

Statement of Common Ground
Portsmouth City Council as Local Planning
Authority
&
Marine Management Organisation

February 2026



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL



Marine
Management
Organisation

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a jointly agreed statement between Portsmouth City Council (PCC) Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). It sets out the position and understanding with respect to key strategic issues between the City Council and the MMO. It is not binding on either party but sets out a clear and positive direction to inform ongoing strategy and plan making. It should be noted that this is a bilateral agreement between these two organisations only.

1.2 The SCG has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 27 of the NPPF (2024) and the section of the Planning Practice Guidance on Maintaining Effective Cooperation. It has also followed guidance prepared by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on this matter. It has been prepared in advance of formal submission by the LPA of the Pre-Submission Portsmouth Local Plan (2024) ('the 2024 Plan') and Pre-Submission Portsmouth Local Plan Addendum (2025) ('the 2025 Plan'), pursuant to Reg.22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).

1.3 For the avoidance of doubt, this SCG relates to both the Pre-Submission Local Plan 2024 and the Pre-Submission Local Plan Addendum 2025. It supersedes the 2024 SCG and recognises that the policies in the Addendum completely supersede the equivalent policies in the 2024 Plan. The 2024 SCG can still be viewed in the evidence page archive for the Local Plan.

1.4 Both the 2024 and 2025 Pre-Submission Plan documents will be submitted for formal Examination and a consolidated version prepared ('The Plan'). The Plan, upon adoption, will supersede the existing Portsmouth Local Plan (2012), will cover the period to 2040 and sets out the vision, objectives and policies to guide future development in the City over the plan period.

2.0 The Relation between PCC-LPA and the MMO

2.1 The MMO are a statutory consultee in the planning process. The MMO's purpose is to protect and enhance the marine environment around the English and Welsh coastline and regulates marine activities through licensing. This includes, inter alia, the management and monitoring of fisheries activities, making marine conservation byelaws and responding to marine emergencies. The MMO produces Marine Plans pursuant to the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)(as amended) and the UK Marine Policy Statement. It is a consultation body as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017), the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)('The Habitats Regulations'). For the purposes of marine works and the Habitats Regulations, the MMO is the relevant 'competent authority'.

2.2 The MMO are a member body of the Tipner West Regulatory Panel. The Panel was established in January 2021 to act as a coordinated consultation body to consider matters relating to the Tipner West and (formerly also) Horsea Island East project, as promoted by PCC as landowner ("PCC-Promoter"). Its members comprise the following statutory consultees and non-statutory interest groups:

Statutory consultees:

- Natural England (NE)
- Environment Agency (EA)

- Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
- Historic England (HE)

Plus non-statutory interest groups as regular guest panellists:

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); and
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT).

2.3 The Panel was established in line with the *Coastal Concordat*¹, which seeks to streamline the multiple consenting processes for coastal developments in England. There are five high level principles in the Coastal Concordat:

- i. Applicants seeking regulatory approval should be provided with a first point of entry into the regulatory system for consenting coastal development, guiding them to the organisations responsible for the range of consents, permissions and licences which may be required for their development.
- ii. Regulators should agree a single lead authority for coordinating the requirements of Environmental Impact Assessments or Habitats Regulations Assessments.
- iii. Where opportunities for dispensing or deferring regulatory responsibilities are legally possible and appropriate, they should be taken.
- iv. Where possible, at the pre-application stage, competent authorities and statutory advisors should agree the likely environmental and habitats assessment evidence requirements of all authorities at all stages of the consenting process.
- v. Where possible, regulators and statutory advisors should each provide coordinated advice to applicants from across their respective organisations.

2.4 The Panel was established to deliver on these principles with respect to the proposed strategic allocation of Tipner West and (formerly also) Horsea Island East. To this end, a "Working Protocol" was prepared which reflects the Concordat principles and supports the Panel in providing a clearly defined and coordinated regulatory body for the purposes of engagement with the Promoter. The MMO is signatory to this Working Protocol.

