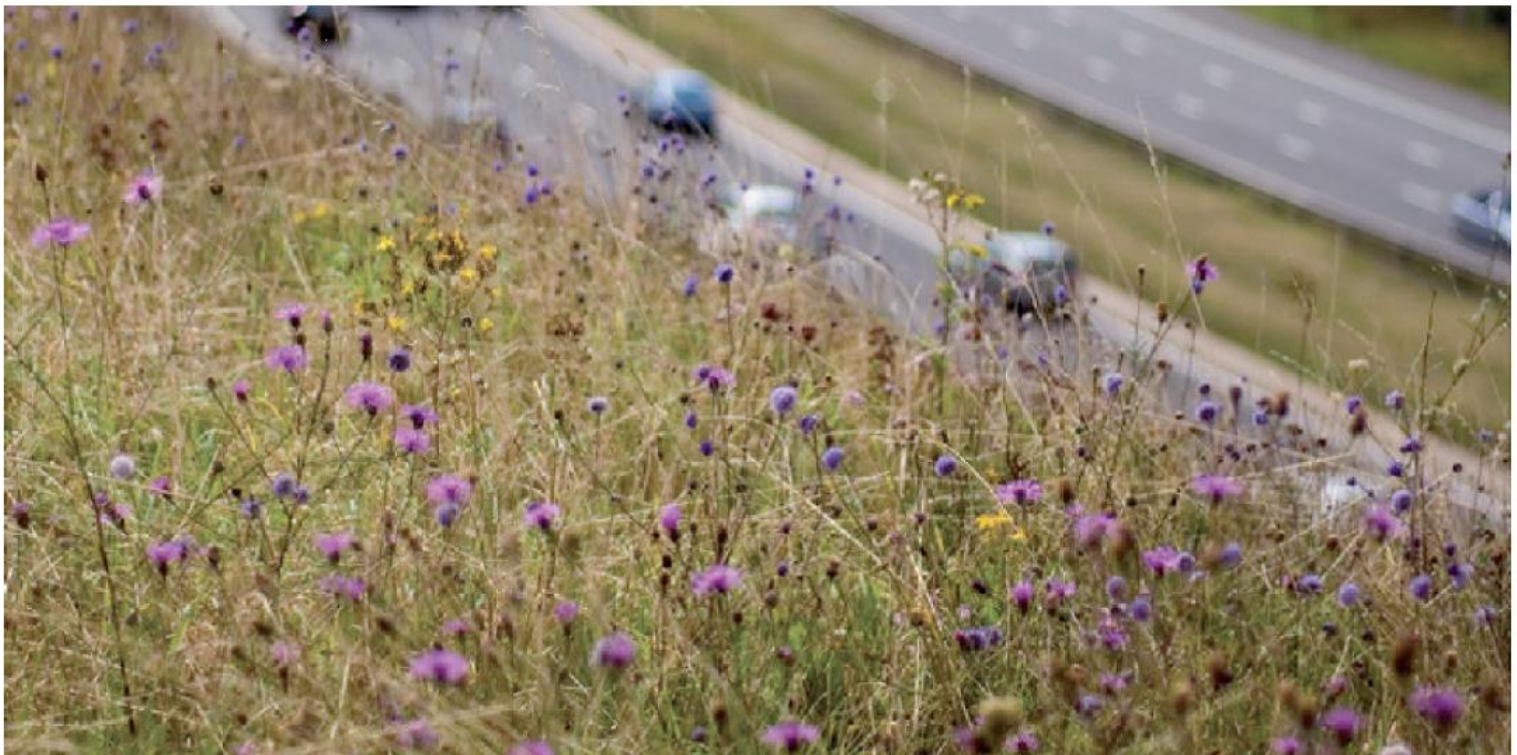




# HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT FOR THE HAMPSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3

Screening Statement for Part A: 20 Year Strategy

March 2011





# Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 3

## Screening Statement for Part A: 20 Year Strategy

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<b>Report No.:</b>	UE-0072_HCC_HRA_screening_9_240311NP
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# Abbreviations

BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
DPD	Development Plan Document
HCC	Hampshire County Council
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IROPI	Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest
LTA	Local Transport Authority
LTP3	Local Transport Plan 3
MDA	Major Development Area
PCC	Portsmouth City Council
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCC	Southampton City Council
SDA	Strategic Development Area
SPA	Special Protection Area
TfSH	Transport for South Hampshire

# Executive Summary

## E1.1 Introduction

This report explains the process of screening for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). It has been prepared by UE Associates on behalf of Hampshire County Council and provides a statement, for consultation with Natural England and others, on whether the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Strategy for the County requires Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations for its effects on European sites. It is supported by an accompanying letter setting out the screening assessment for the LTP3's first Implementation Plan, sent to Natural England and other stakeholders.

European sites are areas of international nature conservation importance that are protected for the benefit of the habitats and species they support. The screening process examines the likely significant effects the LTP3 could have on European sites within or close to Hampshire, as a result of actions proposed by the plan and their interrelationship with the sites' specific environmental sensitivities.

## E1.2 Findings

Based on the information given in the following chapters, it is considered **unlikely that the LTP3 could lead to significant effects** on any European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. An Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations is not required.

Further details of the screening process can be found in the main report, where:

- ▶ **Chapter One** provides a background;
- ▶ **Chapter Two** explains the methodology used;
- ▶ **Chapter Three** describes the European sites considered by the assessment;
- ▶ **Chapter Four** analyses the LTP3 proposals;
- ▶ **Chapter Five** provides a commentary on the potential effects of the plan; and
- ▶ **Chapter Six** presents the Screening Statement and consultation arrangements.

### **E1.3 Consultation**

Consultation on the Screening Statement took place in tandem with consultation on the LTP3 between July and September 2010. In addition, a meeting with Natural England and other nature conservation stakeholders was held during the consultation period, in order for views on the LTP3 and its HRA to be discussed in more detail before the plan was finalised.

This revised Screening Statement seeks to respond to discussions held at the meeting, and written comments which followed, while also re-assessing changes to the LTP3 Strategy following wider consultation.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the County. This is a requirement of Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 ('the Habitats Regulations'). The assessment focuses on the likely significant effects of the plan on the nature conservation interests of European-protected areas in and around the County, and seeks to establish whether or not there will be any adverse effects on the ecological integrity of these European sites as a result of proposals in the plan.

## 1.2 Purpose and Structure of this Document

This report addresses the earliest stages of Habitats Regulations Assessment. It documents the initial evidence gathering process and states whether or not a full Appropriate Assessment is required for the Strategy element of LTP3. It is supported by an accompanying letter setting out the screening assessment for the LTP3's first Implementation Plan, sent to Natural England and other stakeholders. The report shows that there are 59 European sites within or close to the County that need to be considered because they could potentially be affected as a result of the plan due to their specific environmental sensitivities.

The outputs of the report include information in relation to:

- ▶ The Habitats Regulations Assessment process (**section 1.3**);
- ▶ The Local Transport Plan (**section 1.4**);
- ▶ The methodology for assessment (**Chapter Two**);
- ▶ Evidence gathering in relation to the European sites (**Chapter Three**);
- ▶ The likely significant effects of the plan (**Chapter Four**);
- ▶ A commentary on why the plan's potential effects have been discounted from further consideration (**Chapter Five**); and
- ▶ A Screening Statement as to the need, or otherwise, for Appropriate Assessment, and consultation arrangements (**Chapter Six**).

## 1.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment of Land Use Plans

The application of Habitats Regulations Assessment to land use plans is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 ('the Habitats Regulations'), the UK's transposition of European Union Directive 92/43/EEC *on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora* ('the Habitats Directive'). HRA must be applied to all statutory land use plans in England and Wales and aims to assess the potential effects of a plan against

the conservation objectives of any sites designated for their nature conservation importance as part of a system known collectively as the Natura 2000 network of European sites.

European sites provide ecological infrastructure for the protection of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species of exceptional importance within the European Union. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs, designated under the Habitats Directive) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs, designated under European Union Directive 2009/147/EC *on the conservation of wild birds* ('the Birds Directive')). Meanwhile, Government policy (PPS9 (ODPM, 2005a) and Circular 06/05 (ODPM, 2005b)) recommends that Ramsar sites (UNESCO, 1971) are treated as if they are fully designated European sites for the purposes of considering development proposals that may affect them.

