



Plymouth Chicken Farm,
Stock Lane, Landford

Regulation 77
Shadow Appropriate
Assessment

For:
The Browning Family

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FINAL

Plymouth Chicken Farm, Stock Lane, Landford
Regulation 77 Application: Shadow Appropriate Assessment

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Wiltshire Council (WC) has granted prior approval for the conversion of existing agricultural buildings to five dwellings at Plymouth Chicken Farm, Stock Lane, Landford, Salisbury, SP5 2EW. The decision notice records an informative which concerns the need for a Regulation 77 application made under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 to confirm that the proposal will not adversely affect the Solent Habitats Sites or the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar. For completeness, the informative is set out below:

The application site lies within the catchment area of the River Test where Natural England have [sic] advised that all new residential development will have an adverse impact on the River Test and Solent areas of international importance for nature conservation due to increased nitrates. The site also lies within the zone of interest for the New Forest protected sites, in respect of additional recreational pressure on these sites from additional residential development in the area. The applicants are therefore reminded of their obligations under Article 3 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Failure to meet the obligations set out above may result in the development not benefitting from Permitted Development rights.

- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to provide information to the Council in support of the Regulation 77 application required by this informative.

Background

- 1.3. Plymouth Chicken Farm lie within 10km of several statutory designated sites of European nature conservation importance that form part of the National Site Network (NSN), as follows:
- New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Mottisfont Bat SAC
 - Solent & Southampton Water SPA
 - Solent Maritime SAC
 - Emer Bog SAC

- 1.4. The site also lies within close proximity to the New Forest and Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar sites.
- 1.5. The SPAs and SACs receive statutory protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended), (the 'Habitats Regulations'). The Habitats Regulations afford a high level of protection to sites supporting habitats or rare species (other than birds) considered scarce or vulnerable at a European community level (SACs) and areas that hold significant populations of certain bird species (SPAs).
- 1.6. Following amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, the protection afforded by the Habitats Regulations to SPAs and SACs now extends to include Ramsar sites as well.
- 1.7. All are relevant to consideration of the scheme under Regulation 77 of the Habitats Regulations and all are addressed as appropriate, within this document.

Permitted Development in the context of the Habitats Regulations

- 1.8. WC has confirmed that conversion of existing agricultural buildings to five residential units can be considered permitted development (PD). However, under the Habitats Regulations, PD rights potentially affecting habitats sites can only be assumed where they are shown to be directly connected with, or necessary to site management for nature conservation, or where a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is able to conclude that there are no likely significant impacts either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Scope of Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.9. Table 1 on the following page considers each site listed in paragraph 1.3 above to identify which require consideration as part of an appropriate assessment for the Plymouth Chicken Farm.

Table 1: Analysis to determine scope of Appropriate Assessment

Site	Distance from site	Commentary	Included in HRA
New Forest SAC	1.7km	Wiltshire Council planning web pages ¹ identifies that new development within 13.8km of the New Forest SAC will have a likely significant effect in combination with	✓

¹ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-development>

		other plans and projects. The new units at Plymouth Chicken Farm lies c1.7km from the New Forest SAC and therefore falls within this zone.	
New Forest SPA & Ramsar	2.1km	The same webpages identify that new residential accommodation within 13.8km of the New Forest SPA & Ramsar will have a likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects. The new units at Plymouth Chicken Farm lies 2.1km from the New Forest SPA & Ramsar and therefore falls within this zone.	✓
Mottisfont Bat SAC	7.49km	Mottisfont Bats SAC is designated for its population of barbastelle bats. There is a need to consider potential impacts that arise beyond the boundary of this designation that could have a likely significantly effect on this species. The area with greatest bat activity lies is 7.5km around the Mottisfont Bats SAC designation ² . The scheme at Plymouth Chicken Farm lies within this zone (just).	✓
Solent & Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar	11.25km	The Plymouth Chicken Farm lies within the hydrological catchment of the Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar sites, both of which are identified as sensitive to nitrogen. The scheme must therefore demonstrate that it is nutrient neutral. However, the scheme falls outside of the 5.6km zone within which recreational impacts are likely.	✓
Solent Maritime SAC	12.34km	Similarly, the scheme lies within the hydrological catchment of the Solent Maritime SAC, which is also identified as sensitive to nitrogen. The scheme must therefore demonstrate nutrient neutrality.	✓
Emer Bog SAC	10.21km	The site lies outside of the critical catchment and buffer zone in which the potential for hydrological impacts must be considered. This	✗

² <https://testvalley.gov.uk/planning-services/planning/guidance/natureconservationdesignations>

		site can be scoped out of further consideration ³ .	
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- 1.10. This document provides information to WC so that the Council can determine whether the scheme for five residential dwellings at Plymouth Chicken Farm is likely to have a significant effect on all sites identified in the table above. This will ensure that the Council has all necessary information to prepare an Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 77 of the Habitats Regulations.

³ Test Valley Borough Council & Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, 2017. Emer Bog and Baddesley Common Hydrology Study Guidance Note

2.0 Legislative and policy framework

Statutory framework

- 2.1. SPAs, SACs and most recently Ramsar sites receive statutory protection under the Habitats Regulations. The Habitats Regulations afford a high level of protection to sites classified as SPAs as areas that hold significant populations of certain bird species (SPAs) and wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites). They also afford the same level of high protection to tracts of land supporting habitats or rare species (other than birds) considered scarce or vulnerable at a European level (SACs).
- 2.2. Regulation 75 of the Habitats Regulations imposes a condition on any permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) that is likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats Site, under which the permission must not be implemented until the developer has received written notification of the approval of the local planning authority under Regulation 77.
- 2.3. A significant effect is any effect that would undermine the conservation objectives for a Habitats Site and may include physical loss and/or damage of a habitat, disturbance effects, changes to water availability, deposition of contaminants through changes in air quality etc.
- 2.4. Guidance states that HRA judgments handed down by the European Court, and by domestic courts prior to 31 December 2020, remain relevant when interpreting the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)⁴. The European Court judgement known as *People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (C-323/17) therefore remains applicable. This states that, '*measures intended to avoid or reduce impacts on a European site cannot at the same time be regarded as part of the "project"*'⁵ and must be excluded from assessing whether a project is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 2.5. The Habitats Regulations allow the promoter of the project to consult Natural England for a determination as to whether a likely significant effect is likely such that prior approval from the relevant local planning authority is required before the project can proceed. If Natural England determines that the project is not likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination on any International nature conservation site, the project can proceed if it meets all other permitted development restrictions and conditions.

⁴ <https://www.freeths.co.uk/2020/10/22/the-habitats-regulations-assessment-regime-after-31-december-2020-how-will-it-look/>

⁵ <https://insideecology.com/2018/05/01/habitat-regulations-assessments-no-more-screening-out-with-mitigation-measures/>

- 2.6. If Natural England determines that the project is likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination, then the project promoter must apply to the local planning authority for written approval before works can commence. The local planning authority must assess the implications of the project for the conservation objectives of the site in question, and in consultation with Natural England, determine whether or not the project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, having regard to the manner in which the project is proposed to be carried out, or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which it proposes that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given. The local planning authority can only issue written authority where it concludes that the integrity of the site is not compromised.

