

Waverley Local Plan

**Dunsfold Park
Supplementary
Planning Document
(SPD)**

**Report on the determination of the need
for assessment under the Conservation of
Habitats & Species Regulation 2017 (as
amended)**

January 2022 (Final)

Statement of Purpose

This screening report has been prepared by Surrey County Council's Principal Environmental Assessment Officer, who is part of the Planning Development Group of the Environment & Infrastructure Directorate. Waverley Borough Council has commissioned the preparation of the screening report.

The screening report is prepared in response to the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (Statutory Instrument 2017 No.1012) (as amended). The screening report relates to the masterplan framework supplementary planning document (SPD) that Waverley Borough Council intend to adopt in respect of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site allocated under Policy SS7 (Dunsfold Aerodrome New Settlement) of the adopted Waverley Local Plan Part 1 (July 2019).

Statement of Limitations

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Waverley Borough Council ("Client"). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by the County Council's environmental assessment service.

The preparation of this report was undertaken during October 2021 and is based on the information available to the County Council during that period of time. The final version of the report was issued in January 2022 subsequent to consultation with Natural England. The scope of this report is accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

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Part 1: Introduction & Legal Context

- 1.1 Under section 63(1) of The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations), a competent authority, before deciding to undertake or give authorisation for a plan which (a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.
- 1.2 Regulation 8 of the Habitats Regulations defines a European Site as being:
- Designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).
 - Designated Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
 - Candidate SACs.
 - Proposed SPAs.
- 1.2 The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) process can involve four stages, of which screening is the first. Other stages include appropriate assessment, assessment of alternative solutions, and assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain. Each stage determines whether a further stage of assessment is required.
- 1.3 Screening is a process which identifies the likely impacts upon a European Site or European Site Feature of a plan, alone, and where appropriate in combination with other plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.
- 1.4 Under Regulation 105(1) of the Habitats Regulations in the context of Local Plan or Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) preparation the plan-making authority is responsible for undertaking the HRA process. This HRA screening report has been prepared by Waverley Borough Council in respect of the proposed Dunsfold Park SPD. The aim of this HRA screening report is to assess whether there would be any likely significant effects on European sites from the adoption and implementation of the Dunsfold Park SPD.

Part 2: Scope of the HRA Screening Report

2.A European Sites within the zone of influence of the Waverley Local Plan

2.1 There are three Special Protection Area (SPA) designations and one Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation that include land located within the borough of Waverley. The Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar Site is also located wholly within the borough.

- Thursley, Hankey & Frensham Commons (Wealden Heaths Phase 1) SPA – composed of the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The whole of the SPA and SSSI is within Waverley.
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA – composed of thirteen SSSIs of which one, the Bourley & Long Valley SSSI, is partly located in Waverley.
- Wealden Heaths Phase 2 SPA – composed of four SSSIs of which one, the Devil's Punch Bowl SSSI, is located in Waverley.
- Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC – composed of four SSSIs of which one, the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons SSSI, is located in Waverley.

2.2 The HRA undertaken in support of the Waverley Local Plan Part 1 (Strategic Policies & Sites) considered all of the SPAs, the SAC and the Ramsar Site situated within Waverley. That HRA also covered a further eleven European sites and one further Ramsar Site located outside the borough and within 15 kilometres of its boundary.

- Arun Valley SPA and Arun Valley Ramsar Site – located in West Sussex, much of the SPA and Ramsar Site are also designated as the Arun Valley SAC, a fact not referred to in the Local Plan Part 1 HRA.
- Butser Hill SAC – located in Hampshire.
- Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC – located in West Sussex.
- East Hampshire Hangers SAC – located in Hampshire.
- Ebernoe Common SAC – located in West Sussex.
- Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC – located in Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead in Surrey.
- Rook Clift SAC – located in West Sussex.
- Shortheath Common SAC – located in Hampshire.
- Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC – located in West Sussex.
- The Mens SAC – located in West Sussex.

- Woolmer Forest SAC – located in Hampshire and West Sussex.

2.3 The geographical relationship of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to the SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites covered by the HRA of the Waverley Local Plan art 1 is summarised in Table 2-1. The allocated site is located within 10 kilometres of three SACs and one SPA – the implications of the proposed SPD for the conclusions of the earlier HRA work in respect of those four European sites is discussed further in section 3 of this report.