Competent Authorities for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

2.5 The City Council is the LPA for the purposes of terrestrial Plan-making and planning applications made under the Town and Country Planning Acts and is also Competent Authority in undertaking these functions, as defined under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

2.6 The MMO is the equivalent competent authority where undertaking its statutory plan-making and licensing functions.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-coastal-concordat-for-england/a-coastal-concordat-for-england-revised-december-2019>. The Concordat was originally an agreement between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Department for Transport (DoT), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group. It applies to the consenting of projects that span the intertidal area in estuaries and on the coast and require multiple consents including both a marine licence and a planning permission from the local planning authority.

2.7 Pursuant to the Habitats Regulations, the MMO and the LPA separately derive competent authority responsibility with regard to the inter-tidal zone between Mean Low and Mean High Water Springs (MLWS-MHWS), the MMO assessing an HRA up to MHWS, whilst the LPA assesses to MLWS. Where the overlap occurs, for example, through foreshore works, the two parties will work closely together in accordance with the Coastal Concordat. Where the MMO feels able to adopt the LPA's HRA, deeming it sufficient in assessing the marine aspects, the MMO will do so to avoid separate HRAs for onshore/offshore.

PCC-Promoter

2.8 The City Council is also acting as a site promoter and landowner, tasked with delivering the project with partner developers. A separate Statement of Common Ground will be entered into between PCC-LPA and the PCC-Promoter.

3.0 Planning Policy and national legislation

3.1 Paragraph 25 of the NPPF (2024) states that Local Planning Authorities should collaborate with relevant bodies in strategic plan-making, including the MMO.

3.2 The **UK Marine Policy Statement 2011** recognises the importance of integration between the terrestrial and marine planning regimes. Marine plan boundaries extend up to mean high water spring tide levels, whilst terrestrial plans generally extend to low water spring tides and as such there is a physical overlap between respective Plans. This is to ensure marine and terrestrial environments are considered together in coastal environments and in associated strategic planning.

3.3 The **South Inshore and South offshore Marine Plan (2018)** provides strategic planning policies within the inshore and offshore waters between Folkstone in Kent and the river Dart in Devon and informs decision making by marine users and regulators on activities within the marine plan area. This south marine plan areas includes Portsmouth and Southampton harbours and is noted as part of "*...one of the busiest shipping channels in the world*" and which supports "*...significant fishing and aquaculture activity and have a strong association with the defence of Britain.*"(para.11)"

3.4 The Marine Plan contains 12 core objectives, each supported by a number of specific policies. The notable policies, as relevant to draft policy PLP3 for Tipner West, include the following:

S-DEF-1 - Proposals in or affecting MoD areas should only be authorised with agreement from the MoD.

S-INF-1 - Appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa) should be supported.

S-EMP-1 - Proposals that develop skills related to marine activities, particularly in line with local skills strategies, will be supported.

S-EMP-2 - Proposals resulting in a net increase to marine related employment will be supported, particularly where they are in line with the skills available in and adjacent to the south marine plan areas.

S-CC-3 - Proposals in the south marine plan area and adjacent marine plan areas that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on coastal change should not be supported.

S-CC-4 - Proposals that may have a significant adverse impact on habitats that provide a flood defence or carbon sequestration ecosystem service must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate significant adverse impacts.

S-MPA-1 - Proposals that support the objectives of marine protected areas and the ecological coherence of the marine protected area network will be supported. Proposals that may have adverse impacts on the objectives of marine protected areas and the ecological coherence of the marine protected area network must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate adverse impacts, with due regard given to statutory advice on an ecologically coherent network.

S-MPA-4 - Until the ecological coherence of the marine protected area network is confirmed, proposals should demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: a) avoid, b) minimise, c) mitigate adverse impacts on features that may be required to complete the network, d) if it is not possible to mitigate adverse impacts, proposals should state the case for proceeding.

4.0 Portsmouth Context

4.1 Portsmouth is the UK's only island City. Whilst this brings an array of benefits, it does mean that the City is significantly constrained, especially when it comes to growth. Given the east, south and west are bound by the sea and the north by Portsdown Hill, this creates very little scope to grow beyond the current built up area.

