant from the site at its nearest point and is separated by a large expanse of urban development. Hydrologically, the site and SAC are separated by the large, tidal expanse of Southampton Water. Therefore, any unmitigated effects arising from construction activities on site will have negligible impact on the SAC. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from construction activities on the Solent Maritime SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Recreational impacts	Construction of the Road as a standalone project will not result in any increase in residential development or associated recreational pressures. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from recreational disturbance on the Solent Maritime SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts on water quality and pollution	There are no implications for Solent Maritime SAC resulting from water quality or pollution issues as a result of the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on water quality and pollution on the Solent Maritime SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts resulting from water abstraction	There are no implications for Solent Maritime SAC resulting from water abstraction as a result of the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on the Solent Maritime SAC from water abstraction from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts from atmospheric pollution	Solent Maritime SAC is located approximately 4.3km from the site at its nearest point and will not be impacted by any atmospheric pollution generated during construction of the road. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from atmospheric pollution on the Solent Maritime SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Introduction of non-native/invasive plant species	There are no implications for the Solent Maritime SAC from non-native/invasive plants as a result of this application. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from non-native/invasive plants on the Solent Maritime SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts on land used by species outside the European site	No qualifying species for the Solent Maritime SAC site will be impacted through construction of the link road.

boundaries for which the species are a qualifying interest feature

It is therefore acceptable to **screen out impacts** on qualifying features of the Solent Maritime SAC from the Appropriate Assessment.

New Forest SAC

The New Forest SAC qualifies for its designation by supporting the following Annex 1 habitats which are the primary reason for the selection of the site:

- Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*)
- Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea*
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*)
- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*
- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion roburi-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*)
- *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests
- Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains
- Bog woodland (Priority feature)
- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*) (Priority feature)

It also qualifies for its designation by supporting the following Annex 1 Habitats (not a primary reason for selection):

- Transition mires and quaking bogs
- Alkaline fens

Annex II species present as qualifying species a primary reason for selection:

Southern damselfly *Coenagrion mercurial* (a primary reason)

Stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* (a primary reason)

Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (not a primary reason)

Conservation objectives

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To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

New Forest SPA

The New Forest SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive by supporting breeding populations of European importance of the following species listed in Annex I of the Directive:

- Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, 300 pairs representing at least 8.8% of the breeding population in Great Britain (count as at 1991)
- Woodlark *Lullula arborea*, 177 pairs representing at least 29.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (no count period specified)
- Honey buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, 2 pairs representing at least 12.5% of the breeding population in Great Britain (no count period specified)
- Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*, 538 pairs representing at least 33.6% of the breeding population in Great Britain (no count period specified)

It also qualifies under Article 4.1 by supporting the following overwintering Annex 1 species:

- Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, 15 individuals representing at least 2.0% of the wintering population in Great Britain (no count period specified)

The site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive by supporting breeding populations of European importance of the following regularly occurring migratory species:

- Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, 25 pairs representing at least 5.0% of the population in Great Britain (no count period specified)
- Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, unspecified pairs representing at least 2.0% of the population in Great Britain (no count period specified).

Conservation objectives

To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features; and
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

New Forest Ramsar

The New Forest Ramsar site qualifies under the following Ramsar Convention criteria:

- 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 scarce wetland species. The whole site complex, with its examples of semi-natural habitats is essential to the genetic and ecological diversity of southern England.

Potential Impacts	Comments
Impacts from construction activities	The New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar is located approximately 11km from the site at its nearest point and is separated by a large expanse of urban development. Hydrologically, the site and SAC are separated by the large, tidal expanse of Southampton Water.

