BLASHFORD LAKES
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
PLAN (2004)

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Prepared for
Blashford Lakes
Steering Group
by
Land Use Consultants

May 2004

43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD
Tel: 020 7383 5784
Fax: 020 7383 4798
luc@london.landuse.co.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..................................i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION ......................................1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. EXISTING SITUATION AND CHANGES SINCE THE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIGINAL PLAN ........................................5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. STRATEGIC AIM &amp; KEY PRINCIPLES ..............27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS ............................35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. IMPLEMENTATION ....................................89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLES

Table 2.1: Nature Conservation Designations at Blashford Lakes.........................13
Table 5.1: Schedule of Key Actions...........................................................................97

FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Blashford Lakes Aerial Photograph
Figure 2.2: The Study Area
Figure 2.3: Current Mineral Working
Figure 2.4: Proposed Afteruses in Current Restoration Plans
Figure 2.5: Existing and Future Proposed Use for Water Storage and Supply
Figure 2.6: Existing Nature Conservation Designations
Figure 2.7: Existing and Future Proposed Sporting Use
Figure 2.8: Existing and Future Proposed Access and Birdwatching
Figure 2.9: Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Types in the New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment (2000)
Figure 4.1: Management Proposals - Water Storage and Supply
Figure 4.2: Management Proposals - Nature Conservation
Figure 4.3: Management Proposals - Sporting Uses
Figure 4.4: Management Proposals - Access
Figure 4.5: Management Units
Figure 4.6: Overview of Management Proposals

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consultees
Appendix 2: New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003)
Appendix 3: Mineral Activity as at January 2004
Appendix 4: Summary of Key Findings of the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &C.) Regulations 1994
Appendix 5: Appropriate Assessment - Determining Likely Significant Effects
Appendix 6: Nature Conservation Management
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction


2. The purpose of the review was to build upon the success of the original BMLSP taking into account changes that have occurred in terms of land use and activities at the lakes, and also changes in legislation, policy and guidance since 1992. The area covered by this Strategic Management Plan has also been extended from the original BLMSP, so that it now includes all of the lakes and adjoining land within the Blashford Lakes study area.

Factors Influencing the Strategic Management Plan

3. There have been a number of changes that have taken place since the BLMSP was published, most notably:
   - The coming to an end of much of the mineral extraction activity in the study area, (with the exception of the north of the study area), albeit that processing of minerals continues to take place in a number of locations, and several sites in the study area are still in the process of being restored.
   - The designation of a large proportion of the study area as being of national and international importance for its nature conservation interest, and in particular for over-wintering waterfowl, which has brought with it various statutory duties and responsibilities to protect and conserve the ecological interest in order to achieve nature conservation objectives.
   - Proposed inclusion of the Blashford Lakes study area as part of the New Forest National Park.

4. The Strategic Management Plan has drawn on both detailed research relating to the study area, such as monitoring of waterfowl populations, and consultation with those with an interest in the study area.

The Value of Blashford Lakes

5. The Blashford Lakes study area is a valuable resource, catering for a wide range of uses and interests:
   - It has been an important source of minerals over many years, providing essential supplies for the construction industry.
• It represents an important ecological asset, as part of the wider Avon Valley, but also through the creation of large areas of open standing water.

• It is a strategic resource for water storage and supply.

• It is a regionally important location for water-sports, including sailing, water-skiing, and canoeing.

• It provides an important local resource for recreational fishing.

• It also caters for a range of other recreational pursuits, including shooting, walking and bird watching.

• It is an agricultural resource, providing back-up grazing for the New Forest.

• It is an educational resource, linked to all the above uses.

6. The proposals in the Strategic Management Plan take into account the history and evolution of the study area, the various interests involved, and the statutory duties that need to be discharged by public authorities.

**Key Proposals**

7. The Strategic Management Plan addresses the Blashford Lakes study area in two ways:

   (i) It looks strategically at the lakes as a whole, and defines an overall Aim and Key Principles to help to manage the multiple uses and potentially conflicting interests at the lakes. This provides the framework for the Strategic Management Plan, allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate changes over time.

   (ii) It interprets the Key Principles to provide more specific objectives and proposals for individual management units, comprising mineral workings and lakes, watercourses, and significant pockets of other land or special interest features.