4.2 Portsmouth has a shoreline with a total length of 44 km. The City Council is directly responsible for 23 km of Portsmouth's coastline with the remainder in private ownership, predominantly owned by the Ministry of Defence, including His Majesty's Naval Base. The open coast (8 km) is the southern and most exposed shoreline of Portsea Island. Portsmouth is significantly low lying with the majority of Portsea Island being less than 10m above sea level.

4.3 Portsmouth is a City that is exposed to significant degrees of flood risk with large areas to the south of the island and to the north, including the mainland, falling within flood zones 2 and 3 (areas most at risk of extreme flood events). This flood risk is expected to grow with the accompanying sea level rise brought about by future projected climate change.

4.4 Portsmouth is also the only City in the UK with a population density greater than that of London. The City is significantly compact and there are very few vacant sites or opportunity areas within the administrative boundary that could deliver significant levels of growth to meet housing need as calculated by the standard methodology.

5.0 Key Strategic Matters

Policy PLP3: Tipner West

5.1 The strategic site allocation, supported by draft policy PLP3, relates to the site identified in Fig.1 below. A copy of the Pre-Submission Addendum Policy PLP3 is provided at Appendix 1.



Figure 1: Tipner West (Policy PLP3)

5.2 The MMO did not make a representation on the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Portsmouth Local Plan Addendum.

5.3 The MMO and PCC-LPA agree the on the following matters:

(1) A representative of the MMO has attended Tipner West Regulatory Panel meetings since the first meeting held in March 2021 unless, as made clear in meeting minutes, such representative has offered apologies. The MMO agrees that the minutes of the Panel meetings (where attended by an MMO representative) are an accurate reflection of discussions².

(2) The statutory & non statutory nature conservation sites including those of international, national and local importance within the vicinity of the allocation site boundary comprise part of the National Site Network (formerly termed 'European sites') and internationally designated sites potentially impacted by the development. These are shown in Figure 2 below:

² https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/TW08_Reg_Panel_minutes_of_all_meetings_Nov_2024.pdf