	Therefore, any unmitigated effects arising from construction activities on site will have a negligible impact on the SAC. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from construction activities on the New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Increased recreational disturbance	Construction of the Road as a standalone project will not result in any increase in residential development or associated recreational pressures. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from recreational disturbance on the New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts on water quality and pollution	There are no implications for the New Forest as a result of potential impacts from water quality and pollution for the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on water quality and pollution on the New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts resulting from water abstraction	There are no implications for the New Forest as a result of potential impacts from water abstraction for the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from water abstraction on the New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts from atmospheric pollution	There are no implications for the New Forest as a result of impacts from atmospheric pollution for the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from atmospheric pollution on the New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Introduction of non-native/invasive plant species	There are no implications for the New Forest as a result of non-native/invasive plant species for the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts from non-native/invasive plants on the New Forest SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>
Impacts on land used by species outside the European site boundaries for which the species are a qualifying interest feature	There are no implications for qualifying species of the New Forest SPA/SAC/Ramsar for the road project. <u>It is therefore acceptable to screen out impacts on qualifying species from the New Forest SPA/SAC/Ramsar from the Appropriate Assessment.</u>

Other Natura 2000 Sites

Other Natura 2000 Sites have been considered and screened out due to their distance from the development site and them being outside the zones of influence.

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

YES – Stage 2 screening of the HRA of the planning application has concluded that the development would have a likely significant effect on River Itchen SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site through construction activities.

Stage 2 of the HRA of the planning application has also concluded that the development would have a likely significant effect on River Itchen SAC from impacts to water quality and pollution.

Additionally, the Stage 2 screening concluded a likely significant effect from non-native/invasive plants on the River Itchen SAC.

Furthermore, the Stage 2 screening has concluded that the development would have a likely significant effect on otters as a qualifying species for the River Itchen SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site and Solent and Dorset Coast SPA through disturbance during construction.

(If yes, continue to Stage 3).

Stage 3 - Appropriate Assessment

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

River Itchen SAC

Potential Impacts	Comments
Impacts from construction activities	Otter, white clawed crayfish and fish (particularly salmon) have been identified as sensitive receptors for the SAC which could be affected by construction activities through increased sedimentation or pollution/spillage events. Excavation and disturbance of the ground during construction of the road present risks of fine particle sediment mobilisation and run off, and other construction related activities such as the temporary stockpiling of topsoil and subsoil which could also wash away if unconsolidated and unprotected and wheel washing facilities for plant and vehicles leaving the construction site. Construction of the Road within or close to the ordinary watercourses and tributaries that drain the application site would be likely to have the most immediate effects on mobilising and conveying fine particle sediments into the River Itchen SAC. This includes the construction of the proposed stream crossing.

Natural England have not commented on application F/23/96631 but provided the following advice in April 2022 regarding the risk of sediment mobilisation during construction of the OHH link road:
“As advised in our previous response in January 2022 (our ref: 378786), temporary SuDs features will need to be constructed where required prior to the commencement of earthworks to prevent sediment run-off from the site. Further methods to prevent run-off during construction include the phasing of works to reduce the area of disturbed ground and the treatment of any water pumped from the site (dewatering).

As previously advised, we would encourage works likely to generate sediment run-off to cease during heavy rainfall events.

We advise that the measures set out in the CEMP appear appropriate, however these should also be agreed by the council's ecologist and considered within an appropriate assessment. Subject to the conclusions of your appropriate assessment, CEMP may be secured via an appropriate mechanism such as a planning condition.”

As such, sediment mobilisation during construction of the road is proposed to be controlled and mitigated through the installation of temporary SuDS features and/or early installation of permanent SuDS features and through implementation of a best practice Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Details of the proposed approach to surface water management for the wider OPA site can be found in the 'One Horton Heath Flood Risk Assessment Addendum (O/20/89498)' produced by PFA Consulting (ref. G277-FN14 - FRA ADDENDUM (O-20-89498).docx June 2022). The phase-specific Drainage report (*Ridge Spine Road Drainage Strategy December 2023, rev. P06*) and Technical Note dated 10.09.04 (*Ridge 5018551-TN-003, P01*) ensure that the proposed SUDS features for the application site meet best practice associated with the operation of SuDS in line with CIRIA SuDS Manual (CIRIA, 2015. The SuDS Manual. C753F) will be followed at all times, together with a robust programme of monitoring, management and intervention -

A OHH Strategy Document: Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) Secondary Infrastructure Delivery – Internal Distributor Road OHHSID-IDRCEMP/BJM26032024 has been produced which addresses sediment control as set out below. This has been updated including adopting previous formal advice provided by Natural England and the Environment Agency. The early installation of the permanent SuDs features will be implemented to prevent silt contamination of high-risk watercourses including the River Itchen SAC.