8. The key proposals included in the Strategic Management Plan are as follows:

   • Continued restoration and aftercare of mineral workings in line with planning consents, conditions and obligations.

   • Continued use of certain lakes within the study area for water storage and supply, with management of the resource to be determined by detailed hydrological studies.

   • Safeguarding the northernmost lakes in the study area (Ibsley Water, Mockbeggar Lake and silt ponds) for nature conservation.

   • Restoring to favourable condition those lakes designated for their nature conservation interest that are not achieving their conservation objectives.
• Conservation and enhancement of the nature conservation interest of those parts of the study area that are not designated for their nature conservation interest, in order to improve the ecological value of Blashford Lakes as a whole.

• Continuation of sailing at Blashford Lake, and water-skiing at Ellingham Lake, subject to appropriate arrangements being in place to ensure that nature conservation objectives are not compromised.

• Continuation of fishing in the study area, but with careful monitoring to ensure that nature conservation objectives are achieved, with controls introduced as appropriate.

• Further studies to determine the feasibility of introducing non-motorised water-based recreation to Rockford Lake, subject to nature conservation objectives being achieved.

• Pursuit to an end to shooting in the study area, particularly on those sites designated for their nature conservation interest, due to direct conflict with nature conservation objectives.

• Extensions to the footpath and cycleway network to create links between existing footpaths where they are currently missing, and the opportunity for circular walks, with additional bird hides in appropriate locations, subject to nature conservation objectives being achieved.

• Additional parking at various locations throughout the study area, to provide for improved access.

• Encouragement for continued agricultural use of some of the lake margins, particularly as back-up grazing for the New Forest.

• Greater use of the Blashford Study Centre, building on its existing success, to cater for a wider range of users, linked to a comprehensive strategy for interpretation and education throughout the study area.

• Investigating the feasibility of bringing the former Ibsley Airfield Control Tower back into use as a heritage feature, and as a viewing platform for the lakes.

9. The importance of monitoring the ecological interest of the study area, to ensure that activities take place in a manner that does not compromise its importance for nature conservation, is stressed. Further studies, for example into alien species, and to provide for detailed management prescriptions, are recommended.

Implementation of the Strategic Management Plan

10. It is recommended that the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee continues to provide a forum for different interests to consider the future of the study area as a whole, and that stakeholders who currently are not represented on the Committee are invited to join.
11. At the detailed level, it is recommended that the Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group, comprising the partners who guided this project, continues to oversee implementation of the Plan.

12. It is recommended that the chair of the Consultative Committee and Steering Group are reviewed, to reflect the extended boundaries to the study area, and that New Forest District Council are invited to take on this role. This arrangement may need to be reviewed once the New Forest National Park Authority is established.
I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1.1. Blashford Lakes is the generic name given to an area of land incorporating a series of lakes constructed from sand and gravel extraction over the last fifty years, in the Avon Valley to the north of Ringwood, Hampshire. Several uses currently take place at Blashford Lakes including mineral extraction, public water storage and supply, and recreational activities. The lakes themselves are important nature conservation habitats, recognised by national and international designations for migratory wintering wildfowl. The lakes and adjoining tracts of land also provide a significant resource for local residents, with an educational role provided through the Blashford Study Centre.

1.2. The Blashford Lakes Management Strategy and Plan (BLMSP) (1992)\(^1\), often referred to as the ‘Blue Book’, was commissioned by Wessex Water to fulfil a condition of the 1986 planning permission for Stage 1 of the water company’s scheme to utilise a number of the lakes for water storage and supply. Wessex Water entered into a legal agreement to form a management body, with a commitment to prepare the Management Plan for Blashford Lakes and implement those parts for which it has responsibility. The purpose of the BLMSP was to form a basis for co-ordinated activity and management, and the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee was set up to provide a forum for discussion and to agree a final form of the Management Plan.

1.3. The BLMSP has served the Blashford Lakes area well over the last 10 years. However, one of the recommendations of the Original Plan was that it should be ‘subject to periodic review and amendment as necessary’, to take into account changing circumstances. A review at 4-5 year intervals was recommended, and is therefore now overdue.

AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT

1.4. The aim of this document is to update the BLMSP and provide strategic guidance for planning the future of the Blashford Lakes study area. It will provide a basis for the policies and activities of the relevant local authorities and agencies, and other stakeholders.

SCOPE

1.5. This revision aims to build upon the success of the original BLMSP and is not a radical change in direction. However, it takes into account changes that have occurred in terms of land use and activities at the lakes, and also changes in legislation, policy and guidance since 1992. The area covered by this Strategic Management Plan has also been extended from the original BLMSP, so that it now includes all of the lakes and adjoining land within the Blashford Lakes study area (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

1.6. The document sets out a strategic planning framework. It is not a management plan in the conventional sense, as it does not set out detailed management prescriptions. Therefore, for simplicity and ease of understanding, it has been decided to name the document the ‘Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan’. This document will hereafter be referred to as the ‘Strategic Management Plan’. The original 1992 plan, of which this is a revision, will be referred to as ‘the Original Plan’.

1.7. The Strategic Management Plan looks at the Blashford Lakes Study Area in two ways:

(iii) It looks strategically at the lakes as a whole, and defines an overall Aim and Key Principles to help to manage the multiple uses and potentially conflicting interests at the lakes. This provides the framework for the Strategic Management Plan, allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate changes over time.

(iv) It interprets the Key Principles to provide more specific objectives and proposals for individual management units, comprising mineral workings and lakes, watercourses, and significant pockets of other land or special interest features.

CONSULTATION

1.8. Consultation has been a key part of producing the Strategic Management Plan. The consultation has aimed to reach landowners, users of the lakes (recreation groups, walkers, bird watchers etc), local residents, regulatory bodies and other interest groups.

1.9. The consultation programme included:

• Presentations to the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee.

• A consultation letter focusing on key questions, sent to relevant stakeholders, including all members of the Consultative Committee.

• An advert placed in two local newspapers, the Avon Advertiser and the Ringwood and Fordingbridge News.

• A number of public notices placed on local notice boards, in libraries, at the Blashford Study Centre and on the site.

• Interviews with members of the Steering Group, landowners, and recreational clubs.

1.10. Information was collected about the current situation at the lakes, including people’s views on the successes and failures of the Original Plan, perceptions of where any tensions lay between current uses, and thoughts and proposals on the future uses at the lakes.

---

the lakes. This has been used to feed into the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan.

1.11. **Appendix 1** provides details of all the individuals/organisations contacted as part of the consultation programme.

1.12. This draft version of the Strategic Management Plan will be subject to a six-week consultation period, in order to obtain the views of all relevant stakeholders. These views will be taken into account when producing the final version of the Strategic Management Plan.

**STATUS OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN**

1.13. The Strategic Management Plan will be given a degree of weight when decisions are taken with respect to the Blashford Lakes study area, and in this respect New Forest District Council will consider whether it should be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance/Document. It will support the policies of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration, which is currently in Revised Deposit form, published in February 2003, and in particular the following policies (see **Appendix 2** for full wording of policies):

- Policy AV-4 Avon Valley Lakes: Recreational Uses.
- Policy AV-5 Avon Valley Lakes: Recreational Facilities.
- Policy AV-6 Avon Valley Lakes: Country Recreation Area.

1.14. The Strategic Management Plan is largely in line with the above policies, but includes some suggested changes to some of the policies in the light of the research undertaken.

1.15. The Strategic Management Plan covers the whole of the Blashford Lakes study area. However, it is primarily aimed at land in the ownership of Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company and Wessex Water. Both are represented on the Blashford Lakes Steering Group. It is hoped that other landowners and stakeholders will also support the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan, and work with the regulatory bodies to achieve its successful implementation. The consultation process has given the opportunity for all those with an interest to put forward their views with respect to the Strategic Management Plan, which aims to present a balanced set of proposals within the framework set by relevant legislation and policy (and as informed by the Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 50 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, being undertaken by Hampshire County Council).
STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.16. Following this introduction, the Strategic Management Plan is structured in the following way:

Chapter 2: Existing Situation and Changes since the Original Plan
Chapter 3: Strategic Aim and Key Principles
Chapter 4: Management Proposals
Chapter 5: Implementation and Next Steps
2. EXISTING SITUATION AND CHANGES SINCE THE ORIGINAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

2.1. This chapter sets out the existing situation at Blashford Lakes, and the key changes that have occurred since the Original Plan in relation to land use / activities and policy. Known proposals for future use of the lakes are also discussed, for example in mineral restoration plans, and current planning applications.