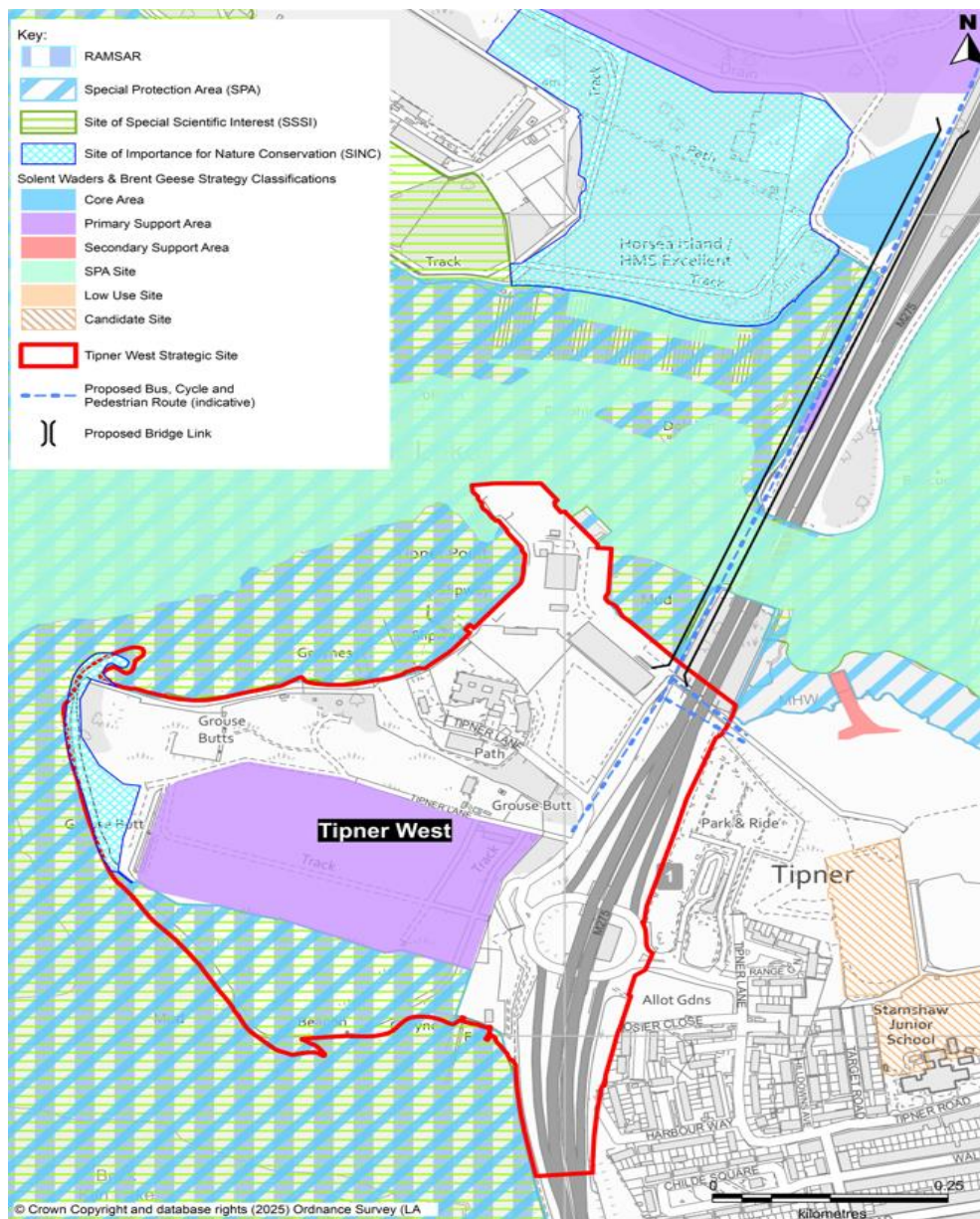


Figure 2: Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Wildlife Sites

(3) The MMO has no in principle objection to the site-wide requirements set out in draft policy PLP3 and is satisfied with the policy criteria as set out in the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Portsmouth Local Plan Addendum. In particular, the MMO supports the quantum of commercial (including marine) and residential development outlined in the policy, noting that the policy no longer proposes the delivery of a new regionally significant marine employment hub, associated reclamation or dredging works, bridge (other than safeguarding) and development of terrestrial SPA/Ramsar habitat. The MMO notes that there is an area of safeguarding for the future delivery of a bridge link to Horsea Island Strategic Open Space (policy PLP9), but that the detail of the bridge design and potential impacts would be taken forward as a separate project, with a project-level HRA at the appropriate time. The MMO will need to be consulted on such a proposal.

(4) Having regard to the updated HRA (2025), it is agreed that the policy as amended would not give rise to adverse effects (that cannot be mitigated) to the integrity of the SPA/Ramsar designated site qualifying features. The policies of the South Inshore and South Offshore Marine Plan 2018, and the need to safeguard the coherence of the marine protected area network, continue to apply to coastal projects such as that envisaged for Tipner West under policy PLP3, in particular with regard to the proposed sea defence works and the safeguarding for a future bridge crossing.

(4) Should the existing sea defences fail, there remains a real risk that contaminants in the ground on Tipner West would leach into Portsmouth Harbour and pollute designated nature conservation sites. This could have significant adverse impacts on the integrity of Habitats Sites and the ecological status of the Portsmouth Harbour Water Framework Directive waterbody. As such, the proposed development allocation and associated policy PLP3 requirements and criterion, are welcomed.

(5) There are no matters of disagreement between the MMO and PCC-LPA in regards to the Pre-Submission Local Plan Addendum and the updated HRA.

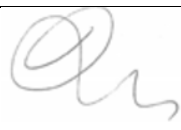
6.0 Signatories

6.1 Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.

6.2 Both parties agree that they have engaged positively on an ongoing basis and that on this basis the Duty to Cooperate has been met.

6.3 Both parties agree that there are no substantial areas of disagreement between the parties relating to the emerging Portsmouth Local Plan and will both continue to work proactively on the key strategic cross boundary issues identified in this SCG.