Under Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations, the assessment must determine whether or not a plan will adversely affect the integrity of the European site(s) concerned. The process is characterised by the precautionary principle. The European Commission (2000) describes the principle as follows:

*If a preliminary scientific evaluation shows that there are reasonable grounds for concern that a particular activity might lead to damaging effects on the environment, or on human, animal or plant health, which would be inconsistent with the protection normally afforded to these within the European Community, the Precautionary Principle is triggered.*

*Decision-makers then have to determine what action to take. They should take account of the potential consequences of taking no action, the uncertainties inherent in the scientific evaluation, and they should consult interested parties on the possible ways of managing the risk. Measures should be proportionate to the level of risk, and to the desired level of protection. They should be provisional in nature pending the availability of more reliable scientific data.*

*Action is then undertaken to obtain further information enabling a more objective assessment of the risk. The measures taken to manage the risk should be maintained so long as the scientific information remains inconclusive and the risk unacceptable.*

The hierarchy of intervention is important: where significant effects are likely or uncertain, plan makers must firstly seek to avoid the effect through for example, a change of policy. If this is not possible, mitigation measures should be explored to remove or reduce the significant effect. If neither avoidance, nor subsequently, mitigation is possible, alternatives to the plan should be considered. Such alternatives should explore ways of achieving the plan's objectives that avoid significant effects entirely. If there are no alternatives suitable for removing an adverse effect, plan-makers must demonstrate, under the conditions of Regulation 103 of the Habitats Regulations, that there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) to continue with the proposal. This is widely perceived as an undesirable position and should be avoided if at all possible.

## 1.4 Background to the Local Transport Plan 3

Hampshire County Council, as the Local Transport Authority (LTA) for Hampshire, is currently preparing the LTP3 for the County. This will replace Hampshire's second Local Transport Plan, which was adopted in April 2006, and covers the five year period between 2006-11.

The LTP3 will:

- ▶ Set out HCC's transport policies and their relation with national and local policy objectives within a single document;
- ▶ Take into account an increasing emphasis on maintenance and road safety, the need to support Hampshire's economy, emerging Local Development Framework priorities, sustainability and the worsening public finance outlook;
- ▶ Be a corporate document, relevant to Hampshire but meeting Government expectations on content;
- ▶ Provide guidance on transport issues for the various Local Development Frameworks being developed within Hampshire; and
- ▶ Leave open the possibility of an early 'refresh' should funding allocations change significantly from expected levels.

The lifespan of the LTP3 will be from 2011 to 2031. This will help enable HCC to set and deliver longer term strategic priorities and meet the requirements of Local Development Frameworks which are currently being developed in Hampshire.

### 1.4.1 *The LTP3 Strategy*

To reflect the timeframe, the LTP3 includes a long term Strategy for Hampshire presenting transport policies and aspirations covering the period to 2031. The Strategy element of the LTP3 is this document's subject of assessment (as opposed to the Implementation Plan element of the LTP3; see below). As a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers, District and Borough Councils and other transport operators, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031.

The LTP3 is based on the development of three 'Area Strategies' for Hampshire. These are designed to reflect countywide priorities in Hampshire at the local level, and encompass (i) the area covered by the Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) transport body, (ii) priorities for central Hampshire and the New Forest, and (iii) priorities for northern Hampshire.

To ensure a collaborative approach in the TfSH area, Hampshire County Council is currently working with Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council to establish responses to common sub-regional transport issues at the LTP3 Strategy level, and to set cross-boundary objectives for transport across the three LTA areas in South Hampshire. Each of the three LTAs will choose its own priorities for delivery within its own Implementation Plan.

The geographic areas covered by the Area Strategies for Hampshire include:

- ▶ **North Hampshire Area Strategy:** includes Andover, Basingstoke, Fleet, Farnborough and Aldershot, the towns of Whitchurch, Hook, Tadley and Yateley, and the rural hinterland of the area.
- ▶ **Central Hampshire and the New Forest Area Strategy:** comprises the largely rural central Hampshire and New Forest area including the New Forest and South Downs National Parks within Hampshire, and Winchester, Ringwood, Brockenhurst, Lymington, Alton, Petersfield and New Alresford.
- ▶ **South Hampshire Area Strategy:** incorporating the mostly urban Transport for South Hampshire area, it includes Southampton, Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Havant, Waterlooville, Romsey and the surrounding areas. The area mirrors the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire area<sup>i</sup>.

**Figure 1.1** below sets out the geographic coverage of the three Area Strategy areas in Hampshire.

#### 1.4.2 *The LTP3 Implementation Plan*

In line with LTP3 guidance, the longer term Strategy presented in the Hampshire LTP3 will be delivered through a programme of shorter term Implementation Plans for the Hampshire County Council area. The first Implementation Plan will cover the three year period April 2011 to March 2014, and will set out which options for delivery set out in the LTP3 Strategy will be progressed to the delivery stage. The Implementation Plan:

- ▶ Sets out proposed expenditure under a number of category headings, including where known the projects to be pursued;
- ▶ Explains the sorts of measures that the expenditure category headings are likely to encompass;
- ▶ Identifies whether the projected funding and budget source is capital or revenue;
- ▶ Provides detail of the types of interventions that are to be included within bids to Central Government to funding streams such as the Regional Growth Fund and Local Sustainable Transport Fund; and
- ▶ Considers opportunities presented by new funding mechanisms including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

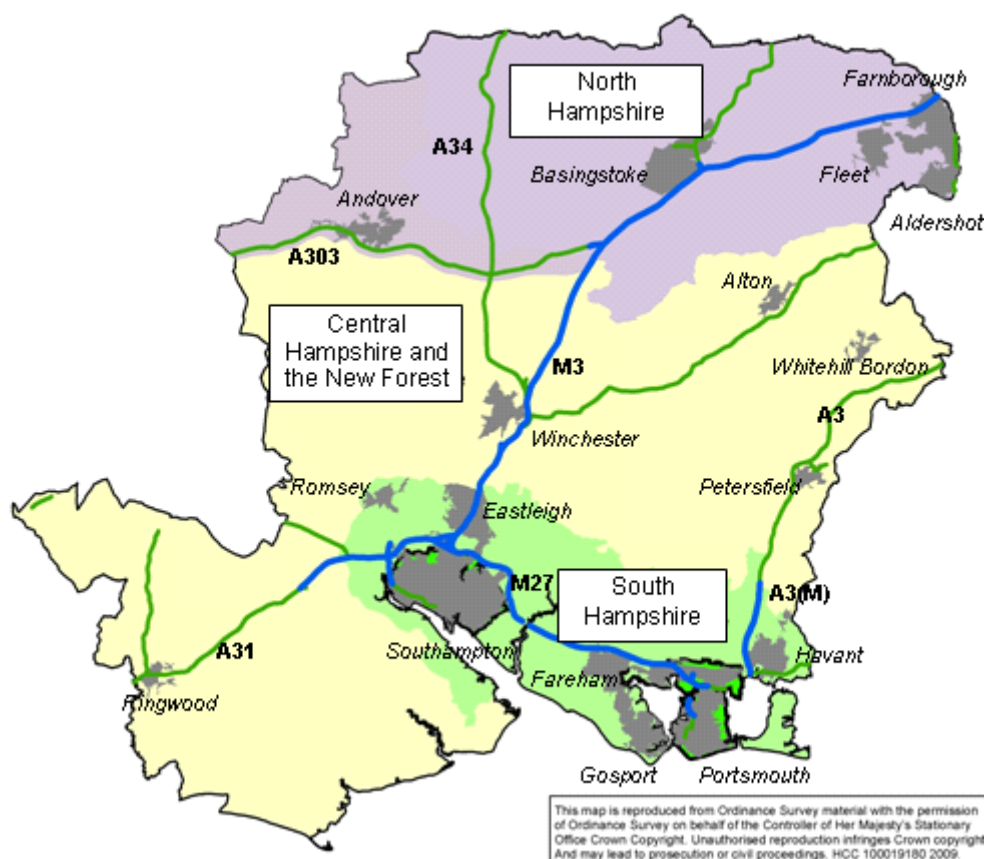
The draft Hampshire LTP3 Implementation Plan will be subject to further Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment work, to complement the assessment carried out on the Strategy. But the Implementation Plan element will not be subject to formal consultation, as in essence the Implementation Plan identifies those elements of the Strategy which the County Council intends to deliver during the first three years of the LTP. Extensive consultation, including with nature conservation stakeholders, was carried out for the Strategy element of the LTP3 between July and September 2010.

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<sup>i</sup> The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) is a partnership of eleven Local Authorities in the south Hampshire area. The partnership was set up to help deliver sustainable growth and economic development in the sub-region.

## 1.5 Overview of the Plan Area

Hampshire is located in central southern England. It provides the only land border to the Cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, and also borders with Dorset and Wiltshire to the west; West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest to the north; and Surrey and West Sussex to the east. The Unitary Authorities of Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council border the County to the south, with the Isle of Wight just off Hampshire's southern coastline. Covering approximately 3,700 square kilometres, the county extends 86km from east to west, and 73km from north to south; see **Figure 1.2**.