The CEMP comprises the following principles:
Sediment control:

- Control of sediment and runoff will be managed in accordance with the principles set out in the CIRIA SuDs Manual and Works and maintenance in or near water: GPP 5 (See appendices).
- Installation temporary sediment basins/traps/settlement ponds and/or early construction of the permeant SuDs features will be undertaken before any earthworks begin.
- Haul roads will be designed to minimise and control run-off including temporary surfacing and temporary drainage to intercept sediment laden run-off and wetting of surfaces during periods of dry weather.
- Run-off control measures to divert run-off around areas being excavated will be installed in conjunction with sediment basins/silt traps.
- The contractor will minimise the amount of land disturbed at any time to reduce the potential for run-off to enter water courses (phasing).
- The use of methods including, retaining grass and vegetation for as long as possible, in disturbed areas, controlling erosion via the use of straw bale barriers, geotextile silt fences and sediment basins (with regular clearing out of excess sediment off-site) and ensuring that the runoff from the disturbed area passes through sediment control systems before discharge will be required.
- De-watering operations – water pumped out of excavations generally carries a heavy sediment load and should never be discharged direct into watercourses. It should be routed first through features that will allow sediment to be filtered out and settle out.
- Working in or on the banks of watercourses presents a high risk of significant sediment mobilisation and challenges in intercepting it and capturing it once mobilised. The Contractor must consider the temporarily diversion of watercourses around work sites.
- Worked areas should be finished and vegetation established as soon as works are complete, and the area/time ground is left bare and disturbed should be minimised. Where active construction will not take place for more than 60 working days areas should be stabilised by temporary seeding and/or mulching or by other suitable means.
- All discharge of water into local watercourses will be in line with relevant Environment agency licenses and permits.
- All sediment controls will be set out in the Contractors Construction phase plan and will be subject to weekly checks

Dealing with silty or contaminated water:

- Silt, including fine silt or other contaminated water must not be allowed to enter watercourses and ditches. The water courses in this area feed into the River Itchen, a 18 European Special Area of Conservation for wildlife. Pollution of the watercourses could have significant environmental and ecological impact.

- There is a potential for significant silt and run-off from the construction works and storage areas, (which slope down towards the drainage ditches) to enter watercourses and ditches.
- If water is heavily laden with silt, it will be pumped via a settlement tank or lagoon or other silt management techniques (e.g. Silt Busters / Silt Bags) prior to discharge to the SuDS system. This is to ensure silt mobilised as a result of construction activities is captured at source to minimise discharge to on-site watercourses.
- The Principal Contractors will plan their work to contain any contamination, for example, bunding, the use silt barriers/geotextile fencing or alternative effective measures to prevent this occurring. Silt fences will be erected along the boundary of watercourses to minimise silt laden runoff entering the on-site watercourses and these will be monitored, as necessary.
- Catch-pits or silt traps on drains will be used to remove suspended solids such as mud and silt to prevent contaminated water entering surface water drains, surface waters or ground waters, or draining onto the land.
- Contaminated water can arise from excavations, exposed ground, stockpiles, plant and wheel washing, concrete mixing, or other construction activities.
- Wheel washing locations will be located away from watercourses and ditches. Before wheel washing takes place, checks will be carried out to ensure that sediment traps and measures to prevent run-off and the transmission of hydrocarbons/salt/invasive plant seeds are in place during cleaning. These controls will be checked and emptied and at regular intervals.
- Adequate provision for dealing with silty water is to be agreed in advance. Any planned discharges off the site will require prior approval with the appropriate authorities.
- All washings from cement and other cleaning processes must be contained within the site and removed via tanker or other appropriate means to prevent discharge into the local environment.
- All contaminated water must be removed from site and adequately treated prior to discharge under the appropriate permits and licenses.
- Full final details of the silt prevention measures will be included in the Contractors Construction Phase Plan and will be reviewed and agreed with the Clients appointed Ecologist prior to works commencing.