2.2. Figures 2.1 & 2.2 show the extent of the Blashford Lakes study area considered by the Strategic Management Plan. Several of the lakes are known locally by different names, and therefore for consistency the names shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 will be used throughout this document.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING SITUATION AT BLASHFORD LAKES

2.3. Blashford Lakes occupies an area of former farmland and woodland in the Avon Valley, part of which became the site of a military aerodrome, RAF Ibsley, constructed in 1939/40 to the south of Mockbeggar Lane. 17 RAF Fighter Squadrons served at RAF Ibsley, which was occupied by British, American, Czech, Polish, French and Australian airmen at one stage or another. The airfield was decommissioned in 1946.

2.4. Today, the most dominant feature in the Blashford Lakes are the former and current mineral workings, which have been operating for over 50 years in this location, creating a unique man-made landscape set within the River Avon valley.

2.5. The Avon valley is a predominantly rural landscape, with the river terraces used for agriculture. The New Forest rises steeply to the east and there is also rising ground to the west of the River Avon. The landscape of Blashford Lakes is more enclosed and consists of the lakes themselves, watercourses including Dockens Water and Lin Brook, which feed into the River Avon, hedgerows, areas of woodland, roads, footpaths and a number of residential properties. The lakes are largely hidden from view from the surrounding roads by trees and hedgerows.

2.6. The current uses at Blashford Lakes include:

- **Mineral extraction and ancillary activities** such as recycling and ready mix concrete and bagging plants (see Figure 2.3). Normally, once mineral reserves are exhausted, restoration and aftercare/management of land takes place (see Figure 2.4). However, some uses such as the concrete block works at the quarry on the site of the former Ibsley Airfield are continuing longer term, independent of mineral extraction, which is coming to an end. Also, completion of extraction on existing sites does not necessarily rule out all mineral extraction or mineral and waste related uses in the future, should suitable proposals come forward in the overriding public interest.
• **Water storage and supply.** A number of the lakes are used for this purpose by Wessex Water and by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company (see Figure 2.5).

• **Nature conservation.** The study area is important for nature conservation, reflected in a series of designations covering part of the lakes study area (see Figure 2.6), including Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (a national designation), and Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site (international designations). The designations recognise the importance of the lakes for overwintering waterfowl, wetland habitat, wetland birds, breeding birds and rare invertebrates and plants. The lakes are also adjacent to the River Avon candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and the New Forest SSSI/ SPA/ Ramsar site and cSAC. Dockens Water flows through the lakes complex and is part of the River Avon System SSSI/cSAC.

• **Sport and recreation.** The lakes are an important resource for sailing, waterskiing, and fishing and the study area is also a resource for walkers and birdwatchers (see Figures 2.7 and 2.8).

• **Education.** The lakes have an educational role since the Blashford Study Centre opened in 1996, which is a resource well used by local school groups (see Figure 2.8).

• **Agriculture.** There is a small amount of farmland, mainly used for grazing, on land adjacent to some of the lakes, for example to the east of Blashford Lake and to the west of Ellingham Lake.

2.7. The following sections set out the existing baseline conditions at the lakes in relation to each of the main activities. Any changes that have taken place since the Original Plan are described. The implications for the future use of the lakes are also drawn out.

**MINERAL EXTRACTION**

**Existing Situation**

2.8. Mineral extraction is coming to the end of its life on existing extraction sites within the study area. However, other mineral and waste applications have been received, and are currently being determined by the County Council. These include:

• An application for a two year north west extension to the existing Tarmac Quarry on land north of Mockbeggar Lane, with importation of soils from this proposed new extension quarry to Blashford Quarry for future restoration purposes (to open water and reed bed to be managed for nature conservation in conjunction with the existing water bodies in the area), plus an extension of time for restoration of the existing quarry on land north of Mockbeggar Lane.