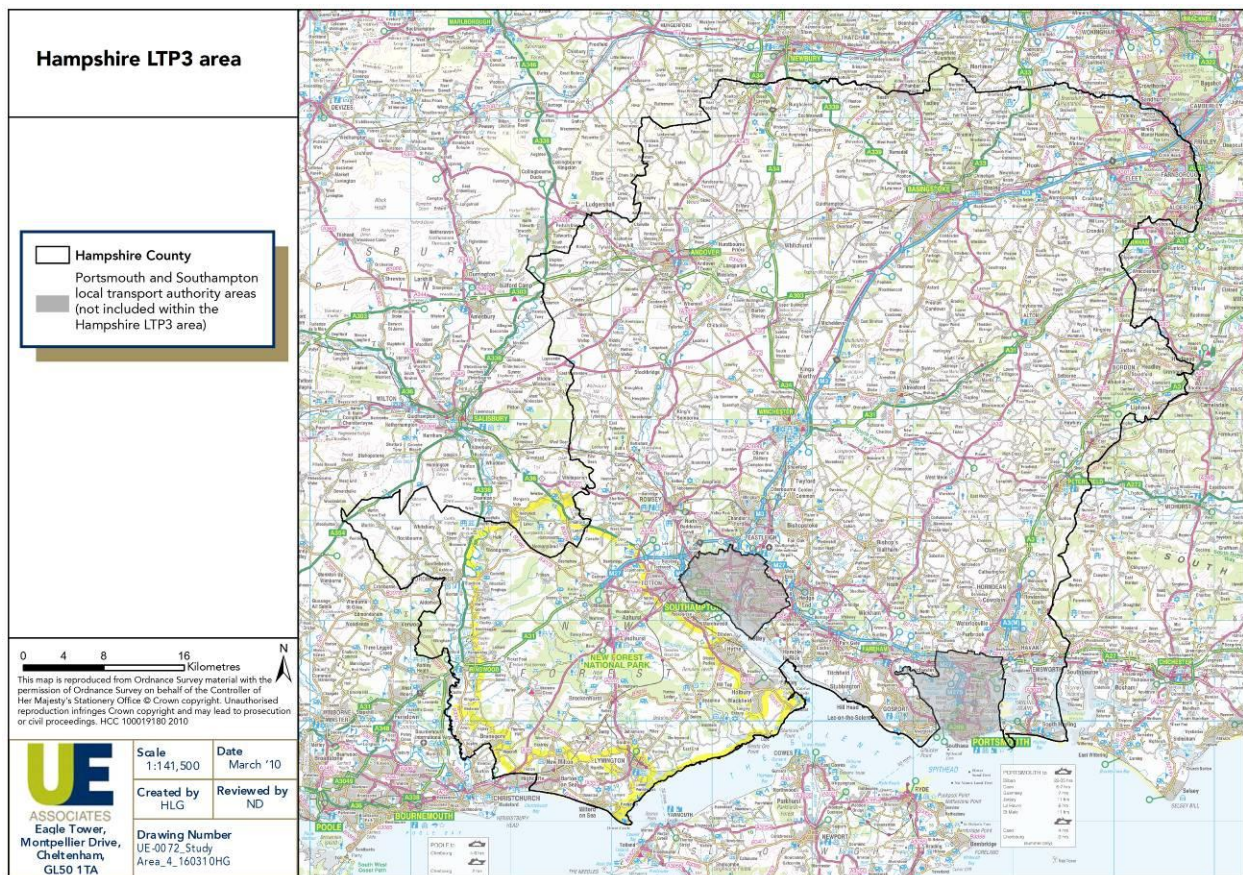
**Figure 1.1:** Hampshire County Council's LTP3 Strategy Areas (Source: HCC)

Significant settlements in Hampshire include: Basingstoke and Andover in the north of the county; the towns and settlements of the Blackwater Valley in the north east including Fleet, Farnborough and Aldershot; Winchester and Romsey in central southern Hampshire; Ringwood, Brockenhurst and Lymington in the New Forest; Petersfield and Alton in the east of the county; and the urbanised area of south Hampshire between Southampton and Portsmouth, which includes the towns of Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Waterlooville. The 2010 population of Hampshire is approximately 1,297,000. This is forecast to grow to 1,393,000 by 2026<sup>ii</sup>.

<sup>ii</sup> HCC Long Term Population Projections:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/planning/factsandfigures/population-statistics/long-term-proj.htm>

Hampshire is characterised by a high quality physical environment, and includes a number of well known features and areas such as the New Forest, the South Downs, the North Hampshire Downs, the south Hampshire harbours, and rivers such the Test, Itchen, Hamble and Avon. The coastline of Hampshire includes: parts of Portsmouth Harbour, Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour; a number of estuaries including those of the rivers Lymington and Hamble; Southampton Water; the coastline of the New Forest; and part of Christchurch Bay. It is separated from the Isle of Wight by the Solent. Whilst the county's coastline is 55km long from east to west 'as the crow flies', with inundations (including creeks, estuaries and harbours), it extends to over 370km in length (including the coastline of Portsmouth and Southampton).



**Figure 1.2:** Area included in the LTP3 for Hampshire

The high quality landscape of Hampshire is reflected by the designation of two national parks (the New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park) and the presence of the North Wessex Downs, Chichester Harbour, and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Hampshire's biodiversity resource is reflected by the significant number of international and national nature conservation designations in the county, centred on the New Forest, the coasts and estuaries of south Hampshire, the chalk rivers of the Itchen and Test and the heathlands of north east and east Hampshire. The county also has a rich historic environment which includes important features such as Winchester Cathedral, Mottisfont Abbey and Hurst Castle, as well as a wide range of other designated and non designated features and areas.

In May 2009, the final version of the South East Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy, RSS) was published by the Government. Setting out the vision for the future of the South East region to 2026, the RSS outlines how the South East should respond to challenges facing the region such as housing, the economy, transport and protecting the environment. Central to the plan is the allocation of 32,700 new homes a year in the County in the period to 2026 to meet housing needs. While currently there is uncertainty surrounding the RSS due to the Government's intention to revoke it, local authority areas will still be contemplating whether to deliver housing targets set out by the plan, or revised targets based on local need. On this basis, many parts of Hampshire may experience significant growth in the next 15-20 years, an issue that will need to be taken into close consideration by the LTP3.

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## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Guidance and Best Practice

Guidance on HRA has been published in draft form by the Government (DCLG, 2006). This draws on advice from a range of experts as well as European Union guidance (European Commission, 2001) regarding methodology for Appropriate Assessment of plans.

The guidance recognises that there is no statutory method for undertaking Habitats Regulations Assessment and that the adopted method must be *appropriate* to its purpose under the Habitats Directive and Regulations; this concept is one of the reasons why HRA is also often referred to as Appropriate Assessment. The guidance identifies three stages to the HRA process:

- ▶ AA1: Likely Significant Effects (Screening)
- ▶ AA2: Appropriate Assessment and Ascertaining the Effect on Integrity
- ▶ AA3: Mitigation Measures and Alternative Solutions

Where stage AA3 cannot produce alternative solutions or mitigation to remove or reduce adverse effects to insignificant levels, there may be a need to explore Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest. This is discouraged by DCLG. The three stages collectively make up Habitats Regulations Assessment, while Stage AA2 is the point at which Appropriate Assessment of the plan is carried out if the evidence points to a need for such an assessment.

Natural England has produced more prescriptive draft guidance on the assessment of Local Development Documents under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations (Tyldesley, 2009). This introduces the concept of a stepped approach to the assessment process and fits within the framework of the three stages identified by DCLG. Whilst the guidance is draft it nevertheless provides a helpful approach to HRA and is followed within this report.

**Table 2.1** illustrates how the two approaches (DCLG and Natural England) can be operated as one integrated methodology to achieve the same outcome from each approach. It is recognised that HRA may be undertaken at the same time as other assessment processes associated with plan making (ie, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)), but it should be noted that it is a distinct procedure with its own legislative requirements. For example, the SEA will examine a wider spectrum of biodiversity impacts whereas the HRA only examines those on European sites. The SEA process for the LTP3 is being undertaken and documented separately from the HRA.