Stream/watercourse diversions:

Temporary damming/dewatering or rerouting of watercourses will be required for the installation of the crossing. All works which will impact the immediate environment and any European Protected Species (EPS) will be undertaken in accordance with the method

	statement reviewed and agreed with the OHH Ecologist and all relevant license conditions. The relevant drainage and SuDS plans and documents and the CEMP (including any further specifications required) can be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions and provided these are then implemented as agreed there is unlikely to be any adverse impacts on the River Itchen through sediment mobilisation or pollution events during construction. An appropriate long-term maintenance, management, adoption and monitoring plan for the SuDS system will be essential to ensuring that there will be no impact on the integrity of the River Itchen during both construction and during the operational lifetime of the development. <u>This information will need to be secured as a pre-commencement condition</u> to ensure that the River Itchen SAC and its interest features are protected throughout construction and operation of the development. <u>It can therefore be concluded that with these mitigating measures in place, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC from construction activities.</u>
Impacts on water quality and pollution	The post- construction sediment shed would be lower than the existing baseline as the majority of the land within the road application is currently agricultural. To ensure that this remains the case, SuDS features need to be managed and maintained appropriately. The provision of surfaced road and permanently vegetated green infrastructure will permanently minimise the extent of exposed surfaces that will cause erosion and transport of sediment. This will reduce the potential for soil/sediment erosion and transportation from the existing agricultural land use. All watercourses will be protected by a 10m vegetated ecological buffer (excluding SUDS connections and ecological improvements) with an associated 10-50m green infrastructure corridor (measured from the bank edge of water limit when watercourse is full). Watercourse severance has been minimised through the development. The approach taken to surface water management includes a SuDS management train approach and at least three forms of filtration which meets EBC Policy DM6 and also accords with NE guidance. A long term adaptive management and monitoring regime for SuDS will also be in place and enforced through planning condition. The Strategic SuDS Features will incorporate the following treatment processes as a minimum: - • Swale with planting • Ponds, to include planting and aquatic flora. • Use of hydrobrakes for flow control

	• Petrol/oil interceptors It is considered that these strategic SUDS Features themselves integrate effective forms of natural filtration, in addition to the other key measures identified elsewhere in the SUDS Train. The proposed surface water management strategy can be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition and provided this is implemented in full it is concluded that it is concluded that the link road project will not have a significant effect on the sediment loading of the River Itchen SAC. An appropriate long-term maintenance, management, adoption and monitoring plan for the SuDS system will be essential to ensuring that there will be no impact on the integrity of the River Itchen during both construction and during the operational lifetime of the development. <u>This information will need to be secured as a pre-commencement condition</u> to ensure that the River Itchen SAC and its interest features are protected throughout construction and operation of the development. Initial information on management and maintenance is provided within the <i>Ridge Secondary Road SuDS Strategy December 2023 (rev. P06) Sections 2 and 3</i>, which includes provision for sediment removal. <u>It can therefore be concluded that adequate levels of sediment control during operation of the link road can be secured such that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC.</u>
Introduction of non-native/invasive plant species	The main risk identified from non-native/invasive plants to the integrity of the River Itchen SAC is from the spread of Japanese Knotweed carried downstream via the to the River Itchen SAC. The submitted ES Chapter 10 Appendix 10.12: Landscape & Biodiversity Design Inherent Mitigation & Enhancement, proposes that the control of INNS during the construction phase is implemented and managed through an invasive species management plan (currently underway) and through appropriate measures included within the CEMP. The submitted CEMP addresses INNS for this application and confirms that the Japanese Knotweed is in year 2 of treatment and management of invasive species must be undertaken in accordance with industry guidance “Invasive species management for infrastructure managers and the construction industry (C679D)” and the SEPA document “Biosecurity and management of invasive non-native species for construction sites and Controlled Activities”. This proposed mitigation can be secured through appropriate planning condition requiring compliance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Based on these considerations, it is considered that the risk of INNS getting into the River Itchen SAC as a result of construction of the link road or during operation are negligible (either in isolation or in-