• An application to retain the Conbloc plant at Ibsley Airfield (Hanson) Quarry, which has been granted, as has the principle of relocating the ready mix plant on this same quarry.
2.9. There are currently four mineral sites where extraction is either still active or complete but not yet restored, notably:

- Blashford Quarry (Tarmac) where extraction on site is complete but where mineral is processed from the Nea Farm Quarry at Somerley, and conveyed to Blashford across the River Avon. Blashford Quarry also has a number of other mineral and waste related uses taking place on it such as a ready mix concrete plant, a mineral bagging plant, and an inert waste recycling plant. Footpaths/cycleways/bridleways are also to be created once Section 106 legal agreements are signed.

- Ringwood Quarry, Snails Lane (RMC) where extraction should be completed over the next few years and restored to open water, agriculture and nature conservation with public footpaths in accordance with its Review of Mineral Planning Permissions Consent (ROMP) and its Interim Development Order Consent. As with other quarries in the study area this has ancillary development by way of a ready mix plant on the site.

- Ringwood and Ellingham Pit (Hanson), which is currently being worked in accordance with a recent ROMP permission and extraction should be complete in less than 12 months. The site is being restored to nature conservation and open water with footpath provision. Ancillary development such as the ready mix plant and the Conbloc plant have been granted planning permission to stay for a longer period on the site, independent from the mineral extraction at the quarry which is drawing to a close. Mineral is being imported from the Avon Valley area to serve the Conbloc plant and also for the ready mix plant once the legal agreement relating to imported material has been completed and the certificate of planning permission issued.

- Land north of Mockbeggar Lane (Tarmac/SITA) quarry, which is in its final restoration stages and should be completed by next summer. The land is being restored to agriculture, back up grazing for the New Forest, and open water and reed bed to be managed for nature conservation. An extension to the Avon Valley footpath, which runs across the site, has been secured as part of the planning permission.

2.10. The Environment Act 1995, introduced new powers for ROMPs in order to modernise working and restoration conditions at all mineral sites. This includes an Initial Review and updating of mineral permissions where the predominant permission was granted before 22 February 1982, and the Periodic Review of all mineral planning permissions thereafter every fifteen years. At Blashford Lakes, two of the mineral sites, Ringwood Quarry and Ringwood Pit, are subject to Initial Reviews of the mineral permissions. This document has sought to be consistent with

---

3 Interim Development Order permissions (IDO)s were originally granted after 21 July 1943 and before 1 July 1948, which have been preserved by successive planning Acts as valid planning permissions in respect of development that had not been carried out by 1 July 1948. The Planning & Compensation Act 1991 introduced new provisions for dealing with such permissions, including the need for permission holders to register the permission with the mineral planning authority, and subsequently to apply for determination of the conditions to which the permission was to be subject. The Environment Act 1995 introduced new requirements for an initial review and updating of old mineral permissions and the periodic review of all mineral permissions (ROMPs) thereafter.
the ROMPS, which should be separately referred to for detailed proposals for individual sites.

2.11. **Figure 2.3** shows the extent of current active mineral working, and the application boundaries for the ROMP applications and the applications to vary restoration plans. **Figure 2.4** shows the proposed afteruses in current restoration plans, although it must be noted that these could change as approvals are subject to the satisfactory completion of legal agreements and approval of detailed schemes. **Appendix 3** provides further details of existing mineral activity and the proposed afteruses.

2.12. The Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1998) does not include the study area of Blashford Lakes as a preferred area for sand and gravel extraction. At present, new proposals for extraction will have to be judged against existing policies in the Local Plan. The South East England Regional Assembly published in September 2003 a Regional Minerals Strategy for consultation as replacement regional planning guidance. This includes a policy for an allocation of a landbank of planning permissions for primary aggregates within the New Forest National Park. If this proposal is retained in submitted regional planning guidance, the policy will be subject to public examination in 2004. The outcome of the Public Inquiry on the New Forest National Park and its boundary is also likely to be known in 2004.

2.13. Ultimately any approved regional planning guidance will have to be tested through the development plan process. The review of the policies in the Local Plan will in the future be part of the preparation of a Hampshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework which will have to consider identifying sites for sand and gravel extraction in the roll forward of landbank allocations. In a similar way, the Framework will be subject to an independent examination. Any new planning application will have to be judged on its merits taking into account whatever stage the above process has reached. In addition, decisions on any new applications have to be assessed in relation to planning guidance including, MPG6, PPG 7 and any subsequent revisions.