### 2.2 Methodology

The HRA follows the methodology prepared by David Tyldesley and Associates (2009), as described in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1: Stages in the HRA process drawing on guidance from DCLG and Natural England**

DCLG Stage	Natural England (Tyldesley) Steps	
AA1: Likely significant effects	1. Gather the evidence base about international sites.	
	2. Consult Natural England and other stakeholders on the method for HRA and sites to be included.	
	3. Screen elements of the plans for likelihood of significant effects.	
	4. Eliminate likely significant effects by amending the plan / option.	
	5. Consult Natural England and other stakeholders on the findings of the screening stage, and scope of the Appropriate Assessment if required.	
AA2: Appropriate Assessment and ascertaining the effect on integrity	6. Appropriate Assessment of elements of the plan likely to have significant effects on a European site.	8. Assess additions and changes to the plan and prepare draft HRA record.
AA3: Mitigation measures and alternative solutions	7. Amend the plan / option or take other action to avoid any adverse effect on integrity of European site(s).	9. Complete the draft Appropriate Assessment and draft HRA record.
Reporting and recording	10. Submit draft HRA and supporting documents to Natural England.	
	11. Consult Natural England, other stakeholders and the public (if suitable).	
	12. Publish final HRA record and submit to Natural England	

ITERATIVE

The screening process, drawing on information about the qualifying features of the site and its conservation objectives, considers whether or not the LTP3’s proposals are likely to lead to significant effects. The screening process concerns steps 1 to 5 in Table 2.1. The following chapters address the five steps accordingly:

- ▶ **Chapter Three** – Identifies all European sites and acquires and examines the conservation objectives of each of these sites;
- ▶ **Chapters Four and Five** – Determines the likely significant effects of the plan on European sites, alone and in-combination with other plans; and
- ▶ **Chapter Six** – Gives the Screening Statement.

## 3 European Sites

### 3.1 Scope of the Study

Since the LTP3 is being prepared alongside and in association with the LTP3s for Portsmouth and Southampton, a shared evidence base has been developed for use in the HRAs of each of the three plans. The area of search for European sites that might be vulnerable to effects from the LTP3s is set at 20km from the Hampshire County boundary in the first instance, and this includes 59 separate (although sometimes overlapping) areas designated under the Birds Directive, Habitats Directive or Ramsar Convention; see **Figure 3.1**.

The shared document *Habitats Regulations Assessments for Local Transport Plans 3 in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton: Volume 2* (UE Associates, 2010) lists the necessary information for each European site considered during the assessment.

### 3.2 Site Descriptions

An ecological description of each European site is given in the shared **Volume 2 document**.

### 3.3 Qualifying Features

The qualifying features of each site (that is, the reasons for which the sites were designated) are listed in the shared **Volume 2 document**.

### 3.4 Conservation Objectives

Natural England is in the process of setting out conservation objectives for all SACs and SPAs, and progress towards these objectives can be taken as an indicator of favourable condition at European sites. Ramsar sites do not have agreed conservation objectives, but in most instances overlap with SPA site boundaries. However, it should be noted that Ramsar qualifying features include a range of habitats and non-bird species common to SAC designations, as well as bird species and assemblages and their supporting habitats, which are common to SPAs.

The conservation objectives of the European sites are currently work in progress and are provided in the shared **Volume 2 document**.

### 3.5 Key Environmental Conditions Supporting Site Integrity

Every European site has distinctive characteristics that make it vulnerable to a variety of impact-inducing activities. The key environmental conditions that support the ecological integrity of each site are listed in the shared **Volume 2 document**.

# European Sites within a 20km vicinity of Hampshire

  20km Buffer from Hampshire  
  SPAs\*  
  SACs\*  
  Ramsar Sites\*  
  Portsmouth  
  Southampton  
  Hampshire County

- \*Map Labels:
1. Bridesford Copses SAC
  2. Butser Hill SAC
  3. Chilmark Quarries SAC
  4. Dorset Heaths SAC
  5. Dorset Heaths (Purbeck&Wareham) & Studland Downs SAC
  6. Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC
  7. East Hampshire Hangers SAC
  8. Ebernoe Common SAC
  9. Emer Bog SAC
  10. Fontmell & Melbury Downs SAC
  11. Great Yews SAC
  12. Hartslock Wood SAC
  13. Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs SAC
  14. Isle of Wight Downs SAC
  15. Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC
  16. Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC
  17. Kingley Vale SAC
  18. Mottisfont Bats SAC
  19. Pewsey Downs SAC
  20. Prescombe Down SAC
  21. River Avon SAC
  22. River Itchen SAC
  23. River Lambourn SAC
  24. Rook Cliff SAC
  25. Salisbury Plain SAC & SPA
  26. Shortheath Common SAC
  27. Singleton and Cocking Tunnel SAC
  28. Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC
  29. Solent Maritime SAC
  30. South Wight Maritime SAC
  31. The Mens SAC
  32. The New Forest SAC & SPA & Ramsar
  33. Thursley, Ash, Pirbright SAC
  34. Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC
  35. Woolmer Forest SAC
  36. Avon Valley SPA & Ramsar
  37. Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA & Ramsar
  38. Dorset Heathlands SPA & Ramsar
  39. Pagham Harbour SPA & Ramsar
  40. Poole Harbour SPA & Ramsar
  41. Porton Down SPA
  42. Portsmouth Harbour SPA & Ramsar
  43. Solent and Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar
  44. South West London Waterbodies SPA & Ramsar
  45. Thames Basin Heaths SPA
  46. Wealden Heaths Phase 1 SPA
  47. Wealden Heaths Phase 2 SPA
  48. Thursley and Ockley Bogs Ramsar

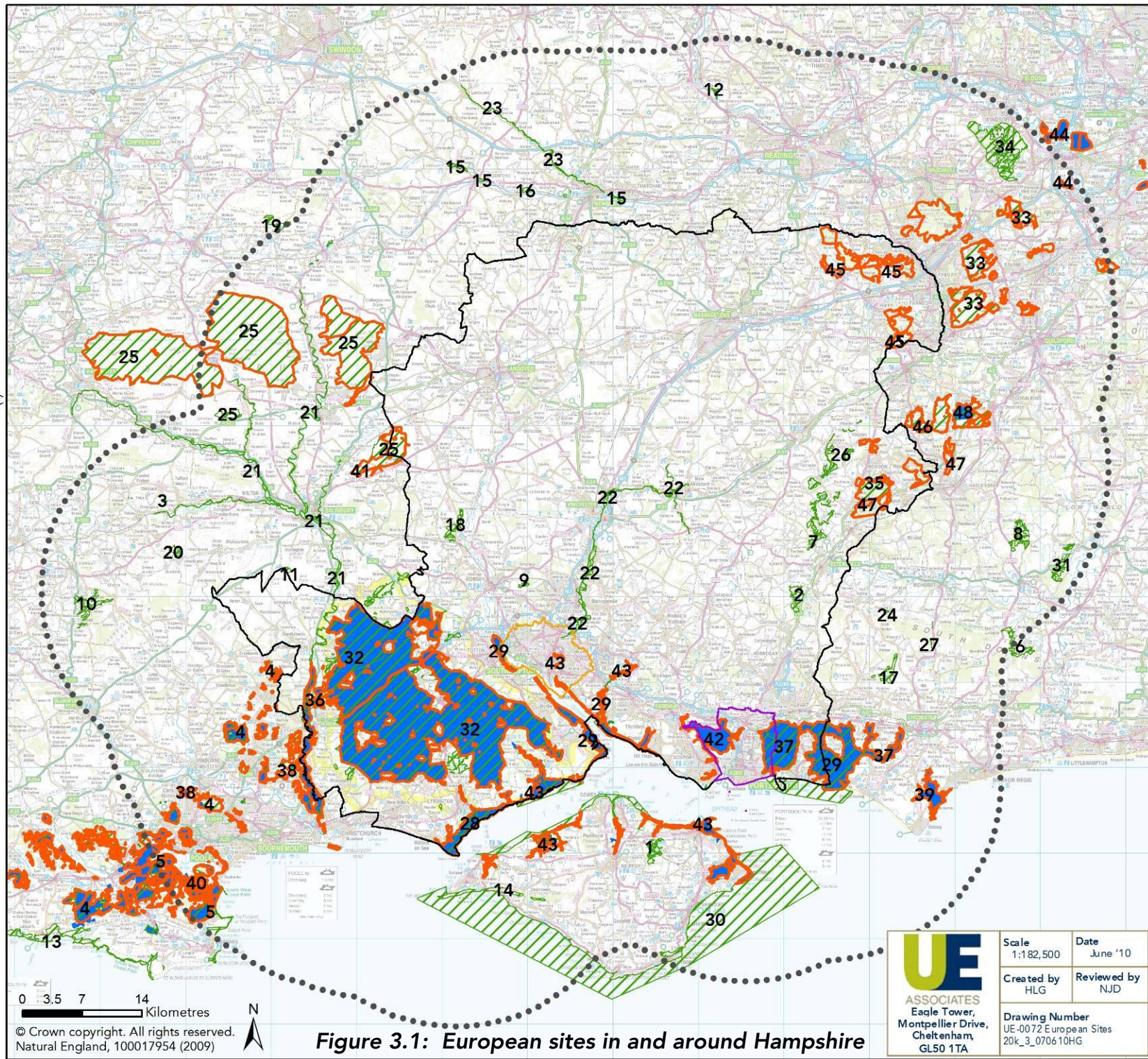


Figure 3.1: European sites in and around Hampshire

 UE ASSOCIATES Eagle Tower, Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL50 1TA	Scale 1:182,500	Date June '10
	Created by HLG	Reviewed by NJD
Drawing Number UE-0072 European Sites 20k_3_070610HG		