Table 2-1: Geographical relationship of Dunsfold Aerodrome to European site & Ramsar sites

European Site / Ramsar Site	Distance from Dunsfold Aerodrome
Thursley, Hankey & Frensham Commons (Wealden Heaths Phase 1) SPA	8.5 km north-west
Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC	8.5 km north-west
Thursley & Ockley Bogs Ramsar Site	10.1 km north-west
Thames Basin Heaths SPA	17.2 km north
Wealden Heaths Phase 2 SPA	11.1 km west
Arun Valley SAC, Arun Valley SPA and Arun Valley Ramsar Site	17.4 km south
Butser Hill SAC	32.8 km south-west
Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC	20.0 km south-south-west
East Hampshire Hangers SAC	25.1 km west
Ebernoe Common SAC	8.1 km south-west
Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC	19.2 km north-east
Rook Clift SAC	25.9 km south-west
Shortheath Common SAC	23.3 km west
Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC	23.4 km south-west
The Mens SAC	9.2 km south
Woolmer Forest SAC	19.3 km west-south-west

2.B Review of previous HRA work for the adopted Local Plan Part 1

- 2.4 The redevelopment of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site is provided for by policies SS7 (New settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome) and SS7A (Dunsfold Aerodrome Design Strategy) of the adopted Waverley Local Plan Part 1 (July 2019). The number of houses that could be delivered at the site is also referenced in policy ALH1 (The amount and location of housing). The maximum number of houses to be delivered at the Dunsfold Aerodrome site is 2,600 (policies ALH1 and SS7). The redevelopment of the site is also required to deliver up to 26,000 square metres of new employment floorspace, at least 3,750 square metres of new floorspace in a new local centre hosting shops, restaurants, cafes, bars and takeaways and financial and professional services, and health, community and education facilities including a new two form of entry primary school. In terms of greenspace the redevelopment of the aerodrome site is required to include a managed country park of at least 103 hectares in size.
- 2.5 The policies and allocations set out in the adopted Local Plan Part 1 were subject to HRA during the preparation of the Plan. The 2016 HRA report (AECOM for Waverley Borough Council) submitted in support the Local Plan Part 1 includes a screening assessment of the Plan policies (Section 4 ‘Screening (Likely Significant Effects)’, pp.25-34). The screening assessment for policy SS7 (New Settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome) reported that the allocation of the site was not expected to have any implications for European sites due the site being situated outside the recreational impact catchments identified for the European sites. It was also noted that the allocation provided for 104 hectares of open space, which would make the development highly self-sufficient in terms of access to outdoor spaces for formal and informal recreation. Good local access to such space would likely reduce the need for residents to travel off-site in search of open space and greenspaces.
- 2.6 The 2017 Addendum to the HRA report (AECOM for Waverley Borough Council), prepared to examine options for delivering housing at a rate of 590 homes per year, a level in excess of the rate proposed in the submission version of the Local Plan Part 1, did not draw any different conclusions to the 2016 HRA report with respect to the allocation of Dunsfold Aerodrome for the development of up to 2,600 homes.

2.C Structure and content of the Dunsfold Park SPD

2.7 The Dunsfold Park SPD will set out a masterplan framework for the redevelopment of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site. The SPD will build on the design principles, strategy and guidance already set out in policy SS7A of the adopted Local Plan Part 1. The parameters of any future development will not change from those defined in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1.

2.8 The proposed SPD is likely to be composed of the following four key parts:

- Part A: Context – This section will set the scene for the SPD, outlining its purpose and providing guidance on the use of the document, describing its relationship to the wider policy context, and summarising the engagement undertaken to inform the development of the masterplan framework, including the design review.
- Part B: Masterplan framework – This section will set out the overarching vision for the future development of the site with broad thematic statements, will provide illustrated explanation of the framework principles, and provide guidance on how the vision and principles could be interpreted in different scenarios, and will set out a sequence of framework plans based on a hybrid option for the future development of the site.
- Part C: Site-wide design guidance – This section will provide succinct design guidance organised under intuitive headings, supported by clear statements and illustrations of the parameters to be adhered to, and cross-referenced to the vision thematic statements.
- Part D: Character areas – This section will provide place-based guidance describing the specific conditions to be achieved in different built and natural character areas, using indicative layouts and unpacked using themed bullet points.

