

Habitat Regulation 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:	27/06/2025
HRA completion date:	22/07/2025
Application reference:	F/24/98678
Application address:	Land east of Chickenhall Lane, Eastleigh, SO50 6AF
Application description:	Construction of a 70-bed care home (Use Class C2), with associated parking, landscaping, access, drainage and other associated works following demolition of existing structures.
Lead Planning Officer:	Nick Parker
Case Officer:	Rebecca Altman
Please note that all references in this assessment to the 'Habitats Regulations' refer to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.	

Stage 1 - details of the plan or project	
European site potentially impacted by planning application, plan or project:	Solent and Dorset Coast SPA Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar Site Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA Solent Maritime SAC Solent and Southampton Water SPA New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar Site River Itchen SAC
Is the planning application directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (if yes, Applicant should have provided details)?	No. The development consists of a care home, which is neither connected to nor necessary to the management of any European site.
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. There have been other recent applications permitted in the locality. All schemes have mitigation measures secured to protect the integrity of the protected areas, and with these mitigation measures in place for all approved schemes, there is not considered to be any likely significant in-combination impact.

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.

Recreational impact on the Solent protected sites

The proposed development is within 5.6km of the collectively known European designated areas Solent SPAs/Ramsar sites. In accordance with advice from Natural England, approved Cabinet report dated 15 February 2018 endorsing the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, a net increase in housing development or overnight accommodation within 5.6km of the Solent SPAs is likely to result in impacts to the integrity of those sites through a consequent increase in recreational disturbance.

Development within the 5.6km zone will increase the human population at the coast and thus increase the level of recreation and disturbance of bird species. The impacts of recreational disturbance (both at the site-scale and in combination with other development in the Solent area) are analogous to impacts from direct habitat loss as recreation can cause important habitat to be unavailable for use (the habitat is functionally lost, either permanently or for a defined period). Birds can be displaced by human recreational activities (terrestrial and water-based) and use valuable resources in finding suitable areas in which to rest and feed undisturbed. Ultimately, the impacts of recreational disturbance can be such that they affect the status and distribution of key bird species and therefore act against the stated conservation objectives of the European sites.

Recreational disturbance (New Forest)

The proposed development is within the 13.8km catchment zone for the New Forest SPA, measured across Southampton Water, and it has been identified that new housing development or overnight accommodation has the potential to result in increased recreational pressure on the SPA predominantly from dog walking. There is, therefore, the cumulative potential for future housing / overnight accommodation developments across the borough of Eastleigh to impact the status and distribution of key bird species and therefore act against the stated conservation objectives of these European sites.

Nutrient neutrality:

There is existing evidence of high levels of nutrient input into the Solent complex and that these nutrients are causing eutrophication at these designated sites. Natural England has advised that the resulting effects arising from this eutrophication cause dense green mats of algae, which are impacting on the Solent's protected habitats and bird species and that wastewater from residential development has been identified as contributing to these nutrient inputs.

There is the potential for future housing developments across the Solent region to further exacerbate these impacts and thereby create a risk to the potential future conservation status of the Solent Complex and the features for which it is designated, therefore acting against the stated conservation objectives of the European sites.

Other impacts

The site lies adjacent to the Barton River, which is a tributary of the River Itchen and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The development has the potential to impact on the quality of this watercourse through pollution from surface water run-off, both during construction and occupation.

Would the proposal lead to a likely significant effect on European site integrity? YES if no mitigation in place.

(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.

The application is accompanied by a Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (prepared by FPCR, May 2025), which is enclosed for reference.

Recreational impact on the Solent protected sites

Eastleigh Borough Council formally adopted the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (SRMP) in March 2018. The SRMP provides a strategic solution to ensure the requirements of the Habitats Regulations are met with regard to the in-combination effects of increased recreational pressure on the Solent SPAs arising from new residential development. This strategy represents a partnership approach to the issue which has been endorsed by Natural England.

Policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036) confirms the Council's approach to securing the appropriate mitigation measures to address the in-combination impact of increased recreational disturbance arising from increased housing development. It states:

"The Council will work with PUSH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement a strategic approach to the protection of European sites from the direct and indirect effects of development including recreational disturbance. Within Eastleigh Borough this will include: a. implementing the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy and contributions to recreation mitigation for the New Forest or alternative agreed approaches if required."