	combination) and do not represent a threat to the integrity of the SAC. It is concluded construction of the link road will <u>not result in likely significant effects on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC</u> from impacts by non-native/invasive plants.
Impacts on land used by species outside the European site boundaries for which the species are a qualifying interest feature	The risk to otters during construction of the road centres on disturbance and potential disruption of otter movement through the landscape. General construction mitigation measures have been included within the submitted ES Appendix 10.12: Landscape & Biodiversity Design Inherent Mitigation & Enhancement, This includes: • sensitive timing and duration of works (especially to avoid disturbance to species such as otter which are mainly active between dusk and dawn) • pollution avoidance measures and specific measures to protect legally protected species such as European otter including detailed method statements • supervision of works by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) and monitoring Additional measures are proposed for construction works near watercourses including: • a general 10 metre exclusion buffer to development activities within all stream corridors • where the link road crosses watercourses culverts have been designed with mammal ledges and tunnels Mitigation will also include surveys for otter presence or signs of otter activity (along with water vole) for at least 50 metres upstream and downstream of any construction activities within or adjacent to stream corridors including the construction of SUDS features and road crossings. These surveys will be undertaken in advance of any such works commencing and the results of the surveys will inform the necessary method statement, including the need to obtain a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence where survey results and ecological assessment indicate the likelihood of an offence, without such a licence. This mitigation can be secured as part of an Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan (EMMP) or by a suitably worded planning condition. <u>It can therefore be concluded that there will be no adverse effect on otters as a qualifying feature of the River Itchen SAC as a result of the link road project.</u>

Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar

Potential Impacts	Comments
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Impacts from construction activities	The pathway for impacts to the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar is through transport of pollution/sediments downstream in the River Itchen. The mitigation provided for impacts from construction on the River Itchen SAC (see relevant section above) will also be effective for preventing any adverse impacts downstream on the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar sites. <u>It can therefore be concluded that with these mitigating measures in place, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Solent and Southampton Water SPA arising from construction of the link road.</u>
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Stage 4 – Summary of the Appropriate Assessment (To be carried out by the Competent Authority (the local planning authority) in liaison with Natural England

In conclusion, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar from construction impacts provided that the submitted CEMP and adopted approach to surface water management (see references below) are adhered to and secured through Planning Conditions.

There will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC through water quality and pollution from the link road project provided the approach taken to surface water management ('One Horton Heath Flood Risk Assessment Addendum (O/20/89498)' produced by PFA Consulting (ref. G277-FN14 - FRA ADDENDUM (O-20-89498).docx June 2022) and further details specific to the road in the *Ridge Spine Road Drainage Strategy December 2023 and Technical Note* Sediments Baseline and Post-Construction Impact) is secured through an appropriately worded planning condition and implemented as agreed thereafter.

In addition, an appropriate long-term maintenance, management, adoption and monitoring plan for the SuDS system will be required to ensure that there will be no impact on the integrity of the River Itchen during both construction and during the operational lifetime of the development. **This information will need to be secured as a pre-commencement condition** to ensure that the River Itchen SAC and its interest features are protected throughout construction and operation of the development.

The authority has also concluded that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the River Itchen SAC by non-native/invasive species provided the suggested mitigation is secured through appropriate planning conditions requiring the provision of Ecological Mitigation and Management Plans (EMMPs) and Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs).

There will also be no adverse effect on otters as a qualifying species of the River Itchen SAC from construction of the road provided mitigation is secured through an appropriate planning condition.

This represents the authority's Appropriate Assessment as Competent Authority in accordance with requirements under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and having due regard to its duties under Section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Consideration of the Ramsar site/s and potential Special Protection Areas is a matter of government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Natural England Officer:

No objection.