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## 4 Effects of the LTP3

### 4.1 Background

This chapter considers the options proposed for inclusion in the LTP3 and, acknowledging that the plan is not necessary to the management of any European site, states whether or not the proposals are likely to have significant effects on the internationally important interest features of a European site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

### 4.2 Plan Options

Three options for the plan were developed in the first instance. Each option contains a range of possible initiatives (sometimes overlapping or shared) to be implemented over the plan period, from which preferred options can be selected. The options are named as follows:

- ▶ **Option 1:** Prioritise Economic Growth
- ▶ **Option 2:** Tackling Climate Change and Improving Sustainability
- ▶ **Option 3:** Sustainable Prosperity

Following the initial screening of these three options, a preferred strategy was selected which was subsequently re-screened for likely significant effects at any European site. This process is described below.

### 4.3 Consideration of Effects

All proposed LTP3 options were screened for likely significant effects on the European sites in question. The effects associated with these proposals can be sorted into one of 17 categories which are listed below in **Box 1**. These categories are derived from the draft HRA guidance document produced by David Tyldesley and Associates (2009), and help to determine which, if any, elements of the plan would be likely to have a significant effect on any interest feature of any international site, alone or in combination with other projects and plans, directly or indirectly.

**Box 1: Assessment Key**

**Category A: No negative effect**

- A1 Options / policies that will not themselves lead to development e.g. because they relate to design or other qualitative criteria for development, or they are not a land use planning policy.
- A2 Options / policies intended to protect the natural environment, including biodiversity.
- A3 Options / policies intended to conserve or enhance the natural, built or historic environment, where enhancement measures will not be likely to have any negative effect on a European Site.
- A4 Options / policies that positively steer development away from European sites and associated sensitive areas.
- A5 Options / policies that would have no effect because development is implemented through later policies in the same plan, which are more specific and therefore more appropriate to assess for their effects on European Sites.

**Category B: No significant effect**

- B Options / policies that could have an effect, but the likelihood is there would be no significant negative effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects.

**Category C: Likely significant effect alone**

- C1 The option, policy or proposal could directly affect a European site because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development onto a European site, or adjacent to it.
- C2 The option / policy could indirectly affect a European site e.g. because it provides for, or steers, a quantity or type of development that may be ecologically, hydrologically or physically connected to it or increase disturbance.
- C3 Proposals for a magnitude of development that, no matter where it was located, the development would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
- C4 An option / policy that makes provision for a quantity / type of development but the effects are uncertain because its detailed location is to be selected following consideration of options in a later, more specific plan.
- C5 Options / policies for developments or infrastructure projects that could block alternatives for the provision of other development in the future, that may lead to adverse effects on European sites, which would otherwise be avoided.
- C6 Options, policies or proposals which are to be implemented in due course - if implemented in one or more particular ways, the proposal could possibly have a significant effect on a European site.
- C7 Any other options, policies or proposals that would be vulnerable to failure under the Habitats Regulations at project assessment stage; to include them in the plan would be regarded by the EC as 'faulty planning'.
- C8 Any other proposal that may have an adverse effect on a European site, which might try to pass the tests of HRA at project level by arguing that the plan provides IROPI to justify its consent despite a negative assessment.

**Category D: Likely significant effects in combination**

- D1 The option, policy or proposal alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if its effects are combined with the effects of other policies within the same plan the cumulative effects would be likely to be significant.
- D2 Options, policies or proposals that alone would not be likely to have significant effects but if their effects are combined with the effects of other plans or projects, the combined effects would be likely to be significant.
- D3 Options or proposals that are, or could be, part of a programme or sequence of development delivered over a period, where the implementation of the later stages could have a significant effect on European sites.

The 17 categories fall into four broader sections which can be described as:

- ▶ **Category A:** Elements of the plan / options that would have no negative effect on a European site at all;
- ▶ **Category B:** Elements of the plan / options that could have an effect, but the likelihood is there would be no significant negative effect on a European site either alone or in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects;
- ▶ **Category C:** Elements of the plan / options that could or would be likely to have a significant effect alone and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted; and
- ▶ **Category D :** Elements of the plan / options that would be likely to have a significant effect in combination with other elements of the same plan, or other plans or projects and will require the plan to be subject to an appropriate assessment before the plan may be adopted.

It should be noted that, at this stage of the HRA, the potential for mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood of impacts has not yet been assessed, and the identification or uncertainty of likely significant effects does not necessarily mean that draft proposals would be certain to have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site. The Appropriate Assessment stage, if required, would therefore need to be undertaken for any proposal where significant effects are considered to be 'likely' or 'uncertain', to understand the scale and magnitude of potential impacts in view of each site's qualifying features, conservation objectives and vulnerabilities, as well as the mitigation measures that may be available to reduce or remove the effect.

**Appendix I** illustrates the results of the HRA screening process for all LTP3 Strategy proposed delivery options, where the numbers in each of the coloured cells correspond to a category listed in Box 1. As can be seen, none of the delivery options for Hampshire are considered likely to lead to significant effects at any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. See also **Chapter Five** which presents a commentary on the plan's potential effects.

#### **4.4 In Combination Test**

Other plans and projects being prepared or implemented in the area may have the potential to cause negative effects on the integrity of European sites. These effects may be exacerbated when experienced in combination with the effects of the plan in question, possibly leading an insignificant effect to become significant. It is therefore important to consider which other plans and projects could generate similar effects to the LTP3 at the same European sites, and which may act in-combination.

The plans and projects listed below were considered for likely effects in combination with the LTP3. It should be noted that in some cases, for example the Core Strategies of a number of authority areas, new plans are not yet in operation and may be subject to change.

- ▶ Core Strategies, Site Allocation Plans and other Local Development Documents of all District, Borough, and Unitary Authorities in Hampshire (Basingstoke and Dean, East Hampshire, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Portsmouth, Rushmoor, Southampton, Test Valley, Winchester);
- ▶ Hampshire County Structure Plan Review (1996-2011) and the South East Plan;
- ▶ Park Management Plans for the New Forest and South Downs National Parks;
- ▶ Minerals and Waste Development Framework Documents for Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton;
- ▶ North Solent Shoreline Management Plan;
- ▶ Local Transport Plans and Minerals and Waste Development Framework Documents for neighbouring authority areas (Dorset, Surrey, West Berkshire, West Sussex, Wiltshire); and
- ▶ Operational plans for Southampton International Airport, and the Ports at Southampton and Portsmouth.

## 5 Commentary on Potential Effects

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the HRA screening stage is to identify any proposals likely<sup>iii</sup> to lead to a significant effect at a European site. The following sections offer a commentary on the factors influencing the assessment, including probable impact pathways and dealing with uncertainty. The chapter concludes with a series of tables addressing individual proposals explaining why the potential (as opposed to likely) effects of certain proposals are screened out from further consideration in the HRA, and the uncertainties around these value judgements.

### 5.2 Probable Impact Pathways

#### *Atmospheric pollution*

Several European sites in Hampshire, because of the notified habitats present on site or protected species that are dependent on high quality habitats, are vulnerable to the effects of increasing atmospheric pollution. Traffic-generated emissions are a particular concern due to the ability of nitrogen emissions to cause long term compositional changes in plant diversity through nutrient enrichment (see for example Bobbink *et al*, 1993).

Any proposal which promotes the construction, widening or increasing flow of traffic on highways within 200m of these sites may lead to significant effects (DfT, 2005). The map series presented in **Appendix II** shows sites in more detail, together with the road corridors that are in close proximity, in order to help guide transport planners away from potentially significant effects in selection of schemes associated with each delivery option. The plan seeks to address increasing emissions, both directly and indirectly, through for example: its adherence to the principles of Reduce, Manage, Invest; Policy Objective 10 which seeks to reduce emissions; and South Hampshire Policy E which specifically targets improvements in air quality.