Conservation objectives

- 2.7. Conservation objectives are identified for all Habitats Sites and cover all features that qualify the site for classification or designation. The conservation objectives apply under the Habitats Regulations and must be considered in addressing Regulation 75 to 77 of the Habitats Regulations.
- 2.8. For Ramsar sites, a decision has been made by Defra and Natural England not to produce Conservation Advice packages, focusing instead on the production of High Level Conservation Objectives. This is because the conservation advice available for overlapping sites is considered sufficient to support the management of Ramsar interests⁶.

Policy framework

- 2.9. An established policy framework is in place to support an assessment of the conversion of agricultural buildings at Plymouth Chicken Farm into five residential units under the terms of the Habitats Regulations.

Local Plan Policy

- 2.10. The Wiltshire Council Core Strategy, adopted January 2015⁷ contains policies for determining planning applications and includes Core Policy 50: Biodiversity & Geodiversity, which addresses matters of biodiversity. As part, Core Policy 50 requires that *'Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 [Habitats] site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or*

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conservation-advice-for-marine-protected-areas-project-background/marine-conservation-advice-project-summary>

⁷ https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/372/Wiltshire-Core-Strategy-adopted2015/pdf/Wiltshire_Core_Strategy_2015.pdf?m=1735555642237

guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 [National Site] network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.'

Recreational Impacts on the New Forest SPD

- 2.11. Online advice from Wiltshire Council states that the Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy for the New Forest Internationally Protected Sites (January 2022) is being revised with implications for development within 13.8 km zones of influence of the New Forest Habitats Sites.
- 2.12. On 7 May 2024, Cabinet approved revised mitigation measures to manage recreational pressures on the New Forest protected sites. This includes the requirement for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures for all residential and tourism / visitor accommodation development within the 13.8 km zone of influence to be funded by developer contributions at a rate of £660 (plus legal and admin fees) per unit of residential or tourism accommodation. This revision applies to all development coming forward through planning permission or permitted development which results in a net increase in residential and/or accommodation units within 13.8 km of the New Forest Habitat Sites.
- 2.13. Where mitigation is provided in line with the options provided, residential schemes will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the New Forest habitats sites.

Impacts on the Mottisfont Bat SAC

- 2.14. The Mottisfont woodland supports an important population of the rare barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus* inclusive of a maternity roost. Mottisfont contains a mix of woodland types including hazel coppice with standards, broadleaved plantation and coniferous plantation which the bats use for breeding, roosting, commuting and feeding. However, they also forage beyond the boundary of the designated site and there is a need to consider potential impacts that arise beyond that could have a likely significant effect on this species. Local evidence has indicated that a core sustenance zone, the area with greatest activity, extends up to 7.5km from the boundary of the Mottisfont Bat SAC.

Nutrient neutrality

- 2.15. In January 2024, Defra issued a policy paper⁸ notifying the designation of sensitive river catchments sensitive to nutrient pollution. This includes the habitats sites of the

⁸ January 2024, DEFRA. The Designation of Sensitive Catchment Areas Notice 2024

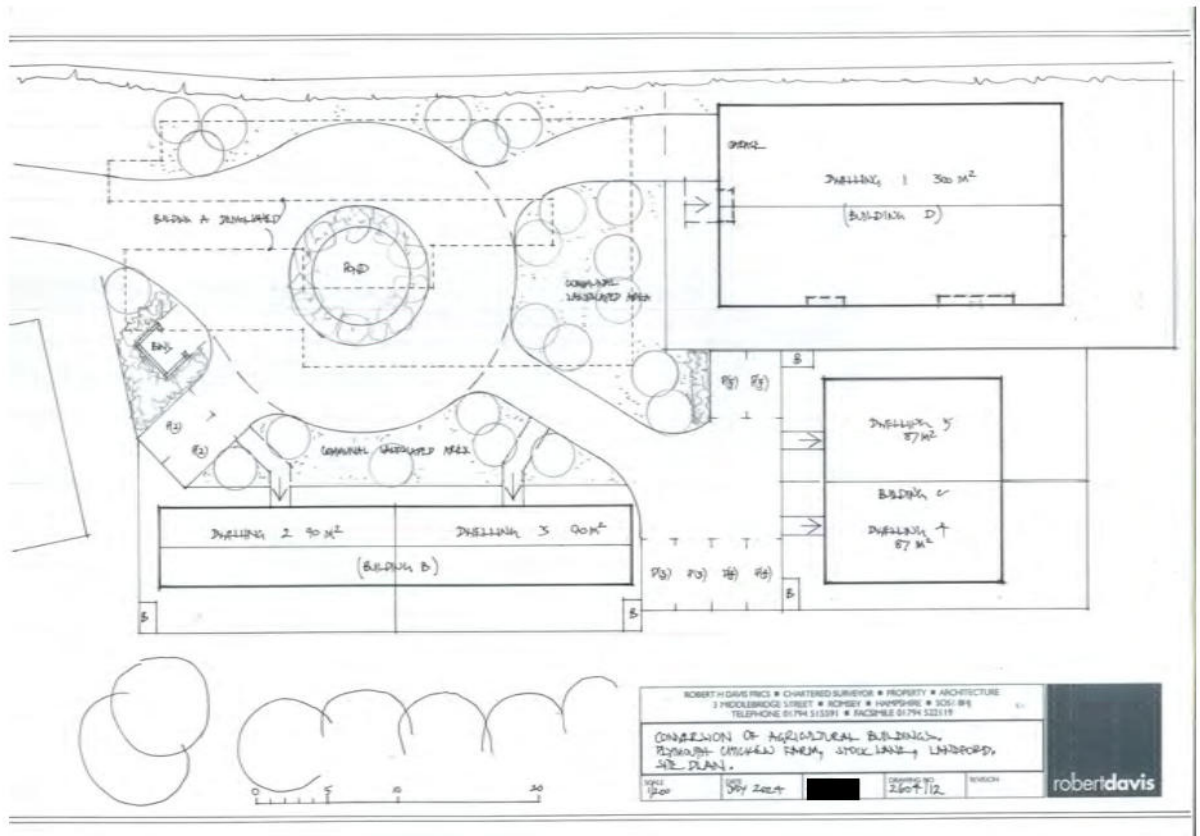
Solent, inclusive of the Solent & Southampton Water SPA and the Solent Maritime SAC, which are identified as being in unfavourable condition on account of nitrogen pollution⁹. The implication of this is that any local planning authority within the catchment of the Solent cannot grant consent for new residential development unless it can be shown to be net nitrogen neutral. A nitrogen calculation is therefore required to ensure that Wiltshire Council has sufficient information to carry out an appropriate assessment of the impacts of the conversion of the habitats sites of the Solent.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-of-designation-of-sensitive-catchment-areas-2024/notice-of-designation-of-sensitive-catchment-areas-2024>

3.0 Development proposals and site description

Site description

- 3.1 Plymouth Chicken Farm is located in Landford, Wiltshire. The scheme involves the conversion of existing, purpose-built poultry units and associated buildings to form five new dwellings. The existing buildings are constructed using blockwork on timber frames with timber cladding and cement fibre roofs.



- 3.2 The old chicken sheds, once converted, will result in a net increase of 5 residential units with direct access to a public highway (existing). The dwellings will vary in size and numbers of bedrooms and will have parking and outdoor space.