Part 3: Review of HRA findings for European sites within 10km of Dunsfold Aerodrome

3.A Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons (Wealden Heaths Phase 1) SPA

3.1 The ecological interest of the SPA and the particular species that are given as reasons for its designation is described as follows in the published citation.

Site Description: Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons together incorporate a heath & valley mire complex. Broadleaved & coniferous woodland covers large parts of the site with scattered scrub & trees present over much of the heath, & several areas of permanent grassland. Areas of open water ranging from acidic boggy pool & ditches to large ponds also contribute significantly to the overall diversity of the site.

Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons qualify under Article 4.1 of the EC Birds Directive as a site of international importance by regularly supporting in the summer the following populations of birds listed under Annex I:

- About 20 pairs of nightjars *Caprimulgus europaeus*, (1% of the British breeding population);
- Up to 27 pairs of woodlark *Lullula arborea*, (12% of the British breeding population); and,
- In excess of 20 pairs of Dartford warblers *Sylvia undata*, (4% of the British breeding population in 1984).0

The numbers of these species fluctuate considerably from year to year; the figures given above relate to peak numbers recorded over the last 10-15 years. This site makes a substantial contribution to the maintenance of the traditional breeding ranges of these species within Britain, where habitat has become greatly fragmented & degraded in recent decades, & in the EC. Notable also are regular breeding kingfishers *Alcedo atthis*, & wintering hen harriers *Circus cyaneus*, species also listed under Annex I of the EC Birds Directive.

3.2 The published **conservation objectives** for the SPA are given below

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 & distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;
- The structure & 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.

Qualifying Features

- A224 *Caprimulgus europaeus*; European nightjar (Breeding)
- A246 *Lullula arborea*; Woodlark (Breeding)
- A302 *Sylvia undata*; Dartford warbler (Breeding)

How might the land use plan affect the SPA?

3.3 The HRA submitted in support of the Local Plan Part 1 identified four pathways (paragraph 6.5.1, p.44, HRA Report 2016) by which implementation of the Plan could potentially impact on the SPA:

3.3.1 Urbanisation – the delivery of housing within 400 metres of the SPA could result in adverse effects on the integrity of the site. The Dunsfold Park site is located c.8.5 kilometres from the closest boundary of the SPA and would therefore not contribute to adverse urbanisation effects. The geographical relationship of the development site to the SPA would be unaffected by the adoption of the proposed SPD.

3.3.2 Recreational pressure and disturbance – Paragraph 6.3.2 (p.43) of the 2016 HRA for the Local Plan Part 1 reports that 70% of all visitors to the SPA originate from locations within 9 kilometres of the SPA. The majority of the Dunsfold Aerodrome allocated site was noted as being located beyond the 9 kilometre zone, with the part of the site within that zone likely composed of greenspace and non-residential land uses (paragraph 6.7.4, p.46, 2016 HRA Report). It was noted that the c.2,600 new homes to be delivered through the creation of Dunsfold Park could be situated within the site so as to fall outside the 9 kilometre zone (paragraph 6.7.4, p.46, 2016 HRA Report). Policy SS7 of the Local Plan Part 1 requires that redevelopment of the site include a managed country park of at least 103 hectares, which would ensure access that the new community had access to good quality local greenspace. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to recreational trips to the SPA would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

- 3.3.3 Atmospheric pollution – Paragraph 6.8.4 (p.48) of the 2016 HRA report noted that delivery of the development set out in the submission version of the Local Plan Part 1 in-combination with other development would likely contribute to an increase in vehicle movements of more than 1,000 AADT (annual average daily traffic flows) on the section of the B3001 that passes through the SPA. Paragraph 6.8.5 (p.48) of the 2016 HRA report noted that the projected increase in vehicle movements on the B3001 would contribute to nitrogen oxide emissions rising within 1 metre of the road by between 1.1 µg/m³ and 1.6 µg/m³ but that those increases would not result in the National Air Quality Strategy objective for the protection of vegetation (30 µg/m³) being exceeded. Paragraph 6.8.6 (pp.48-49) of the 2016 HRA report noted that the emissions associated with the increased vehicle movements would not account for more than 1% of the site relevant critical load for nitrogen deposition or for acid deposition. It was therefore concluded that implementation of the plan would not result in likely significant effects on the SPA due to changes in air quality, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. The 2017 addendum to the HRA concluded that the proposed uplift in the total amount of housing to be delivered in the borough would not alter the conclusions of the earlier assessment with respect to air quality. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to air quality impacts on the SPA as a result of vehicle movements along the B3001 would be unchanged from that previously assessed.
- 3.3.4 Reduced water availability – Paragraph 6.9.2 (p.50) of the 2016 HRA report notes that the Local Plan Part 1 includes policies that promote development that will increase demand for water resources within Waverley. Paragraph 6.9.4 (p.50) of the 2016 HRA report noted that the Environment Agency were of the view that future demand for water resources in the Waverley area could be met without further abstractions from watercourse and groundwaters important to the ecological integrity of the SPA. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to additional demand for water resources and the associated potential for impacts on the SPA would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