#### *Fragmentation and/or Loss of Habitat*

Development proposals such as new highways, extensions to the rail network, or port expansion, can lead directly to loss or damage to designated habitats; all sites are potentially vulnerable to this impact type. During the initial screening prior to selection of the preferred option, further detail was requested on a number of initiatives that, because of their identified or possible location/route, could lead to significant effects on (potentially) adjacent European sites through fragmentation or direct loss of habitat.

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<sup>iii</sup> This concept is addressed further in Natural England's draft guidance on HRA (David Tyldesley and Associates, 2006, p.6) which states: "Firstly, the [LTA] must consider whether the [LTP] would be likely to have a significant effect on any European site. In this context 'likely' means probably, not merely a fanciful possibility; 'significant' means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that is potentially relevant to the site's conservation objectives."

### *Fragmentation and Bats*

One site in central Hampshire (Mottisfont Bats SAC) is notified because of its importance to the Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*, which it uses for breeding, roosting, commuting and foraging. Bats are known to have a strong reliance on landscape features, particularly for foraging outside of the roost, and this includes linear features and different habitat types. Furthermore, bats will forage at some distance from the roost, for example English Nature (Natural England's predecessor; 2004) states:

*Recent studies using radio-tracking have shown that bats are very variable in the distances that they travel from their roosts to forage. For example, at some maternity sites for greater horseshoe bats over 90% of the bats' activity took place within 4km of the roost whereas at other roosts some individuals travelled up to 22km to forage. Bechstein's bats appear to be a relatively sedentary species, with few individuals travelling more than 1km whereas other species of a similar size, such as the Barbastelle, will frequently travel more than 5km. English Nature, 2004, p.20.*

None of the LTP3 delivery options are identified as having a likely significant effect on Mottisfont Bats SAC. The map at **Appendix III** illustrates potential zones of influence around the SAC, together with existing landscape and transport features. Any substantial changes to the area's current characteristics could be problematic and this will be kept under review as the LTP3 and its Implementation Plans progress.

### *Other Impact Pathways*

Further impacts at European sites may occur through alteration to ground- or surface-water regimes, water quality, vibration during earthworks, and mobilisation of contaminants from construction activities during scheme implementation. These are addressed as required during the assessment and commentary presented below.

## **5.3 Dealing with Uncertainty**

The DTA (2009) guidance gives helpful advice on a number of ways in which uncertainty can affect the assessment, and some of these are addressed in **Box 2**. In general terms, during this assessment delivery options which aim to investigate potential, explore feasibility or safeguard land for a particular scheme are not viewed as leading to development under the LTP3 Strategy.

This is because they will be brought forward and further developed and assessed by (a) other operators or developers (regulatory uncertainty), or (b) City, District or Borough Councils as part of their LDF Core Strategies and Site Allocations Documents (planning hierarchy uncertainty). In this sense, the Strategy seeks only to enable rather than block the aspirations of other parties, even though the Strategy itself is not necessarily promoting a particular scheme. In other cases, they are aspirational schemes which could possibly be delivered later in the 20 year Strategy period, but for which no detail currently exists; the way in which these schemes are delivered through Implementation Plans will affect the mechanisms of any impact (implementation uncertainty).

## **Box 2: Dealing with Uncertainty: extracts from DTA (2009)**

### ***Regulatory Uncertainty***

Some plans will include references to proposals that are planned and implemented through other planning and regulatory regimes, for example, trunk road or motorway improvements. These will be included because they have important implications for spatial planning, but they are not proposals of the LTA, nor are they proposals brought forward by the plan itself. Their potential effects will be assessed through other procedures. The LTA may not be able to assess the effects of these proposals. Indeed, it may be inappropriate for them to do so, and would also result in unnecessary duplication...

There is a need to focus the Habitats Regulations Assessment on the... proposals directly promoted by the plan, and not all and every proposal for development and change, especially where these are planned and regulated through other statutory procedures which will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

### ***Planning Hierarchy Uncertainty***

The higher the level of a plan in the hierarchy the more general and strategic will be its provisions and therefore the more uncertain its effects will be. The protective regime of the Directive is intended to operate at differing levels. In some circumstances assessment 'down the line' will be more effective in assessing the potential effects of a proposal on a particular site and protecting its integrity. However, three tests should be applied.

It will be appropriate to consider relying on the Habitats Regulations Assessments of lower tier plans, in order for a LTA to ascertain a higher tier plan would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, only where:

- A] The higher tier plan assessment cannot reasonably assess the effects on a European site in a meaningful way; whereas
- B] The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the lower tier plan, which will identify more precisely the nature, scale or location of development, and thus its potential effects, will be able to change the proposal if an adverse effect on site integrity cannot be ruled out, because the lower tier plan is free to change the nature and/or scale and/or location of the proposal in order to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (e.g it is not constrained by location specific policies in a higher tier plan); and
- C] The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the plan or project at the lower tier is required as a matter of law or Government policy.

It may be helpful for the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the higher tier plan... to indicate what further assessment may be necessary in the lower tier plan.

### ***Implementation Uncertainty***

In order to clarify the approach where there is uncertainty because effects depend on how the plan is implemented, and to ensure compliance with the Regulations, it may be appropriate to impose a caveat in relevant policies, or introduce a free-standing policy, which says that any development project that could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site will not be in accordance with the plan...

This would help to enable the assessors to reasonably conclude, on the basis of objective information, that even where there are different ways of implementing a plan, and even applying the precautionary principle, no element of the plan can argue that it draws support from the plan, if it could adversely affect the integrity of a European site.

## 5.4 Measure Requiring Further Detailed Assessment in the Future

The LTP3 acknowledges the uncertainties described in **section 5.3**, and reiterates the County Council's commitment to resolving these through future Implementation Plans and associated assessments. Such future assessments should seek to address the following proposed interventions in detail, in order to establish whether they could lead to significant effects at any European site once design, layout and location plans are clearer:

- ▶ 'Managed motorway' measures on the M3 between Basingstoke and the Farnborough;
- ▶ Affordable and environmentally acceptable solutions to address congestion at Junction 9 of the M3;
- ▶ Safeguarding land for rail stations e.g. Farlington;
- ▶ Exploration of the feasibility of options for light rail in south Hampshire;
- ▶ Safeguarding land to enable developer-led access solutions to unlock Dunsbury Hill Farm and Eastleigh River Side for new employment uses;
- ▶ Investigate feasibility for the provision of a bridge link from Tipner to Horsea Island;
- ▶ Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is considered to facilitate reliable access to and from Southampton International Airport;
- ▶ Maintain ongoing dialogue with ferry operators to encourage delivery of passenger improvements;
- ▶ Support port operators in their aspirations to increase freight moved by short-sea shipping;
- ▶ Promote measures which will enable more freight to be moved by rail;
- ▶ M27 Junction 5 signalisation and slip lanes (in relation to air pollution; see Implementation Plan and screening letter);
- ▶ Access to Dunsbury Hill Farm strategic employment site (in relation to air pollution; see Implementation Plan and screening letter);
- ▶ Newgate Lane online widening, Fareham (in relation to air pollution; see Implementation Plan and screening letter);
- ▶ Totton Western Bypass junction Improvements (in relation to air pollution; see Implementation Plan and screening letter);
- ▶ Town Access Plan priorities (in relation to air pollution, and increasing accessibility and possible recreational impacts; see Implementation Plan and screening letter);
- ▶ Sustainable and healthy access routes (in relation to increasing accessibility and possible recreational impacts; see Implementation Plan and screening letter); and
- ▶ Public transport infrastructure improvements (in relation to interchanges; see Implementation Plan and screening letter).

## 5.5 Iterative Assessment of Potentially Impact-Generating Proposals

Assessing LTP3 proposals under the Habitats Regulations was an iterative process that can be summarised by the following key tasks: (i) initial screening for potential effects, (ii) requesting further detail and clarification from transport planners and/or amending proposals to improve their performance against conservation objectives, and (iii) re-screening for likely significant effects on European sites. In many cases these tasks were carried out two or more times before the final conclusions presented in this report were arrived at.

**Table 5.1** presents a summary of findings for these key tasks for proposals for which, on initial screening, a possible risk to one or more European sites was determined. The proposal numbers in the table refer to the number assigned to each proposal in **Appendix I**.