Treatment of foul

- 3.3 The new dwellings will connect to the public sewer with all foul treated at the nearby Wellow Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW), within whose catchment the scheme falls¹⁰.

¹⁰ Southern Water, date unknown. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). Test and Itchen Catchment.

4.0 Baseline

- 4.1 The following section sets out the location, designation criteria and conservation objectives of the Habitats Sites to be included in this Shadow Appropriate Assessment. The locations of these sites relative to the application site are shown in Figure 1.

The New Forest SAC

- 4.2 The Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site are:

3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains:
Littorelletalia uniflorae

- 4.3 Hatchet Pond in the New Forest in the south of England is in fact three ponds, one of which is an example of an oligotrophic waterbody amidst wet and dry lowland heath developed over fluvial deposits. It contains shoreweed (*Littorella uniflora*) and isolated populations of northern species such as bog orchid and floating bur-reed (*Sparganium angustifolium*), alongside rare southern species such as Hampshire-purslane (*Ludwigia palustris*). Hatchet Pond is therefore important as a southern example of this lake type where northern species, more common in the uplands of the UK, co-exist with southern species

3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the
Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea*.

- 4.4 In the New Forest vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or of the *Isoeto-Nanojuncetea* occurs on the edge of large temporary ponds, shallow ephemeral pools and poached damp hollows in grassland, which support a number of specialist species in a zone with toad rush (*Juncus bufonius*). These include the two nationally scarce species coral-necklace (*Illecebrum verticillatum*) and yellow centaury, often in association with allseed (*Radiola linoides*) and chaffweed (*Anagallis minima*). Heavy grazing pressure is of prime importance in the maintenance of the outstanding flora of these temporary pond communities. Livestock maintain an open habitat, controlling scrub ingress, and trampling the surface. Commoners' animals also transport seed in their hooves widely from pond to pond where suitable habitat exists. Temporary ponds occur throughout the Forest in depressions capable of holding water for part of the year. Most ponds are small (between 5-10 m across) and, although great in number, amount to less than 10 ha in total area.

4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*.

- 4.5 The New Forest contains the most extensive stands of lowland northern Atlantic wet heaths in southern England, mainly of the M16 *Erica tetralix* – *Sphagnum compactum* type. M14 *Schoenus nigricans* – *Narthecium ossifragum* mire is also found on this site. The wet heaths are important for rare plants, such as marsh gentian and marsh clubmoss, and a number of dragonfly species, including the scarce blue-tailed damselfly (*Ischnura pumilio*) and small red damselfly (*Ceragrion tenellum*). There is a wide range of transitions between wet heath and other habitats, including dry heath, various woodland types, *Molinia* grasslands, fen, and acid grassland. Wet heaths enriched by bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*) are a prominent feature of many areas of the Forest. Unlike much lowland heath, the New Forest heaths continue to be extensively grazed by cattle and horses, favouring species with low competitive ability.

4030 European dry heaths

- 4.6 The New Forest represents European dry heaths in southern England and is the largest area of lowland heathland in the UK. It is particularly important for the diversity of its habitats and the range of rare and scarce species which it supports. The New Forest is unusual because of its long history of grazing in a traditional fashion by ponies and cattle. The dry heaths of the New Forest are of the H2 *Calluna vulgaris* – *Ulex minor* heath type, and H3 *Ulex minor* – *Agrostis curtisii* heath is found on damper areas. There are a wide range of transitions between dry heath and wet heath, *Molinia* grassland, fen, acid grassland and various types of scrub and woodland. Both the New Forest and the two Dorset Heath SACs are in southern England. All three areas are selected because together they contain a high proportion of all the lowland European dry heaths in the UK. There are, however, significant differences in the ecology of the two areas, associated with more oceanic conditions in Dorset and the continuous history of grazing in the New Forest.

6410 *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinia caerulea*).

- 4.7 The New Forest represents *Molinia* meadows in southern England. The site supports a large area of the heathy form of M24 *Molinia caerulea* – *Cirsium dissectum* fen-meadow. This vegetation occurs in situations of heavy grazing by ponies and cattle in areas known locally as 'lawns', often in a fine-scale mosaic with 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths and other mire and grassland communities. These lawns occur on flushed soils on slopes and on level terrain on the floodplains of rivers and streams. The New Forest *Molinia* meadows are unusual in the UK in terms of their species composition, management and landscape position. The grasslands are species-rich,

and a particular feature is the abundance of small sedges such as carnation sedge (*Carex panacea*), common sedge (*Carex nigra*) and yellow-sedge (*Carex viridula* ssp. *oedocarpa*), and the more frequent occurrence of mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*) and petty whin (*Genista anglica*) compared to stands elsewhere in the UK.

7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*

- 4.8 The New Forest, one of three sites selected in southern England, is considered to hold the largest area in England of depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*, in complex habitat mosaics associated primarily with the extensive valley bogs of this site. The habitat type is developed in three situations: in natural bog pools of patterned bog surfaces, in flushes on the margins of valley mires and in areas disturbed by peat-digging, footpaths, tracks, ditches etc. In places the habitat type is rich in brown mosses *Cratoneuron* spp. and *Scorpidium scorpioides*, suggesting flushing by mineral-rich waters. The mosaics in which this habitat type occurs are an important location for bog orchid.

9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrub layer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*).

- 4.9 The New Forest is the largest area of mature, semi-natural beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) woodland in Britain and represents Atlantic acidophilous beech forests in the most southerly part of the habitat's UK range. The mosaic with other types of woodland and heath has allowed unique and varied assemblages of epiphytic lichens and saproxylic invertebrates to be sustained, particularly in situations where the woodland is open and the tree trunks receive plenty of light. The traditional common grazing in the Forest by cattle and ponies provides opportunities to explore the impact of large herbivores on the woodland system.

9130 *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests

- 4.10 The New Forest is the largest area of mature, semi-natural beech woodland in Britain; much of it is a form of W14 *Fagus sylvatica* – *Rubus fruticosus* woodland that conforms to the Annex I type *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests. The mosaic with other types of woodland and heath has allowed unique and varied assemblages of epiphytic lichens and saproxylic invertebrates to be sustained, particularly in situations where the woodlands are open and the tree trunks receive plenty of light. The traditional common grazing in the Forest by cattle and ponies provides opportunities to explore the impact of large herbivores on the woodland system.

9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains.

- 4.11 The New Forest is representative of old acidophilous oak woods in the southern part of its UK range. It is the most extensive area of active wood-pasture with old oak *Quercus* spp. and beech in north-west Europe and has outstanding invertebrate and lichen populations. This site was preferred over other sites that lack a succession of age-classes because, although scattered over a wide area, the oak stands are found within a predominantly semi-natural landscape with a more balanced age-structure of trees. The traditional common grazing in the Forest by cattle and ponies provides opportunities to explore the impact of large herbivores on the woodland system. The New Forest has been identified as of potential international importance for its saproxylic invertebrate fauna by the Council of Europe.