Are there any other projects or plans that together with the land use plan could affect the SPA (in-combination effects)?

- 3.4 The HRA undertaken in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 took account of the potential interactions between development proposed in the Local Plan and the plans of adjoining authorities and other committed development in the borough and the surrounding area. The proposed SPD would not alter the quantum or type of development to be delivered at Dunsfold Aerodrome from that specified in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan, and therefore the potential for in-combination impacts would be unchanged from the situation addressed in the earlier HRA work.

Would the land use plan lead to a likely significant effect on the SPA?

- 3.5 No. The Dunsfold Park SPD will expand on the design principles set out for the proposed new settlement in policy SS7 (New settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome) and policy SS7A (Dunsfold Aerodrome Design Strategy) of the Waverley Local Plan Part 1. The SPD will provide additional guidance to ensure that a high quality and inclusive development is delivered. The parameters of the proposed development, in terms of the amount of housing and new commercial floorspace to be constructed and the amount of greenspace and open space to be provided within the context of the 249 hectare site, is set in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1. Those parameters would not be altered by the proposed SPD.
- 3.6 Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and NE3 (Thames Basin Heaths SPA) of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 provide for the protection of European sites that could be affected by development proposed in the Plan. The Dunsfold Park SPD does not include any proposals to disapply those policies in respect of the redevelopment of the Dunsfold Park Aerodrome. The mechanisms embedded in the adopted Local Plan to protect European sites would remain in place and would ensure that any planning permission granted in respect of the Dunsfold Aerodrome redevelopment would not give rise to likely significant effects on any European site.
- 3.7 The conclusions of the HRA prepared in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 remain valid with respect to the Dunsfold Aerodrome development and the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons (Wealden Heaths Phase 1) SPA. Those conclusions would not be altered or otherwise affected by the adoption and implementation of the proposed SPD.

3.B Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC

3.8 The ecological interest of the SAC and the particular habitats that are cited as reasons for its designation is described as follows in the published **citation**.

Site Description: The heathland is a series of large fragments of previously more continuous areas & is principally dominated by heather – dwarf gorse (*Calluna vulgaris* – *Ulex minor*) dry heathland. There are transitions to wet heath & valley mire, scrub, woodland & acid grassland, including types rich in annual plants. This habitat supports an important assemblage of animal species, including numerous rare & local invertebrate species, including the nationally rare white-faced darter *Leucorhinia dubia*, as well as sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* & smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*.

This site supports the sole area of lowland northern Atlantic wet heath in south-east England. The wet heath at Thursley is mainly cross-leaved heath – bog-moss (*Erica tetralix* – *Sphagnum compactum*) & contains several rare plants, including great sundew *Drosera anglica*, bog hair-grass *Deschampsia setacea*, bog orchid *Hammarbya paludosa* & brown beak-sedge *Rhynchospora fusca*.

Depressions on peat substrates are widespread, both in bog pools, mires & in flushes where they occur as part of a mosaic associated with valley bog & wet heath. They show extensive representation of brown-beak sedge & are also important for great sundew and bog orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*.

Qualifying Habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*
- European dry heaths
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*. (Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath)

3.9 The published **conservation objectives** for the SAC are given below.

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained and 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.
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats.
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely.

Qualifying Features

- H4010. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*; Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath
- H4030. European dry heaths
- H7150. Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*

How might the land use plan affect the SAC?