**Table 5.1:** Summary of iterative screening assessment judgements for potentially impact-generating proposals

### North Hampshire 2, 17, 23, 31, 40: Targeted measures to improve capacity at congestion bottlenecks and optimise management of highway network

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> D1	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>Undefined capacity improvements, such as developments to widen carriageways or reconfigure junctions, could lead to potentially damaging increases in traffic flow and emissions, particularly at Farnborough and Fleet in relation to Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC and Thames Basin Heaths SPA.</p> <p>Transport planners confirmed that planned measures would be within the confines of the existing highway only and involve traffic signal improvements, eg Split, Cycle and Offset Optimisation Techniques, rather than physical development. This was not considered likely to lead to additional pollution effects.</p>	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

### North Hampshire 3a: In association with the Highways Agency, investigate the potential for Managed Motorway measures on M3 between Basingstoke and the Farnborough area, such as ramp metering at junctions, including a review of the benefits and implications of such measures

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> D2	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>Managed Motorways aim to improve the flow of traffic and reduce congestion through transitional speed restrictions. Research has found that, depending on the circumstances, they can either improve or worsen air pollution associated with traffic (DfT, 2008). The M3 in this area passes close to Thames Basin Heaths SPA, which could be negatively affected by worsening air quality.</p> <p>The proposal is not possible to assess further due to <b>implementation uncertainty</b>; under LTP3 Strategy, only actions to 'investigate the potential' for Managed Motorways would be progressed, with any further detail requiring consideration and assessment through later Implementation Plans.</p>	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** Should the LTA and Highways Agency decide to pursue Managed Motorways on this stretch of the M3, consideration will be required for the possible atmospheric pollution effects on lowland heathland habitats in the SPA (in particular through nitrogen deposition) and subsequent impacts on woodlark *Lullula arborea*, nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata* and hobby *Falco subbuteo*.

**North Hampshire 8: New rail stations at locations such as Chineham**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C4	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Chineham is approximately 10km from the nearest European site (Thames Basin Heaths SPA) and as such will not lead to fragmentation effects, but further details were requested of any other new rail station options that could come to light during the plan period.  Transport planners advised that no further options for new rail stations are envisaged during the LTP3 Strategy period.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A4
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**Central Hampshire & New Forest 2: Over the long-term, work with Highways Agency to explore scope for affordable and environmentally acceptable solutions to address congestion at Junction 9 of the M3**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C6	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Undefined solutions to address congestion, such as developments to widen carriageways or reconfigure junctions, could lead to potentially damaging increases in traffic flow and emissions in relation to River Itchen SAC at Winchester.  Transport planners confirmed that planned measures could include adjustments to traffic signals to reduce delays to local traffic leaving Winchester in the PM peak. A major scheme, such as developing a free-flow junction between the A34 and M3, is not deemed suitable. Adjusted signalisation is not considered likely to lead to additional pollution effects.  The proposal also has inherent <u>implementation uncertainty</u> in that, under LTP3 Strategy, only actions to 'explore the scope' of possible solutions would be progressed, with any further detail requiring consideration and assessment through later Implementation Plans.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**Central Hampshire 6 & 33: Investigate the potential for a direct rail connection to Whitehill Bordon**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C1	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> A direct rail connection at Whitehill Bordon could potentially join the main line either north or south of the town, but the town is surrounded by European sites. However, a rail connection is just one (long term) option for a Transport Strategy to enable comprehensive redevelopment in the area.  The proposal is not possible to assess further due to <u>implementation uncertainty</u> ; under LTP3 Strategy, only actions to 'investigate the potential'	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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for a rail connection would be progressed, with any further detail requiring consideration and assessment through later Implementation Plans and other strategies.

**Considerations for future assessment:** Feasibility studies for a rail connection, if progressed, will need to consider possible noise, fragmentation, diffuse pollution effects of possible rail routes on East Hampshire Hangers SAC, Shortheath Common SAC and Wealden Heaths SPA to the north, and/or Woolmer Forest SAC and Wealden Heaths SPA to the south.

**South Hampshire 4: Investigate the potential for hard-shoulder running and variable speed limits on the busiest sections of motorway**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> D2	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>These measures are equivalent to Managed Motorways, which aim to improve the flow of traffic and reduce congestion through transitional speed restrictions. Research has found that, depending on the circumstances, they can either improve or worsen air pollution associated with traffic (DfT, 2008). The M27, M271 and M275 in this area all pass close to European sites which may be vulnerable to worsening air quality.</p> <p>The proposal is not possible to assess further due to <b>implementation uncertainty</b>; under LTP3 Strategy, only actions to 'investigate the potential' for Managed Motorways would be progressed, with any further detail requiring consideration and assessment through later Implementation Plans.</p>	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** Should the LTAs and Highways Agency decide to pursue Managed Motorways in South Hampshire, consideration will be required for the possible atmospheric pollution effects on coastal marsh and mudflat habitats and their dependent species at Solent Maritime SAC, Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Solent and Southampton Water SPA (in particular through nitrogen deposition).

**South Hampshire 10: Ensure appropriate infrastructure is considered to facilitate reliable access to/from Southampton International Airport**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> D1	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>The airport lies close to River Itchen SAC, and new or reconfigured access infrastructure could possibly lead to air pollution impacts through increased traffic flow, or direct impacts on salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> or otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> populations.</p> <p>Transport planners confirmed that the proposal provides for a 'watching brief' on congestion levels on highway routes to/from J5 of the M27 and the airport site. If congestion worsens, the LTA will explore the feasibility of potential highway measures/improvements to ensure that journey reliability does not worsen, for example full signalisation of all arms of the J5 roundabout or other capacity adjustments. Adjusted signalisation is not considered likely to generate significant effects.</p>	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 11: Support measures to enable movement of more freight by rail**

**Initial screening cat.:**  
C1

**Clarification / amendment**

Transport planners confirmed that this would involve a new passing loop in the eastbound direction in close proximity to Basingstoke station, between the station and Worting Junction. The location is more than 10km from the nearest European site (Thames Basin Heaths SPA), and as such will not lead to significant effects from fragmentation.

**Final screening cat.:**  
A4

**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 22: Improvement to highway drainage to better cope with heavy rainfall (eg, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems)**

**Initial screening cat.:**  
D2

**Clarification / amendment**

Highway drainage has an essential role to play in managing the potential environmental impacts of surface water run-off, which from highways frequently contains low levels of hydrocarbon pollutants and, during pollution incidents, can contain high levels of other toxic substances. Typically, highways drainage will involve the use of filters, interceptors and balancing ponds to manage these risks, while changes to current arrangements drawing on the principles of sustainable drainage will further reduce the risk of ecological impacts.

**Final screening cat.:**  
A3

**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 32 and 59: Extended Park and Ride network (both bus and rail based systems)**

**Initial screening cat.:**  
C1/C6

**Clarification / amendment**

Park and Ride has the potential to generate locally significant increases in traffic flow which could be a risk to European sites in certain locations. Transport planners provided further details on possible bus based locations as follows; rail based systems will be focused on existing station car parks:

- Windhover (Eastleigh): this location is approximately 1.5km from Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, and is therefore unlikely to lead to atmospheric pollution effects at the European sites;
- Nursling (Southampton/Test Valley): this location is approximately 200m from Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar and does not pose a fragmentation risk, while the rate of nitrogen deposition from modelled background pollution levels is approaching its critical load (APIS 2008 data) at this location;
- Stoneham (Southampton/Eastleigh): this location is approximately 1km from River Itchen SAC, and is therefore unlikely to lead to atmospheric pollution effects at the site; and

**Final screening cat.:**  
A1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tipner (Portsmouth): adjacent to the proposed new M275 junction at Tipner, the currently preferred location is set back 100m from Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar and does not pose a fragmentation risk to the site. The rate of nitrogen deposition from modelled background pollution levels is less than half its critical load (APIS 2008 data).</li> </ul> <p>Bus based Park and Ride in locations close to Southampton is not currently considered viable and work is underway to ascertain the conditions under which it could become viable. As a result, it is not possible to further assess the proposal due to <b>implementation uncertainty</b>. Future viability assessments would be carried out through later Implementation Plans.</p>	
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**Considerations for future assessment:** Viability assessments for the possible site at Nursling will need to consider the likely increase in traffic flow on the highway network local to the site, and consequent atmospheric pollution impacts on the nearby Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar.