91D0 Bog woodland*

- 4.12 Within the New Forest, in southern England, birch (*Betula* sp) – willow (*Salix* sp) stands occur over valley bog vegetation, with fringing alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) – *Sphagnum* stands where there is some water movement. These stands appear to have persisted for long periods in stable association with the underlying *Sphagnum* bog-moss communities. The rich epiphytic lichen communities and pollen record provide evidence for the persistence of this association. The bog woodland occurs in association with a range of other habitats for which the site has also been selected.

91E0 Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)*

- 4.13 The New Forest contains many streams and some small rivers that are less affected by drainage and canalisation than those in any other comparable area in the lowlands of England. Associated with many of the streams, particularly those with alkaline and neutral groundwater, are strips of alder woodland which, collectively, form an extensive resource with a rich flora. In places there are examples of transitions from open water through reed swamp and fen to alder woodland. The small rivers show natural meanders and debris dams, features that are otherwise rare in the lowlands, with fragmentary ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) stands as well as the alder strips. In other places there are transitions to 9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains and 9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrub layer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Illici-Fagenion*), for which this site has also been selected.
- 4.14 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for the selection of the site are:
- Transition mires and quaking bogs.
 - Alkaline fens.

Annex II species that are a primary reason for the selection of the site are:

Southern damselfly

- 4.15 The New Forest in central southern England is an outstanding locality for southern damselfly, with several population centres and strong populations estimated to be in the hundreds or thousands of individuals and with a long history of records. With Preseli, Dorset Heaths and the River Itchen, it represents one of the four major population centres in the UK.

Stag beetle

- 4.16 The New Forest represents stag beetle in its Hampshire/Sussex population centre and is a major stronghold for the species in the UK. The forest is one of the most important sites in the UK for fauna associated with rotting wood, and was identified as of potential international importance for its saproxylic invertebrate fauna by the Council of Europe.
- 4.17 The Annex II species great crested newt is present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for site selection.

Conservation objectives

- 4.18 The conservation objectives of the NF SAC are set out in a Natural England publication and are set for each qualifying feature (Annex 1 habitat & Annex 2 species) for which the site is classified. Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving Favourable Conservation Status for that habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive. *With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change; 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*
 - *The distribution of qualifying species within the site.*

New Forest SPA

4.19 The NF SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I in any season:

- Dartford warbler – 454 pairs representing 75% of the GB breeding population
- Nightjar – 300+ pairs representing 15% of the GB breeding population
- Woodlark – 51 - 54 pairs representing 24% of the GB breeding population
- Honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*) – 2 pairs representing 7% of the GB breeding population
- Hen harrier – 15 individuals representing 2% of the GB wintering population

4.20 The site also qualified under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I during the breeding season:

- Hobby - 2 pairs representing 3% of the GB breeding population
- Wood warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) - 350 pairs representing 3% of the GB breeding population

Conservation objectives

4.21 The conservation objectives of the NF SPA are set out in a Natural England publication¹¹ and are set for each qualifying feature for which the site is classified. Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive. *With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed), and subject to natural change:*

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*
- *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.*

¹¹ Natural England, 2019: European Site Conservation Objectives for New Forest Special Protection Area. UK9011031

New Forest Ramsar

- 4.22 The New Forest is an area of semi-natural vegetation including valley mires, fens and wet heath within catchments whose uncultivated and undeveloped state buffer the mires against adverse ecological change. The habitats present are of high ecological quality and diversity with undisturbed transition zones.
- 4.23 The suite of mires is regarded as the locus classicus of this type of mire in Britain. Other wetland habitats include numerous ponds of varying size and water chemistry including several ephemeral ponds and a network of small streams mainly acidic in character which have no lowland equivalent in the UK. The plant communities in the numerous valleys and seepage step mires show considerable variation, being affected especially by the nutrient content of groundwater. In the most nutrient-poor zones, *Sphagnum* bog-mosses, cross-leaved heath, bog asphodel, common cottongrass and similar species predominate. In more enriched conditions the communities are more fen-like.
- 4.24 The New Forest qualifies as a Ramsar site under three criteria (1, 2, and 3):
- **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.
- 4.25 The site supports populations of national importance of 28 higher plants, nationally important breeding populations of Dartford warbler and wintering hen harrier. Internationally important populations of southern damselfly and stagbeetle (*Lucanus cervus*) are also present, as well as nationally important species of great crested newt, brook lamprey and bullhead. Over 180 notable invertebrates are listed on the Ramsar designation sheet.

Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar

4.26 The SSW SPA extends from Hurst Spit to Hill Head along the south coast of Hampshire, and from Yarmouth to Whitecliff Bay along the north coast of the Isle of Wight. The site comprises a series of estuaries and harbours with extensive mud-flats and saltmarshes together with adjacent coastal habitats including saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reedbeds, damp woodland and grazing marsh. The mud-flats support beds of *Enteromorpha* spp. and *Zostera* spp. and have a rich invertebrate fauna that forms a food resource for the estuarine birds. In summer, the site is of importance for breeding seabirds, including gulls and four species of terns. In winter, the SPA holds a large and diverse assemblage of waterbirds, including geese, ducks and waders. Dark-bellied brent geese *Branta bernicla bernicla* also feed in surrounding areas of agricultural land outside the SPA. The RMA for the resident housing lies within 5.4km of the SSW SPA.

Qualifying features

4.27 The SSW SPA qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the GB population of a species listed on Annex I in any season¹²:

- Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus* – 2 pairs - representing 8.2 – 13.9% of the GB breeding population (5 year peak mean. Count years 1994-1998).
- Little tern *Sterna albifrons* – 49 pairs - representing 2% of the GB breeding population (5 year peak mean. Count years 1993-1997).
- Roseate tern *Sterna dougallii* – 2 pairs - representing 3.1% of the GB breeding population (5 year peak mean. Count years 1993-1997).
- Common tern *Sterna hirundo* – 267 pairs – representing 2.2% of the GB breeding population (5 year peak mean. Count years 1993-1997).
- Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis* – 231 pairs – representing 1.7% of the GB breeding population (5 year peak mean. Count years 1993-1997).

4.28 The breeding bird assemblage of the SSW SPA is largely confined to saltmarsh habitats west of the Beaulieu River or nature reserves such as Titchfield Haven. The Mediterranean gull colony in Langstone Harbour is currently the largest colony in Hampshire and appears to be attracting most of the breeding birds from along the Solent coast. The breeding tern colonies are mostly associated with salt-marsh habitats or artificial lagoons and are largely inaccessible during the breeding season.

¹² <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineSiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK9011061>

4.29 The site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) because it used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographic population of a regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed on Annex I) in any season:

- Eurasian teal *Anas crecca* (North-western Europe) – 4400 - representing 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7).
- Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta bernicla bernicla* (Western Siberia/Western Europe) - 7506 – representing 2.5% of the population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7).
- Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (Europe/Northern Africa - wintering) – 552 - representing 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7).
- Black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa islandica* (Iceland - breeding) – 1125 - representing 1.6% of the population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7).

4.30 The site is also regularly used by over 20000 waterfowl (as defined by the Ramsar Convention) in any season. Five year peak mean 51361 (1992/93 – 1996/97).