3.10 The HRA submitted in support of the Local Plan Part 1 identified two pathways (paragraph 6.5.1, p.44, HRA Report 2016) by which implementation of the Plan could potentially impact on the SAC:

3.10.1 Atmospheric pollution – Paragraph 6.8.4 (p.48) of the 2016 HRA report noted that delivery of the development set out in the submission version of the Local Plan Part 1 in-combination with other development would likely contribute to an increase in vehicle movements of more than 1,000 AADT (annual average daily traffic flows) on the section of the B3001 that passes through the SAC. Paragraph 6.8.5 (p.48) of the 2016 HRA report noted that the projected increase in vehicle movements on the B3001 would contribute to nitrogen oxide emissions rising within 1 metre of the road by between 1.1 µg/m³ and 1.6 µg/m³ but that those increases would not result in the National Air Quality Strategy objective for the protection of vegetation (30 µg/m³) being exceeded. Paragraph 6.8.6 (pp.48-49) of the 2016 HRA report noted that the emissions associated with the increased vehicle movements would not account for more than 1% of the site relevant critical load for nitrogen deposition or for acid deposition. It was therefore concluded that implementation of the plan would not result in likely significant effects on the SAC due to changes in air quality, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. The 2017 addendum to the HRA concluded that the proposed uplift in the total amount of housing to be delivered in the borough would not alter the conclusions of the earlier assessment with respect to air quality. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to air quality impacts on the SAC as a result of vehicle movements along the B3001 would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

3.10.2 Reduced water availability – Paragraph 6.9.2 (p.50) of the 2016 HRA report notes that the Local Plan Part 1 includes policies that promote development that will increase demand for water resources within Waverley. Paragraph 6.9.4 (p.50) of the 2016 HRA report noted that the Environment Agency were of the view that future demand for water resources in the Waverley area could be met without further abstractions from watercourse and groundwaters important to the ecological integrity of the SAC. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the

adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to additional demand for water resources and the associated potential for impacts on the SAC would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

Are there any other projects or plans that together with the land use plan could affect the SAC (in-combination effects)?

- 3.11 The HRA undertaken in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 took account of the potential interactions between development proposed in the Local Plan and the plans of adjoining authorities and other committed development in the borough and the surrounding area. The proposed SPD would not alter the quantum or type of development to be delivered at Dunsfold Aerodrome from that specified in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan, and therefore the potential for in-combination impacts would be unchanged from the situation addressed in the earlier HRA work.

Would the land use plan lead to a likely significant effect on the SAC?

- 3.12 No. The Dunsfold Park SPD will expand on the design principles set out for the proposed new settlement in policy SS7 (New settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome) and policy SS7A (Dunsfold Aerodrome Design Strategy) of the Waverley Local Plan Part 1. The SPD will provide additional guidance to ensure that a high quality and inclusive development is delivered. The parameters of the proposed development, in terms of the amount of housing and new commercial floorspace to be constructed and the amount of greenspace and open space to be provided within the context of the 249 hectare site, is set in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1. Those parameters would not be altered by the proposed SPD.
- 3.13 Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and NE3 (Thames Basin Heaths SPA) of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 provide for the protection of European sites that could be affected by development proposed in the Plan. The Dunsfold Park SPD does not include any proposals to disapply those policies in respect of the redevelopment of the Dunsfold Park Aerodrome. The mechanisms embedded in the adopted Local Plan to protect European sites would remain in place and would ensure that any planning permission granted in respect of the Dunsfold Aerodrome redevelopment would not give rise to likely significant effects on any European site.

- 3.14 The conclusions of the HRA prepared in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 remain valid with respect to the Dunsfold Aerodrome development and the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC. Those conclusions would not be altered or otherwise affected by the adoption and implementation of the proposed SPD.

3.C Ebernoe Common SAC

- 3.15 The ecological interest of the SAC and the particular habitats and species that are given as reasons for its designation is described as follows in the published **citation**.

Site Description: Ebernoe Common has an extensive block of beech *Fagus sylvatica* high forest & former wood-pasture over dense holly *Ilex aquifolium* with a very rich epiphytic lichen flora, including *Agonimia octospora* & *Catillaria atropurpurea*. The beech woodland is associated with other woodland types, open glades & pools, which contribute to a high overall diversity. A maternity colony of **Barbastelle bats** *Barbastella barbastellus* utilises a range of tree roosts in the site, usually in dead tree stumps, but the species appears to be present throughout the year, with individuals utilising a range of roost sites in tree holes & under bark. The site also holds a maternity colony of **Bechstein's bats** *Myotis bechsteinii*, mainly roosting in old woodpecker holes in the stems of live mature sessile oak *Quercus petraea* trees.