As set out in the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, the mitigation would comprise a financial contribution, the amount of which is dependent on the size of the residential dwellings proposed.

In this case, the proposal is for a care home and the applicant has confirmed that this would provide a high level of care to its residents. Residents of the development would not be capable of leaving the home independently. Paragraph 6.9 of the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy states that: *'...in respect of residential accommodation designed specifically for elderly people, a developer contribution (or bespoke mitigation) will be required for apartments for the active elderly, but not for secure accommodation such as a residential nursing home for people who are unable to independently leave the accommodation and which does not provide residents parking or allow pets.'* There would therefore be no mitigation requirement in relation to the proposed care home as due to the nature of the use, it would not result in increased recreational pressure on the Solent protected areas.

Recreational impacts on the New Forest SPA

The project being assessed comprises a care home, which would be located within the 13.8km catchment area of the New Forest SPA. However, the same principles relating to recreational pressure on the Solent protected areas apply to the New Forest impacts. As the residents of the care home would be subject to a high level of nursing care, they would not be able to leave the

accommodation independently and therefore would not place increased pressure on the New Forest SPA through increased visits. No mitigation is therefore required.

Nutrients

The development being assessed would result in a 70- bed nursing home, which would be served by the Chickenhall Land Wastewater Treatment Works, which ultimately feeds into the River Itchen.

The applicants have applied an occupancy rate of 0.93 persons per room, taking account of the fact that there would be a natural turnover of residents and the care home would therefore not operate at 100% capacity at all times. A similar reduced occupancy rate has been agreed for other similar care home developments in the Borough and is considered appropriate.

Based on a 70-bed care home at 0.93 occupancy, and using the standard occupancy, the nutrient output has been calculated as follows (a copy of the calculator is enclosed for reference):

Phosphates: 2.3 kg TP/yr

Nitrates: 89.04 kg TN/yr

It has been agreed between the applicants and the Local Planning Authority that the applicant can mitigate the increase in nitrates and phosphates through the purchase of credits in accordance with the Council's Nutrient Neutrality Offset Schemes. These schemes mainly involve taking land within the Borough, which is within the control and ownership of the Council, out of agricultural use (high intensity) and placing it into a lower intensity use (open space). Further detail can be found via the following link:

[Nutrient Offset Scheme \(eastleigh.gov.uk\)](http://eastleigh.gov.uk)

Upon purchasing the credits, the applicant would receive a vesting certificate which would identify the credits which have been assigned to the planning application and a record of this investment would be retained by the Council.

The Council, as Competent Authority is satisfied that sufficient land is available to mitigate the impact of increased nutrients from the development.

Impacts on adjacent watercourse

To mitigate impacts of pollution into the adjacent watercourse, the following measures are proposed:

- Implementation of a sustainable drainage scheme incorporating 3 forms of naturalised filtration, comprising a hydro-filter channel drain, permeable sub-base and SPEL Smartcepter. This will ensure that surface water is effectively filtered to remove excess nutrients, chemicals and sediments before entering the watercourse, resulting in no net increase in pollutant levels.
- Restriction of run-off rates as part of the drainage strategy to ensure that the development would not result in a material change in water flow into the river to that it already experiences under existing greenfield conditions.
- Implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan throughout the course of construction, which would include measures to minimise pollution from dust and particulates and to prevent water pollution. This would include measures such as the provision of a dedicated plant refuelling area, appropriate storage locations for plant and equipment and regular monitoring.

A final version of the CEMP to cover all measures to prevent pollution would be secured by condition if planning permission is granted. Subject to implementation of the CEMP and drainage

strategy, and on-going management and monitoring (which can also be secured by condition), it is concluded that the development would not have an adverse impact on the quality of the adjacent watercourse and thereby not impact on the integrity of the River Itchen and associated protected sites.

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, subject to mitigation in accordance with the Council's Nutrient Neutrality Offset Scheme, and the imposition of conditions to secure implementation of a CEMP, and implementation and management of the drainage strategy, the application will not have a likely significant effect on the protected sites.

This represents the authority's Appropriate Assessment as Competent Authority in accordance with the 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 NERC Act 2006 to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Consideration of the Ramsar site/s is a matter of government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.