6.4 Signatures

	Signed:	Signed:
		
	Name: Lucy Howard	Name: Linda Brewis
	Position: Head of Planning Policy	Position: Senior Marine Licensing Case Manager
	Portsmouth City Council	Marine Management Organisation
	Date: 5th February 2026	Date: 3 rd February 2026

Appendix 1

Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Portsmouth Local Plan Addendum (2025)

Policy PLP3 - Tipner West

**This extract omits the background and supporting text contained within the Addendum. The full document can be found: [Here](#)*

- 1. Tipner West, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for mixed use development of the following uses and infrastructure:**
 - a) Approximately 25,000m² of employment floorspace including marine uses (classes E(g)(ii) and (iii) research and development and light industrial, B2 general industrial and B8 storage or distribution) and ancillary office space;**
 - b) Approximately 1,000 residential dwellings (class C3);**
 - c) Flood defences along the peninsula edges of Tipner West in line with the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan;**
 - d) Shops selling convenience goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280m² (class F2a); and**
 - e) Meeting places for the principal use of the local community (class F2b).**
- 2. Land is safeguarded for landfall of a new bridge, as shown on the Policies Map and figure 4.2, connecting Tipner West to Horsea Island for the use of sustainable transport modes only.**
- 3. Development proposals for the above named uses will be permitted provided that they meet all of the following site-specific development requirements:**
 - a) Create a new landmark gateway to the City of Portsmouth to be demonstrated through a conceptual site-wide masterplan with an accompanying design code framework that delivers high quality place-making and has regard to the National Model Design Code;**
 - b) Break down the barriers, both physical and perceived, created by the M275 motorway and Portsbridge Creek. This will be facilitated by enabling public access through the existing subway under the M275 and through the design of both buildings and spaces to create excellent connections with new development at Tipner East and the wider area.**
 - c) Deliver a design, scale and massing that responds sensitively to the significance of Portchester Castle including its setting, taking into account its dominance in Portsmouth Harbour and the contribution made by views to and from the Castle to its significance;**

- d) Allow views to and from Tipner West and notable landmarks within the zone of visibility including Portchester Castle, the Spinnaker Tower and His Majesty's Naval Base;**
- e) Integrate green and blue infrastructure into the masterplanning and design of the development and seek to mitigate the urban heat island effect;**
- f) Submit a site-wide Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which includes a proposed Tree Removal, Replacement and Retention Plan and Tree Protection Plan that protects the trees of highest value.**
- g) Identify and incorporate opportunities to conserve, restore and recreate priority habitats and ecological networks;**
- h) Ensure new sea defence designs:**
 - i. Avoid or minimise loss of, or damage to SPA/Ramsar habitats having regard to the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (2010) 'Hold the Line' policy (as may be amended) and associated compensation strategies³ and ensure protection of the integrity of the international, national and local nature designations⁴;**
 - ii. Provide public access along the waterfront that remains above the Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) level and precludes public access to the protected intertidal areas;**
 - iii. Integrate bespoke public lookout/viewing areas over the Harbour with information boards on nature conservation, heritage and other points of interest;**
 - iv. Incorporate measures set out in a Wayfinding Strategy, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, that includes signage to connect with existing coastal pathways, including the England Coast Path.**
- i) Incorporate on-site car parking for residents, workers and visitors, including wherever feasible car-free zones and/or pedestrian-priority streets, with clearly defined connections to 'Mobility as a Service' and other sustainable transport opportunities, including bus services at the Tipner Park and Ride facility;**
- j) Provide enhanced pedestrian and cycle links connecting Tipner West to the City Centre, nearby public open spaces, recreational facilities including the Mountbatten Centre and other local shops and services;**
- k) Provide safe and efficient vehicular access to and from the M275 and the surrounding non-strategic road network;**
- l) Deliver or contribute proportionally to the relevant transport and highways mitigation measures identified within the Local Plan Strategic Transport**

³ The Habitat Compensation and Restoration Programme - <https://southerncoastalgroup-scopac.org.uk/hcrp/#:~:text=SOLENT%20AND%20SOUTH%20DOWNS&text=The%20HCRP%20is%20the%20Government%27s,to%20as%20the%20Habitats%20Regulations>).