Qualifying Habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* & sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*). (Beech forests on acid soils)

Qualifying Species: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*

- 3.16 The published **conservation objectives** for the SAC are given below.

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

Qualifying Features

- H9120. Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* & sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion roburi-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*); Beech forests on acid soils
- S1308. *Barbastella barbastellus*; Barbastelle bat
- S1323. *Myotis bechsteinii*; Bechstein`s bat

How might the land use plan affect the SAC?

3.17 The HRA submitted in support of the Local Plan Part 1 identified two pathways (section 8, pp.61-66, HRA Report 2016) by which implementation of the Plan could potentially impact on the SAC:

3.17.1 Recreational pressure and disturbance – Paragraph 8.2.7 (pp.62-63) of the 2016 HRA report notes that the Ebernoe Common SAC is considered to be susceptible to disturbance which may arise from recreational pressure. Paragraph 8.2.16 (p.64) of the 2016 HRA report concludes that subject to the application of policies NE1 (Biodiversity & Geodiversity Conservation), ICS1 (Infrastructure & Community Facilities), and LRC1 (Leisure, Recreation & Cultural Facilities) of the Local Plan Part 1, the Plan would not give rise to likely significant effects on the SAC. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to recreational trips to the SAC would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

3.17.2 Atmospheric pollution – Paragraph 8.3.3 (p.64) of the 2016 HRA report notes that the SAC is located adjacent to a section of the A283 c.6 kilometres south of the Waverley boundary. The A283 links Godalming in Surrey to Petworth and Chichester in West Sussex. The road is not classed as a major commuter link for Waverley residents in the 2016 HRA and traffic arising from the Plan is not expected to give rise to likely significant effects on SACs located along that road corridor. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to changes in air quality at the SAC would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

Are there any other projects or plans that together with the land use plan could affect the SAC (in-combination effects)?

- 3.18 The HRA undertaken in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 took account of the potential interactions between development proposed in the Local Plan and the plans of adjoining authorities and other committed development in the borough and the surrounding area. The proposed SPD would not alter the quantum or type of development to be delivered at Dunsfold Aerodrome from that specified in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan, and therefore the potential for in-combination impacts would be unchanged from the situation addressed in the earlier HRA work.

Would the land use plan lead to a likely significant effect on the SAC?

- 3.19 No. The Dunsfold Park SPD will expand on the design principles set out for the proposed new settlement in policy SS7 (New settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome) and policy SS7A (Dunsfold Aerodrome Design Strategy) of the Waverley Local Plan Part 1. The SPD will provide additional guidance to ensure that a high quality and inclusive development is delivered. The parameters of the proposed development, in terms of the amount of housing and new commercial floorspace to be constructed and the amount of greenspace and open space to be provided within the context of the 249 hectare site, is set in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1. Those parameters would not be altered by the proposed SPD.
- 3.20 Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and NE3 (Thames Basin Heaths SPA) of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 provide for the protection of European sites that could be affected by development proposed in the Plan. The Dunsfold Park SPD does not include any proposals to disapply those policies in respect of the redevelopment of the Dunsfold Park Aerodrome. The mechanisms embedded in the adopted Local Plan to protect European sites would remain in place and would ensure that any planning permission granted in respect of the Dunsfold Aerodrome redevelopment would not give rise to likely significant effects on any European site.
- 3.21 The conclusions of the HRA prepared in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 remain valid with respect to the Dunsfold Aerodrome development and the Ebernoe Common SAC. Those conclusions would not be altered or otherwise affected by the adoption and implementation of the proposed SPD.

3.D The Mens SAC

3.22 The ecological interest of the SAC and the particular habitats and species that are given as reasons for its designation is described as follows in the published **citation**.

Site Description: The Mens is an extensive area of mature beech *Fagus sylvatica* woodland rich in lichens, bryophytes, fungi & saproxylic (dead wood) invertebrates. It is developing a near-natural high forest structure, in response to only limited silvicultural intervention over the 20th century, combined with the effects of natural events such as the 1987 great storm. The site also supports an important population of barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*.

