

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Screening Matrix and Appropriate Assessment Statement

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

HRA drafting date:	28/07/2022
HRA completion date:	09/08/2022
Application reference:	F/22/93150
Application address:	ROYAL SOUTHERN YACHT CLUB, ROPE WALK, HAMBLE-LE-RICE, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 4HB
Application description:	The works involve the relocation of an existing length of main walkway and installation of two new finger pontoons. One pile will be removed completely and one relocated.
Lead Planning Officer:	Nicholas Parker
Case Officer:	Rachael Morris
Please note that all references in this assessment to the 'Habitats Regulations' refer to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.	

Stage 1 - details of the plan or project

European site potentially impacted by planning application, plan or project:	Solent and Southampton Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Coastal Sensitive Areas – Eutrophic. New Forest Special Protection Area SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites.
Is the planning application directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (if yes, Applicant should have provided details)?	No. The development consists of works to a pontoon and walkway, which is neither connected to nor necessary to the management of any European site.
Are there any other projects or plans that together with the planning application being assessed could affect the site (Applicant to provide details to allow an 'in combination' effect to be assessed)?	No. This application is stand alone and is not connected to any other development.

Stage 2 - HRA screening assessment

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

Recreational disturbance:

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

In addition, the site is 13.8km of the New Forest National Park. In accordance with the Cabinet report dated 24 March 2022, an interim strategy was approved to acknowledge the recreational impacts new residential development will have on the New Forest SPA.

The proposal does not result in additional housing or an increase in population therefore this is not applicable.

Nutrient neutrality:

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

The proposal does not result in additional housing or an increase in population and thereby nitrogen loading. Therefore, this is not applicable.

Other likely significant effects:

The following matters are identified as potential likely significant effects arising from the development, specifically the act of piling, upon the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Solent and Southampton Special Protection Area (SPA), having regard to the location and nature of the development proposed:

- Abrasion/disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed. Risk is medium-high and refers to structures, anchors, mooring chains, and piles. The works include small scale tubular steel piling
- Changes in suspended solids (water clarity). Risk is medium-high and can only occur during piling.
- Penetration and/or disturbance to the substratum below the surface of the seabed including abrasion. Risk is medium-high and refers to anchor moorings.
- Noise disturbance to SPA birds during construction period
- Physical loss of habitat

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

(If yes, continue to Stage 3).

Stage 3 - Appropriate Assessment

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

The piling works consist of the removal of one tubular steel pile (Ø473mm) and the relocation of one tubular steel pile (Ø473mm). The relocation (driving) of one pile will effectively cover (penetrate/disturb) 0.176m² of seabed. This will result in the loss of 0.176m² subtidal estuary habitat (comprising mixed sediments). This habitat is a qualifying feature of the Solent Maritime SAC. However, due to the scale of the loss and the relatively low quality of the habitat at this location, it can be concluded that there will be no adverse effects on the SAC. The removal of two piles (one to be relocated) will expose 0.352m² of seabed which will be restored by natural processes over time.

The piling operation will be undertaken using vibro-piling methods and is estimated to take 10-15 minutes for each pile. This has the potential to resuspend sediment locally at the base of the pile. However, this is very short-lived and of low concentrations. Tidal currents will disperse any material as it becomes suspended.

Vibro piling (rather than percussive piling) will be used during construction to reduce noise impacts.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed works will have no adverse effect on the site integrity of the SAC and SPA.

Stage 4 – Summary of the Appropriate Assessment (To be carried out by the Competent Authority (the local planning authority) in liaison with Natural England

In conclusion, the application will not have a likely adverse effect on site integrity.

This represents the authority's Appropriate Assessment as Competent Authority in accordance with the requirements under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and having due regard to its duties under Section 40(1) of the NERC Act 2006 to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Consideration of the Ramsar site/s is a matter of government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.