⁴ Notably the Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar site, Portsmouth Harbour SSSI and Solent and Dorset Coast SPA – as required by the Habitats Regulations (2017) (as amended) and related national habitats legislation.

Assessment⁵ and/or Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁶, including the proposed bridge connecting Tipner West with Horsea Island;

- m) Mitigate likely significant effects from recreational disturbance to protected bird populations through a bespoke developer-provided package of measures for the lifetime of the development, which will proportionally rely upon the Bird Aware Solent Revised Strategy⁷ together with site-specific and other measures, as advised by Natural England and identified through HRA;**
 - n. Deliver appropriate surface water and foul drainage infrastructure together with required nutrient neutrality and water usage mitigation measures to support the Environment Agency in achieving and/or maintaining at least 'Good' water quality status and to protect designated habitats within the Portsmouth Harbour Waterbody (pursuant to the Water Environment Regulations);**
 - o) Deliver land raising and construction of flood defences. Their implementation should be informed by the SFRA Level 1 and 2⁸;**
 - p) Deliver surface water management measures to make provision for storage during high tide events, when the surface water drainage may be subject to tide locking;**
 - q) Mitigate and/or remediate contamination from current and historic uses; and**
 - r) Provide a skills and employability plan for both the construction and occupation stages of the development.**
- 4. Land south of the firing range is designated as terrestrial SPA and Ramsar and should be retained as such without any development built on it other than sea defences as necessary. Developers will need to demonstrate, as part of a Site Management and Maintenance Strategy, to be approved by the Local Planning Authority, how this land will be protected with particular regard to the control of public access.**
- 5. The Listed Buildings located on Tipner West must be retained, restored and re-used. Development proposals must fully assess the significance of these assets and give great weight to the conservation and where possible the enhancement of their fabric and/or setting. In addition, any proposals must demonstrate a full understanding of the contribution of views towards the site, to the setting and therefore the significance of both the Scheduled Portchester Castle across the Harbour, and the D-Day Slipways adjoining Horsea Island East and should seek where possible to avoid or mitigate any unnecessary harm to their setting. The**

⁵ https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Portsmouth-Local-Plan-TA_Strategic-Transport-Assessment-Draft-23.05.2024_-ISSUE-NO-TRACKS.pdf

⁶ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/FINAL-IDP-2025-version-November-2025-v1.pdf>

⁷ <https://birdaware.org/solent/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/02/BAS-five-year-strategy-proposals.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/development-and-planning/planning-policy/portsmouth-local-plan-evidence/climate-emergency/>

impact (or potential impact) of any proposals on non-designated archaeology either within, and/or if necessary, below mean high water springs around the site, shall also be assessed and recorded and where possible mitigated in proportion to the significance of any find(s).

6. A shadow, project-level Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required to be submitted alongside project-level planning applications, and as necessary for any phased applications, for assessment by the local planning authority as competent authority, in consultation with Natural England. On account of the fact that delivery of the Policy will inevitably result in the loss of some functionally linked habitat, the HRA must among other things demonstrate that any loss of functionally linked habitat, including that identified as a primary or secondary support area in the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy, will be mitigated through the provision of replacement functionally linked supporting habitat of equal or greater quality and quantity, which fulfils the same special contribution and particular function of the areas lost or damaged for the same species of birds.
7. Whilst the City Council wishes to see a comprehensive development of the site, it recognises that planning applications may come forward separately or in phases. These applications, where considered necessary, will need to align with the site-wide conceptual masterplan and design code as well as complying with the other development requirements set out above. All development proposals will be supported by appropriate site phasing and sequencing strategies to ensure a holistic approach is taken to the delivery of development. Planning applications will need to demonstrate potential landscaping or other solutions for land comprising later phases in the event that such phases do not come forward within an agreed timeframe.
8. A Safeguarded Infrastructure Assessment will be required to be submitted in support of a future planning application. This should have regard to the minerals and waste infrastructure, safeguarded under the currently adopted Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan⁹ (2013) and its replacements.

⁹ <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste/HampshireMineralsWastePlanADOPTED.pdf>