**South Hampshire 54: Development of a Bus Rapid Transit network and other innovative public transport solutions between main centres**

<p><b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C4</p>	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>The first phase of developing BRT is underway along a disused rail corridor between Gosport and Fareham. Depending the route taken, it is possible completion of the network could pass close to or fragment other European sites in South Hampshire.</p> <p>Transport planners confirmed that new routes will mainly utilise the existing highway, rather than using disused former railway lines or new route corridors. Routes serving the M/SDAs will require new development but these are located away from all European sites and would not pose a fragmentation risk.</p>	<p><b>Final screening cat.:</b> A4</p>
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 71: Improving rail access to Southampton Airport from the east and west**

<p><b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C1</p>	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>Rail access improvements to Southampton Airport could include a variety of interventions. Most likely to be delivered are lower-cost options, such as re-timetabling the hourly Southern service from Brighton-Chichester-Havant-Fareham to Southampton via Eastleigh and Southampton Airport Parkway in the westbound direction. This would provide, for the first time, direct access to the airport from the east without the need to change trains. Access from Romsey/Salisbury to west is available via the "figure of six" Romsey-Chandlers Ford-Southampton-Romsey-Salisbury rail service.</p> <p>A more complex scheme known as the 'Eastleigh Chord' is also possible. It would involve the provision of a short new rail link within the rail depot south of Eastleigh, close to River Itchen SAC, linking the Fareham-Botley</p>	<p><b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1/A4</p>
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	<p>line directly with the airport without needing to enter Eastleigh and change trains or reverse direction. If pursued, redevelopment would be on railway-owned brownfield land within the boundary of the existing railway, over 500m from River Itchen SAC; fragmentation effects would not occur.</p> <p>However, transport planners have indicated that this higher-cost option is less likely to be delivered during the lifetime of the Strategy due to prohibitive costs arising from engineering for trackwork changes and the need for a tunnel to mitigate impacts on the airport runway safety zone.</p>	
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 72: Increasing capacity on the rail route between Eastleigh and Fareham**

<p><b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C1</p>	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>The Botley line between Eastleigh and Fareham traverses River Itchen SAC just east of Eastleigh. However, transport planners have confirm that capacity improvements would involve re-doubling the line within the existing rail corridor where double track previously existed; there would be no new land take and it would not pose a fragmentation risk.</p>	<p><b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1</p>
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 80: Explore the feasibility of options for light rail in in South Hampshire**

<p><b>Initial screening cat.:</b> C4</p>	<p><b>Clarification / amendment</b></p> <p>The undefined nature of this proposal introduces a risk that effects on European sites could be possible. Transport planners have confirmed that the option has been included as a very long-term aspiration insofar as development of a light rail system would not have a sufficiently strong business case at the present time to enable it to be delivered. Its inclusion in the Strategy is so as not to preclude the possibility of providing such a network in the future if funding opportunities (such as a successful Regional Growth Fund bid or Tax Increment Financing) become available.</p> <p>Light rail feasibility work could be centred on the Fareham-Gosport BRT route or Fareham to St. Denys rail line and would not be likely to involve new light rail routes across greenfield areas. The proposal is not possible to assess further due to <b>implementation uncertainty</b>; under LTP3 Strategy, only actions to 'explore the feasibility' for light rail would be progressed, with any further detail requiring consideration and assessment through later Implementation Plans.</p>	<p><b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1</p>
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 87: Safeguarding of proposed strategic routes, such as Botley bypass and Western Access to Gosport, where heavy volumes of traffic through local communities cause problems of severance, noise and poor air quality**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> A1	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Transport planners have confirmed that, as a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers and District and Borough Councils, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031. This proposal is an example of the LTP3's enabling role: the Strategy does not block future options but safeguarding the route does not lead to development either. It is therefore screened out of the HRA.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** It is noted that a possible proposed route alignment at Botley passes within 70m of Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar which is sensitive to atmospheric pollution at this location. (A possible route alignment for the Stubbington bypass (Western Access to Gosport) is within 400m of Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar which would not present an atmospheric pollution risk.) Future consideration and assessment of any bypass route within 200m of a European site will require an assessment of atmospheric pollution impacts on sensitive habitats and species.

**South Hampshire 88: Safeguarding land to enable developer-led access solutions to unlock Dunsbury Hill Farm and Eastleigh River Side for new employment uses**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> A1	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Transport planners have confirmed that, as a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers and District and Borough Councils, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031. This proposal is an example of the LTP3's enabling role: the Strategy does not block future options but safeguarding the route does not lead to development either. It is therefore screened out of the HRA.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** It is noted that a possible proposed route alignment of highway access solutions at Eastleigh River Side passes within 15m of River Itchen SAC, and runs parallel for approximately 700m. (Dunsbury Hill Farm is approximately 3.5km from the nearest European site.) At the present stage there is insufficient information available to determine the likely effects of this proposal, but redevelopment of the area presents possible risks associated with atmospheric pollution and potential loss of habitat or supporting adjacent habitat. There are further risks from potentially altering the ground- or surface-water regime and from mobilising contaminants which could leach into the water course. The close proximity could also present the risk of otter casualties through roadkill, while groundworks could present risks to migrating salmon through vibration. Eastleigh Borough Council is considering options for the area as a Strategic Site within its Core Strategy and Site Allocations Document, and will be assessing them accordingly.

**South Hampshire 89: Enabling developer-led road improvements to facilitate access to planned Major Development Areas (such as North Whiteley)**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> A1	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Transport planners have confirmed that, as a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers and District and Borough Councils, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031. This proposal is an example of the LTP3's enabling role and does not lead to development. It is therefore screened out of the HRA.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** A possible route alignment for the proposal passes more than 300m from Solent Maritime SAC and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar which would not present an atmospheric pollution risk. However, further consideration of proposed routes should be aware of fragmentation and diffuse pollution risks to the sites.

**South Hampshire 90: Safeguard land for developing a new motorway junction on the M275 serving Tipner, Portsmouth**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> A1	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Transport planners have confirmed that, as a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers and Councils, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031. This proposal is an example of the LTP3's enabling role: the Strategy does not block future options but safeguarding the route does not lead to development either. It is therefore screened out of the HRA. Furthermore, the proposal already has the benefit of planning permission, although at present funding remains unclear.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

**South Hampshire 91: Investigate feasibility for provision of a bridge link from Tipner to Horsea Island (for all modes)**

<b>Initial screening cat.:</b> A1	<b>Clarification / amendment</b> Transport planners have confirmed that, as a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers and Councils, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031. This proposal is an example of the LTP3's enabling role: the Strategy does not block future options but does not lead to development either. It is therefore screened out of the HRA.  The proposal is not possible to assess further due to <b>implementation uncertainty</b> ; under LTP3 Strategy, only actions to 'investigate the feasibility' for a bridge link would be progressed, with any further detail requiring consideration and assessment through later Implementation Plans and/or Portsmouth's Core Strategy. At the time of writing, Portsmouth City Council does not view the bridge as essential to the delivery of its Core Strategy.	<b>Final screening cat.:</b> A1
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**Considerations for future assessment:** Where LTAs, the City Council or any developer proponent seeks to consider the feasibility of bridge options to link Tipner and Horsea Island, assessments will need to focus on possible impacts to Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar. These could include, but may not be limited to, loss of intertidal habitat at the bridge supports (although costly, initial feasibility work suggests that design options are available that would avoid this impact (PBA, 2010)), interruption to bird commuter paths between Portsmouth and Langstone Harbours, and atmospheric pollution.

## South Hampshire 92: Safeguard land for new stations at certain locations, eg Farlington

**Initial screening cat.:**  
A1

### Clarification / amendment

Transport planners have confirmed that, as a long term Strategy, the LTP3 aims to support and enable actions that other parties, including developers, Councils and other transport operators, may seek to bring forward in the period to 2031. This proposal is an example of the LTP3's enabling role: the Strategy does not block future options but safeguarding land does not lead to development either. It is therefore screened out of the HRA.

The proposal is not possible to assess further due to implementation uncertainty. At the present time, new rail stations would not have a sufficiently strong business case to be delivered, and no site plans or feasibility work has yet been started.

**Final screening cat.:**  
A1

**Considerations for future assessment:** not applicable.

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## 6 Screening Statement

### 6.1 Screening Statement

This document sets out Hampshire County Council's statement on Habitats Regulations Assessment for the proposed LTP3 Strategy. It shows that at the present time, it is considered unlikely that the Strategy will generate significant effects at any European site included in the assessment, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

As a result a **stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will not be undertaken.**

### 6.2 Consultation

Consultation on the Screening Statement took place in tandem with consultation on the LTP3 Strategy between July and September 2010. In addition, a meeting with Natural England and other nature conservation stakeholders was held during the consultation period, in order for views on the LTP3 and its HRA to be discussed in more detail before the plan was finalised.

In light of feedback from statutory consultees received at the meeting, and written comments which followed, some changes of a relatively minor nature have been made to the format of the Screening Statement. In addition, some changes have been made to delivery options within the LTP3 Strategy, including some new interventions and changes to wording of others, to reflect feedback received through the consultation process, and these are also addressed within this revised Screening Statement.

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