4.31 Solent and Southampton Water also qualifies as a Ramsar site under four criteria (1, 2, 5 and 6):

- **Criterion 1:** The site is one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland in European waters, exhibiting an unusual strong double tidal flow and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the biogeographic region: saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reedbeds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs.
- **Criterion 2:** The site supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. At least thirty three (33) British Red Data Book invertebrates and at least eight (8) British Red Data Book plants are represented.
- **Criterion 5:** The site contains avian assemblages of international importance whereby species with peak counts in winter are 51,343 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003).
- **Criterion 6:** A wetland should be considered internationally important if it regularly supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of waterbird.

Species with peak counts in winter are:

- Black-tailed godwit, *Limosa limosa islandica*, (Iceland/W Europe) - 1,240 individuals, representing an average of 2.6% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3);
- Dark-bellied brent goose, *Branta bernicla bernicla* - 6,456 individuals, representing an average of 3.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3); and

- Eurasian teal, *Anas crecca* (NW Europe) - 5,514 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn are:

- Ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (Europe/Northwest Africa) – 397 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3).

Conservation objectives

4.32 The conservation objectives of the SSW SPA are set out in a Natural England publication¹³ and are set for each qualifying feature for which the site is classified. Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed), and subject to natural change:

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*
- *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.*

Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

4.33 The Village Centre RMA lies approximately 4.75km from the closest point of the SM SAC. The Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site are:

1130 Estuaries

The Solent encompasses a major estuarine system on the south coast of England with four coastal plain estuaries (Yar, Medina, King's Quay Shore, Hamble) and four bar-

¹³ Natural England, 2014: European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area. Site Code: UK9011061.

built estuaries (Newtown Harbour, Beaulieu, Langstone Harbour, Chichester Harbour). The site is the only one in the series to contain more than one physiographic sub-type of estuary and is the only cluster site. The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their hydrographic regime of four tides each day, and for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present within the area. Sediment habitats within the estuaries include extensive estuarine flats, often with intertidal areas supporting eelgrass *Zostera* spp. and green algae, sand and shingle spits, and natural shoreline transitions. The mudflats range from low and variable salinity in the upper reaches of the estuaries to very sheltered almost fully marine muds in Chichester and Langstone Harbours. Unusual features include the presence of very rare sponges in the Yar estuary and a sandy 'reef' of the polychaete *Sabellaria spinulosa* on the steep eastern side of the entrance to Chichester Harbour.

1320 *Spartina* swards (*Spartinion maritimae*)

The Solent contains the second-largest aggregation of Atlantic salt meadows in south and south-west England. Solent Maritime is a composite site composed of a large number of separate areas of saltmarsh. In contrast to the Severn estuary, the salt meadows at this site are notable as being representative of the ungrazed type and support a different range of communities dominated by sea-purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*, common sea-lavender *Limonium vulgare* and thrift *Armeria maritima*. As a whole the site is less truncated by man-made features than other parts of the south coast and shows rare and unusual transitions to freshwater reedswamp and alluvial woodland as well as coastal grassland. Typical Atlantic salt meadow is still widespread in this site, despite a long history of colonisation by cord-grass *Spartina* spp.

4.34 Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- 1150 Coastal lagoons (priority feature)
- 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines
- 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks
- 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- 2120 "Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")

4.35 Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: 1016 Desmoulin's whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana*¹⁴.

¹⁴<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteGeneralDetail.aspx?SiteCode=UK0030059&SiteName=solent%20maritime%20sac&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

Conservation objectives

4.36 The conservation objectives of the SM SAC are set out in a Natural England publication¹⁵ and are set for each qualifying feature Annex 1 habitat & Annex 2 species for which the site is classified. Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving Favourable Conservation Status for that habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive. *With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change; 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*
- *The distribution of qualifying species within the site.*

Mottisfont Bat SAC

4.37 The Mottisfont Bat SAC is designated for the support of an important population of barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*. The site contains a mix of woodland types including hazel coppice with standards, broadleaved plantation and coniferous plantation which the bats use for breeding, roosting, commuting and feeding.

Conservation objectives

4.38 The conservation objectives for the Mottisfont Bats SAC are set out in a Natural England publication¹⁶ and are set for each qualifying feature Annex 1 habitat & Annex 2 species for which the site is classified. Where the objectives are met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving

¹⁵ Natural England, 2014: European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation. Site Code: UK0030059.

¹⁶ Natural England, 2018: European Site Conservation Objectives for Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation. Site Code: UK0030334

Favourable Conservation Status for that habitat type at a UK level. The term 'favourable conservation status' is defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive. *With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change; 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*
- *The distribution of qualifying species within the site.*

5.0 Likely significant effect test

- 5.1 The first test of Regulation 75 of the Habitats Regulations requires an assessment of whether the conversion of the poultry sheds to five residential properties is likely to have a significant effect on the habitats sites in question, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Mitigation cannot be considered within this test (see para 2.5).
- 5.2 Table 2 on the following page shows the potential pathways through which impacts could arise on the sites identified through conversion of the old chicken sheds as set out in Section 3.0.

Table 2 New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar – assessment of likely significant effects

√ Likely significant adverse effect on the NSN site x Not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the NSN site - The principle is not relevant to the screening exercise ? Uncertain effect on the Natura 2000 site					
Check list of change Potential impacts	Reduction in area of Annex 1 habitats?	Direct effects on the populations of species for which the site is designated	Indirect effects on the populations of species for which the site was designated or classified due to loss or degradation of their habitat (quantity/quality)?	Changes to the composition of the habitats for which the site was designated (e.g. reduction in species structure, abundance or diversity that comprises the habitat over time)?	Interruption or degradation of the physical, chemical or biological processes that support habitats and species for which the site was designated or classified?
Land take	-	X	-	-	-
	Plymouth Chicken Farm lies outside the boundary of the New Forest Habitats Sites. No land take within the designations is required, & no direct impacts on populations or habitats for which the Habitats Sites are designated will occur. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans & projects.				

Construction impacts	-	-	X	X	X
			The site is located just under 1.7km away from the closest part of the New Forest Habitats Sites and is separated by the villages of Landford & Hampworth (to the west), hedgerows, tree lines and the A36. These features serve to provide a significant spatial separation between the Plymouth Chicken Farm during construction and Forest habitats. No impact pathways exist that could have a likely significant effect on the Habitats Sites of the New Forest. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects.		
Increased recreational disturbance	-	-	✓	✓	✓
			The New Forest attracts significant numbers of visits for recreational purposes. These arise from both tourists and those living in the local area. Increased visits for recreational purposes act in combination to increase the risk of a range of impacts including: • damage to Annex 1 habitats and mire habitats designated under the Ramsar criteria from: ◦ erosion through increased footfall, ◦ littering; and, ◦ increased risk of wildfire • the disturbance and predation of ground nesting birds for which the SPA and Ramsar are designated • degradation of habitats on which Annex 2 species and SPA bird populations rely. In May 2024, Wiltshire Council recognised the need for mitigation of recreational pressures deriving from new residential accommodation within 13.8km of the New Forest SAC and that without mitigation, significant effects on the conservation objectives for the site are likely. The Council has acknowledged that mitigation is likely to be required for any increase in residential accommodation. Without it, residential accommodation must be considered as likely to have a significant effect. Likely significant effect in combination with other plans & projects.		
Wintering birds: increased recreational disturbance	-	-	X	X	X
			Hen Harrier uses the New Forest to over winter. As a qualifying feature, this species is less vulnerable to recreational disturbance. Breeding does not occur over the winter months and recreational pressures reduce too with colder and wetter weather. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects.		