Qualifying Habitats: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following habitats listed in Annex I:

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*). (Beech forests on acid soils)

Qualifying Species: The site is designated under **article 4(4)** of the Directive (92/43/EEC) as it hosts the following species listed in Annex II:

- Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus*

3.23 The published **conservation objectives** for the SAC are given below.

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

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

Qualifying Features

- Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*); Beech forests on acid soils (H9120.)
- *Barbastella barbastellus*; Barbastelle bat (S1308)

How might the land use plan affect the SAC?

3.24 The HRA submitted in support of the Local Plan Part 1 identified one pathway (section 8, pp.61-66, HRA Report 2016) by which implementation of the Plan could potentially impact on the SAC.

3.24.1 Recreational pressure and disturbance – Paragraph 8.2.11 (p.63) of the 2016 HRA report notes that The Mens SAC is located more than 6 kilometres to the south of Waverley and is not directly accessible from major roads. Paragraph 8.2.16 (p.64) of the 2016 HRA report concludes that subject to the application of policies NE1 (Biodiversity & Geodiversity Conservation), ICS1 (Infrastructure & Community Facilities), and LRC1 (Leisure, Recreation & Cultural Facilities) of the Local Plan Part 1, the Plan would not give rise to likely significant effects on the SAC. The proposed SPD would not alter the amount or type of development to be provided at Dunsfold Park from that defined in the adopted policies of the Local Plan Part 1. The potential contribution of the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to recreational trips to the SAC would be unchanged from that previously assessed.

Are there any other projects or plans that together with the land use plan could affect the SAC (in-combination effects)?

3.25 The HRA undertaken in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 took account of the potential interactions between development proposed in the Local Plan and the plans of adjoining authorities and other committed development in the borough and the surrounding area. The proposed SPD would not alter the quantum or type of development to be delivered at Dunsfold Aerodrome from that specified in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan, and therefore the potential for in-combination impacts would be unchanged from the situation addressed in the earlier HRA work.

Would the land use plan lead to a likely significant effect on the SAC?

3.26 No. The Dunsfold Park SPD will expand on the design principles set out for the proposed new settlement in policy SS7 (New settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome) and policy SS7A (Dunsfold Aerodrome Design Strategy) of the Waverley Local Plan Part 1. The SPD will provide additional guidance to ensure that a high quality and inclusive development is delivered. The parameters of the proposed development, in terms of the amount of housing and new commercial floorspace to be constructed and the amount of greenspace and open space to be provided within the context of the 249 hectare site, is set in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1. Those parameters would not be altered by the proposed SPD.

- 3.27 Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) and NE3 (Thames Basin Heaths SPA) of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 provide for the protection of European sites that could be affected by development proposed in the Plan. The Dunsfold Park SPD does not include any proposals to disapply those policies in respect of the redevelopment of the Dunsfold Park Aerodrome. The mechanisms embedded in the adopted Local Plan to protect European sites would remain in place and would ensure that any planning permission granted in respect of the Dunsfold Aerodrome redevelopment would not give rise to likely significant effects on any European site.
- 3.28 The conclusions of the HRA prepared in support of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 remain valid with respect to the Dunsfold Aerodrome development and The Mens SAC. Those conclusions would not be altered or otherwise affected by the adoption and implementation of the proposed SPD.

3.E Summary and Conclusion

- 3.29 This HRA screening report has been prepared with reference to the Borough Council's duty as a plan-making authority to act in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. The assessment draws on past HRA work undertaken in support of the adopted Waverley Local Plan Part 1, which includes policies that allocated the Dunsfold Aerodrome site for redevelopment as a new settlement providing up to 2,600 homes and up to 26,000 square metres of new employment floorspace.
- 3.30 This HRA screening report has considered the potential for the adoption and implementation of a masterplan framework SPD for the Dunsfold Aerodrome site to give rise to likely significant effects on European sites. The SPD would not alter the quantum or types of development to be delivered on the allocated site from the parameters set out in policies ALH1 and SS7 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1. No additional sources of potential impacts on those SPAs and SACs located within 10 kilometres of the allocated site would be introduced by the SPA. It is therefore concluded that adoption of the SPD would not give rise to likely significant effects on the Thursley, Hankley & Frensham Commons (Wealden Heaths Phase 1) SPA, the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham SAC, the Ebernoe Common SAC and The Mens SAC, and that Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 3.31 Following consultation on the proposed Dunsfold Park SPD no comments have been received from Natural England that would suggest that the SPD needs to be subject to further HRA work prior to its adoption by the Borough Council. The conclusion of no likely significant effects therefore remains valid.