Hydrological changes, including: • water quality • flows • abstraction • nutrient levels	-	-	X	X	X
			No impact pathways exist to link the Plymouth Chicken Farm scheme to the hydrology of the New Forest Habitats Sites. This extends to include issues of water quality, surface water drainage, water abstraction and flooding No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects.		
Air quality changes	-	-	X	X	X
			The potential impact of decreased air quality on the New Forest Habitats Sites is considered negligible on account of the small-scale nature of the proposals and their rural location. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects.		

Table 3: Mottisfont Bats SAC – assessment of likely significant effects

√ Likely significant adverse effect on the Natura 2000 site x Not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the Natura 2000 site - The principle is not relevant to the screening exercise ? Uncertain effect on the Natura 2000 site					
Check list of change	Reduction in area of Annex 1 habitats?	Direct effects on the populations of species for which the site is designated	Indirect effects on the populations of species for which the site was designated or classified due to loss or degradation of their habitat (quantity/quality)?	Changes to the composition of the habitats for which the site was designated (e.g. reduction in species structure, abundance or diversity that comprises the habitat over time)?	Interruption or degradation of the physical, chemical or biological processes that support habitats and species for which the site was designated or classified?
Potential impacts					
Land take	-	X	-	-	-
	The site lies outside the boundary of the SAC. No land take within the SAC is required, & no direct impacts on populations for which the SAC is classified will occur. No likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects.				
Bat roosting	-	-	X	X	X
			Wiltshire Planning Explorer ¹⁷ locates the proposed scheme within the 7.5km buffer identified for Barbastelle. Roosts are important year-round and include mines & shafts, caves, culverts & tunnels, buildings and trees with rot holes, flaking bark and/or woodpecker holes. The red line at Plymouth Chicken Farm does not support any of these features and does not therefore have any potential to offer roosting opportunities for Barbastelle at any time of the year.		

¹⁷ <https://wiltscouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=74a353612a934bd48fee1f2bc564cdd8>

			Separately, emergence surveys were carried out of the chicken sheds in 2021 by Hampshire Ecological Services Ltd¹⁸. Bats were observed emerging from Barn 2. The level of usage, combined with the number of bat droppings, show that the barn is an occasional, non-breeding day roost for low numbers of common pipistrelles and brown long-eared bats. Neither species is a qualifying feature for the Mottisfont Bat SAC and whilst a European Protected Species Licence will be necessary for the works, consideration of impact on these species is not relevant to this HRA. No likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects.		
Bat foraging	-	-	X	X	X
			The Wiltshire Planning Explorer identifies a zone within 7.5km of the Mottisfont Bat SAC boundary that Barbastelle uses as functionally linked habitat. This zone represents the core area over which the Barbastelle bat population forage with woodland, hedgerow and scrub, unimproved rough grassland, intensively grazed pastures and watercourses and wetland features as particularly important. Bat activity surveys during 2021 observed common pipistrelles, soprano pipistrelles, noctules, serotine, long-eared and Myotis bats flying in the vicinity of the buildings with the mature trees and hedgerows around the boundaries and by the buildings provide good foraging habitat for bats. These connect to a network of hedges, tree-lines and strips of woodland which in turn connect the site to areas of high-quality foraging habitat in the wider landscape such as nearby ancient woodland and waterways. These species are not relevant to the Mottisfont Bat SAC because they are not a qualifying feature. Barbastelle has not been recorded from site to date. No barbastelle has been recorded from the site. The trees on site were identified as having negligible bat roost suitability. Although these surveys are now out of date, the site is little changed since they completed and there is no reason to expect a change to the species recorded present. Update survey work has been instructed over summer 2026 to confirm.		

¹⁸ Hampshire Ecological Services Ltd, November 2021. Plymouth Cottage, Stock Lane, Landford, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 2EW. Ecological Appraisal Report

			Barbastelle has not been recorded from the site to date and it is unlikely that they will have started to use the site in the period between the last bat surveys and those taking place this year. In the event that they have, the location of the site, at the very edge of the Core Area to the Mottisfont Bat SAC means that activity will be marginal with the risk of a significant impact, negligible. No likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects.		
Bat commuting	-	-	X	X	X
			Barbastelles move between their roosts and foraging areas through a series of landscape scale corridors focussed on hedgerows and tree lines, woodlands, riparian corridors and well vegetated embankments. These commuting corridors are key to bat ecology and their disruption has the potential to affect the success of bat populations. This can occur through loss of these habitats, or through indirect effects such as light spill. No barbastelle have been recorded from the Plymouth Chicken Farm scheme to date and no direct loss of commuting corridors will occur. Whilst update surveys taking place this year could pick up barbastelle activity, the location of the site at the very edge of the Core Area means that the activity will be incidental and marginal to the main function of the area. Furthermore, mitigation measures established to minimise impact on the more common species of bats that have been recorded in and around the site will serve to also mitigate any impact on barbastelle. No likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects.		

Table 3 Solent & Southampton Water SPA & Solent Maritime SAC – assessment of likely significant effects

√	Likely significant adverse effect on the Habitats Sites		x	Not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the Habitats Sites	
-	The principle is not relevant to the screening exercise		?	Uncertain effect on Habitats Sites	
Check list of change Potential impacts	Reduction in area of Annex 1 habitats?	Direct effects on the populations of species for which the site is designated	Indirect effects on the populations of species for which the site was designated or classified due to loss or degradation of their habitat (quantity/quality)?	Changes to the composition of the habitats for which the site was designated (e.g. reduction in species structure, abundance or diversity that comprises the habitat over time)?	Interruption or degradation of the physical, chemical or biological processes that support habitats and species for which the site was designated or classified?
Land take	-	X	-	-	-
	The Plymouth Chicken Farm scheme lies outside the boundary of these Habitats Sites. No land take within the designations is required, & no direct impacts on populations or habitats for which the sites are classified/designated will occur. No likely significant effect in combination with other plans and projects.				
Breeding birds: increased recreational disturbance			X	X	X
			The breeding colonies within the SSW SPA & Ramsar are located on the coast and a significant distance from the Plymouth Chicken Farm site. The key location for breeding Mediterranean gull is typically Langstone Harbour with small numbers also found at Keyhaven/Pennington in the black-headed gull colonies that breed on the saltmarsh. Both sites are more than 10km away from the Application Site. Similarly, the tern breeding colonies are focussed at Keyhaven, with Sandwich and little tern colonies also found at Langstone. Given the distance from the development and their inaccessibility, no likely significant effects are predicted with respect to the breeding bird assemblage for which the SPA's are classified. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects.		

Disturbance of wintering & breeding birds during construction	-	-	X	X	X
			The residential scheme is >10km distant to the nearest point of the SSW SPA & Ramsar. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects.		
Hydrological changes, including:	-	-	✓	✓	✓
• water quality • flows • abstraction • nutrient levels	Existing infrastructure will be used, meaning no risk of direct impact	Existing infrastructure will be used, meaning no risk of direct impact	Water quality: The site of the residential scheme is too distant to the Habitats Sites of the Solent to represent any risk to water quality. No impact pathways are identified during either construction or once the new units have completed and are occupied. No likely significant effect alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Foul water: all foul water arising from the new residential units will be treated at West Wellow Sewage Treatment Works (STW), a Southern Water facility. The residential development will result in increased nitrogen outputs to the Solent Habitats Sites through increased throughputs of foul water, and the eventual discharge of treated effluent to sea via outfalls into Solent waters. The change in land use may also add to the total loading, but could also reduce overall loading. To establish certainty, a series of nutrient calculations are required and the scheme is considered likely to have a significant effect alone and in combination with other plans and projects. Flood risk: The Application Site is in Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. The Environment Agency Map of long-term flood risk from surface water indicates that there is a low risk of surface water flooding of low-lying areas in the existing site. No likely significant effect alone and in combination with other plans and projects. Water abstraction: water will not be abstracted or diverted on site. The proposed development falls in the Southern Water supply zone and derives from underground sources in the Water Resource Zone known as Hampshire Rural. HRA of the draft Water Resource Management Plan for 2020-2070 concludes that water resource management will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, assuming identified mitigation schemes are brought forward in consultation and agreement with Natural England¹⁹. No likely significant effect alone and in combination with other plans and projects.		

¹⁹ Southern Water, December 2019. Water Resources Management Plan 2019. Annex 15: Habitats Regulations Assessment. Main Report.

- 5.3 The analysis in Tables 3 and 4 establish potential impact pathways for adverse effects in relation to:
- increased recreational pressures on the New Forest Habitats Sites deriving from new residents moving into the new residential dwellings acting in combination with recreational pressures from other new residential development.
 - the potential for increases in nitrogen loading to the Habitats Sites of the Solent.
- 5.4 In the absence of being able to consider any form of mitigation, the residential scheme at Plymouth Chicken Farm is therefore considered likely to have a significant effect in combination with other projects on these various Habitats Sites.
- 5.5 This conclusion generates a requirement for an appropriate assessment of the scheme to address the impact of increasing recreational pressures and increased nitrogen loading on the ecological integrity of the respective Habitats Sites (see Section 6.0).

6.0 Appropriate assessment

- 6.1 Section 5 set out an analysis to identify impact pathways likely to have a significant effect on Habitats Sites, either alone or in combination with other projects. In the absence of mitigation, the analysis identified the need for appropriate assessment of the impacts of:
- increased recreational pressures on the Habitats Sites of the New Forest,
 - increased nitrogen on the Habitats Sites of the Solent; and,
- 6.2 The appropriate assessment will establish whether the scheme will have an adverse effect on integrity of these sites, either alone or in combination with other projects.

Impacts of recreation on the Habitats Sites of the New Forest

- 6.3 The New Forest SPA is home to a number of rare bird species, including nightjar, Dartford warbler and woodlark. Nightjar and woodlark breed on or near the ground during the spring and summer months and are susceptible to disturbance from visitors to the New Forest, whether walking, cycling or taking part in other recreational sports. They are also vulnerable to disturbance from dogs who may also predate their nests.
- 6.4 Increased recreational pressures can generate structural changes in Forest habitats through erosion, compaction and also through the increased risk of fire that accompanies the use of visitor BBQ's and open fires, which although prohibited, still occur. The structural changes to habitats on which birds depend can reduce the ability of the habitat to function, reducing its ability to support foraging and other essential behaviours.
- 6.5 The New Forest SAC is also designated for a range of rare habitats, including European dry heaths, northern Atlantic wet heaths, oligotrophic waterbodies, and Molinia meadows and the rare species these habitats support. These are vulnerable to damage through erosion and also the increased risk of fire, which has the potential to impact the integrity of their structure and function.
- 6.6 The New Forest Ramsar recognizes the wet mires and bog habitats of the Forest, all of which are complex, specialized habitats whose wet nature renders them vulnerable to damage and erosion through footfall and tyre pressure from bikes.

Implications of the residential scheme for the Habitats Sites of the New Forest

- 6.7 The close proximity of the five new dwellings to the New Forest and the open access to the commons, woodlands and heathlands means that residents of the new units are certain to access and use the New Forest for recreational purpose year round and it is reasonable to assume that, without mitigation, they will increase recreational pressures on the bird populations, habitats and rare species for which the Forest is

designated. Whilst alone, the pressure generated would not be of a magnitude to adversely affect the ecological integrity of the New Forest, it will contribute to in combination effects to have a more significant impact.

Mitigation

- 6.8 On 7 May 2024, Cabinet approved revised mitigation measures to manage recreational pressures on the New Forest protected sites. This includes the requirement for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures for all residential and tourism / visitor accommodation development within the 13.8 km zone of influence to be funded by developer contributions at a rate of £660 (plus legal and admin fees) per unit of residential or tourism accommodation.
- 6.9 This revised position represents a revision to The Interim Recreation Mitigation Strategy for the New Forest Internationally Protected Sites (January 2022) and applies to all development coming forward through planning permission or permitted development which results in a net increase in residential &/or accommodation units within 13.8 km of the New Forest protected sites. Table 1 on the Council's Planning & Biodiversity webpage²⁰ identifies that the relevant contribution for brownfield sites of 1-49 residential units within the 13.8km zone, is £660.00 per dwelling.

Contribution to secure mitigation

- 6.10 The applicant will make a contribution appropriate to the five new residential units for which Prior Approval has been consented, to mitigate the recreational impacts of the scheme on the New Forest Habitats Sites. This contribution will be £3300.00 and will be secured through a condition of the Reg 77 approval notice.
- 6.11 The contribution will ensure that increased recreational pressures arising from the Plymouth Chicken Farm scheme on the Habitat Sites of the New Forest are effectively mitigated, and that the scheme will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of these designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Impacts on the Habitats Sites of the Solent: nutrient neutrality

- 6.12 The ecological importance of the Solent coast is well established. As a single estuarine system it comprises a diverse array of natural habitats including mudflats, sandflats, ancient saltmarsh and Spartina marsh. The mudflats are rich in benthic invertebrate species and provide important feeding grounds for waterfowl and waders over the

²⁰ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-development>

winter months, which also rely on grazing marsh, vegetated shingle, sea cliffs, saltmarshes, mudflats, sand flats, rocky shores, lagoons as supporting habitat. The Solent is also important for natural gradations between maritime to coastal and marine habitats, transitions that have been lost from many other areas of the south coast. However, Natural England has identified that the Solent is high in nitrogen, threatening its ecological condition and affecting both protected habitats and species²¹.

- 6.13 Nutrient pollution is a big environmental issue for many of the most important places for nature in England. In estuaries such as the Solent, increased levels of nitrogen can speed up the growth of certain plants, disrupting natural processes and impacting wildlife. This process (called 'eutrophication') damages these water dependent sites and harms the plants and wildlife that are meant to be there.
- 6.14 In January 2024, Defra issued a policy paper²² notifying the designation of catchment areas sensitive to nutrient pollution. This was updated in May 2024 and includes the Solent (catchments of) both the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC.
- 6.15 The Solent is identified as being in unfavourable condition on account of nitrogen pollution²³. The implication of this is that any local planning authority within the catchment of the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and the Solent Maritime SAC, cannot grant consent for new residential development unless it can be shown to be net nitrogen neutral.
- 6.16 A nitrogen calculation is therefore required to ensure that an appropriate assessment can be carried out that properly considers the impacts of the scheme on the Solent Habitats Sites.
- 6.17 This section takes full account of all information provided by WC on the Council's dedicated nutrient neutrality website²⁴. The note also draws on the calculator and guidance resources on the Government website *Tools and resources for calculating nutrient neutrality*²⁵, most recently updated on 27th May 2025.
- 6.18 **Box 1** on the following page sets out the parameters and assumptions used to assess the additional nitrogen loading that the 5 new dwellings will generate.

²¹ Natural England, & Ricardo April 2022. Nutrient neutrality calculator. Tool for assessing the nutrient loading to a Habitats Site. River Avon SAC.

²² January 2024, DEFRA. The Designation of Sensitive Catchment Areas Notice 2024

²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-of-designation-of-sensitive-catchment-areas-2024/notice-of-designation-of-sensitive-catchment-areas-2024>

²⁴ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-bio-phosphorous-nitrogen-mitigation>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tools-and-resources-for-calculating-nutrient-neutrality>

Box 1: Assumptions relevant to the assessment of additional nutrient loading for x5 new residential dwellings at Plymouth Chicken Farm

- **Residential occupancy for the new dwellings:** 2.4 occupants
- **Total wastewater produced by single person:** 120 litres per day
- **Method of waste processing:** the new residential dwellings will be connected to the public sewer and foul waste will be processed at the West Wellow Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW).
- **Total plot area:** The total plot area extends to 1.4ha.
- **Land use:** the chicken sheds are currently redundant agricultural facilities previously used as a poultry farm. The **Poultry** agriculture category is the most suitable descriptor
- **Proposed development:** The schemes, once developed, are classed as **residential urban land**.

6.19 The most recent Natural England Nitrogen Calculator for the Solent catchment has been used to calculate the nutrient load generated by the treated foul for the five new units.

Water infrastructure information	
Description of required information	Data entry column - user inputs required
Date of first occupancy (dd/mm/yyyy):	01/06/2028
Average occupancy rate (people/dwelling or people/unit):	2.40
Water usage (litres/person/day):	120
Development proposal (dwellings/units):	5
Include deductible acceptable loading?	Yes
Wastewater treatment works:	West Wellow WwTW
Current wastewater treatment works N permit (mg TN/litre):	25.00
Not applicable	Not applicable
Post 2030 WwTW N permit (mg TN/litre):	8
Final calculation of nutrient load from wastewater	
Description of values generated	Values generated
Post-2030 wastewater nutrient loading	
Additional population (people):	12.00
Wastewater by development (litres/day):	1440.00
Annual wastewater TN load (kg TN/yr):	3.79
Pre-2030 wastewater nutrient loading	
Annual wastewater TN load (kg TN/yr):	13.15

6.20 The calculations show that the treatment of foul from the five new dwellings is **13.15kg** of Total Nitrogen (TN) per year pre 2030, dropping to **3.79kg** TN per year post 2030. Note that the 20% buffer has not been applied at this stage. Rather it is applied to the final calculation once the overall budget for the site is established.

6.21 To address the overall net nutrient budget for the scheme, it is important to also consider how rates of nitrogen leaching from the ground will change in response to a changed land use. Stages 2 & 3 of the calculation assess the total nitrogen loading to the water environment that is currently taking place and compares this to the loading that will occur once the site has been developed. Both stages are set out below.

Current land use information		
Description of required information	Data entry column - user inputs required	
Operational catchment:	Lower Test and Southampton Streams	
Soil drainage type:	Impeded drainage	
Annual average rainfall (mm):	900.1 - 950	
Within nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ):	Yes	
Current land uses		
Existing land use type(s) - user inputs required	Area (ha) - user inputs required	Annual nitrogen nutrient export (kg TN/yr)
Poultry	1.40	139.49
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
Totals:	1.40	139.49

Future land uses		
New land use type(s) - user inputs required	Area (ha) - user inputs required	Annual nitrogen nutrient export (kg TN/yr)
Residential urban land	1.40	24.14
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
		0.00
Totals:	1.40	24.14

- 6.22 Finally, the calculator generates a net nitrogen loading for the scheme to take account of both loading from treated foul and the change of use of the land for development. This is set out in Stage 4, below.

Total nutrient budget calculations	
Description of values generated	Values generated
Wastewater TN load (kg TN/year):	3.79
Net land use TN change (kg TN/year):	-115.35
TN budget:	-111.56
TN budget + 20% buffer:	-111.56
Annual nutrient budget	
The total annual nitrogen load to mitigate is (kg TN/yr):	0.00
Pre-2030 nutrient budget	
The total annual nitrogen load to mitigate is (kg TN/yr):	0.00

- 6.23 The calculations show that the change in use of the land from a chicken farm to residential dwellings will result in a significant reduction in nitrogen loading to the water environment, and that this reduction is much greater than the increased loading generated by the treatment of foul from the x5 new residential dwellings. The scheme is therefore better than nutrient neutral and **no mitigation is required** to ensure net nutrient neutrality.

Conclusion

- 6.24 A nitrogen budget calculated in line with the most current Natural England guidance and calculator for a net increase of five residential units at Plymouth Chicken Farm, Landford will result in a reduced nitrogen loading to the water environment. No mitigation is required to secure the scheme as net nutrient neutral.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Having concluded that the application is likely to have a significant effect on the Habitats Sites of the New Forest and the Habitats Sites of the Solent in the absence of avoidance and mitigation measures, this document sets out a Shadow Appropriate Assessment of a scheme to convert old chicken sheds at Plymouth Chicken Farm, Landford into 5 new residential units in accordance with Regulation 75 to 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 7.2 The assessment has concluded that the likely significant effects arising from each of the five new units are consistent with, and inclusive of potential impacts detailed in all relevant policy documents, and that the proposal is compliant with the necessary measures to prevent adverse impacts on site integrity.
- 7.3 All mitigation measures necessary to prevent an adverse impact on the integrity of the relevant sites can be secured through condition.
- 7.4 On this basis, it is concluded that that the five new residential properties will not adversely affect the integrity of the New Forest Habitats Sites, the Solent & Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar site, or the Solent Maritime SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. WC can therefore conclude a positive appropriate assessment for the Regulation 77 Application submitted for the scheme.



Key

-  Red line boundary
-  10km buffer
-  New Forest SPA & Ramsar
-  The New Forest SAC
-  Mottisfont Bats SAC
-  River Avon SAC

0 2.5 5 km



Project: Plymouth Chicken Farm

Figure 1: Plymouth Chicken Farm in the context of relevant Habitats Sites

Client:

Date: 11/06/26

Google Satellite
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Key

-  Red line boundary
-  Mottisfont Bats SAC
-  New Forest Habitats Sites
-  Mottisfont Bats SAC 7.5km zone
-  New Forest Habitats Sites 13.8km zone

0 2.5 5 km



Project: Plymouth Chicken Farm

Figure 2: Plymouth Chicken Farm in the context of the New Forest Habitats Sites 13.8km zone and the Mottisfont Bats SAC 7.5km zone

Client:

Date: 11/06/26

Google Satellite
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