**Changes since Original Plan**

2.14. Since the Original Plan, there have been a number of changes in minerals operations, as working has progressed. Several of the restoration proposals have been altered and applications have been submitted to vary restoration plans by the mineral companies. The majority of the proposed restoration plans include proposals for nature conservation and quiet recreational pursuits such as walking, bridleways, cycleways, bird hide facilities, as opposed to the proposals in the Original Plan which included more active water based recreation on some of the lakes (e.g. Ibsley Water).

**WATER STORAGE AND SUPPLY**

**Existing Situation**

2.15. Wessex Water Services, use a number of the lakes for water storage and public water supply. Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company own Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lake, and plan at some future date to develop Ibsley for water
supply. Figure 2.5 shows the existing use of the lakes for water storage and supply, and proposed future use by the water companies. Any future use would be subject to securing permission from the Environment Agency for water abstraction from the lake concerned.

2.16. The planning permission granted in 1986 for stage one of the water storage scheme included engineering works for the use of Ivy, Blashford (and in the future Ellingham) Lakes for water storage and supply, the river intake from the River Avon at Ibsley, the intake pound to the north of Ellingham Lake and construction of the water treatment works. This has been operational since 1989, apart from the use of Ellingham Lake, which has been awaiting completion of restoration following mineral extraction.

2.17. Planning permission was also granted for the second stage in 1992 involving Ibsley Water, Rockford Lake and North Somerley Lake. None of these lakes has as yet been brought into use.

2.18. The lakes are currently used infrequently for water supply, although they were used heavily during the droughts of 1990, 1995 and the winter of 1996/97.

2.19. Water is taken from Blashford and Ivy Lakes and pumped to the water treatment works. Wessex Water has an informal agreement with the recreational clubs on the maximum amount of drawdown on Blashford and Ivy Lakes, under normal conditions. This is 2.5 metres below the natural water level on Blashford Lake and one metre below the natural water level on Ivy Lake. To refill the lakes, water is abstracted from the River Avon into the pound north of Ellingham Lake. Water gravitates from the pound to Ivy Lake and is then pumped into Blashford Lake.

2.20. The abstraction licence on the River Avon for Blashford Lakes is linked to an abstraction licence further downstream at Knapp Mill, Christchurch, which is for direct public water supply. The combined abstraction is not allowed to exceed 113.6ML/day, of which up to 20ML/day can be abstracted for Blashford Lakes. Should the full entitlement be required at Knapp Mill, abstraction could not take place for storage at Blashford Lakes. For most of the year there is currently enough surplus to keep the lakes full, although water demand is expected to rise in the future.

Changes since Original Plan

2.21. The lakes have not been used for water storage and supply to the level anticipated and accounted for in the Original Plan. This is partly because demand has not been as great as predicted due to improvements in leakage control and water efficiency. In addition the water companies have chosen only to use this water supply infrequently to date.

2.22. In addition, the full extent of the proposals for water storage and supply outlined in the Original Plan have yet to be implemented, as in some cases mineral working is still taking place. However, there are some changes in the water storage strategies of the water companies, as set out below. It should be noted that all these proposals are also subject to securing abstraction licences from the Environment Agency. Existing permissions for water supply are also subject to Review of Consents by the Environment Agency, under the Habitats Regulations. It is proposed that:
• Ibsley Water will be used for water storage and supply by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company once mineral extraction is completed by Hanson. However, this will be a ground level scheme rather than a 6 metre bunded reservoir for which permission was granted in 1992. The lake will be drawn down for water supply, but will be left to refill naturally by ground water.

• Ellingham Lake will be used for water storage and supply by Wessex Water once Hanson have carried out engineering works to strengthen the eastern bank next to Dockens Water. At present Wessex Water have no plans to connect the lake to a water treatment works with a permanent pipeline. In the foreseeable future it is envisaged that the lake would only be used on an intermittent or occasional basis using a temporary pumping plant.

• Rockford Lake and North Somerley Lake, although included in the 1992 permission for water storage, will not be used use for water storage at the present time. RMC, the freeholders of Rockford Lake, have recently received the determination of the review of the mineral permission, which includes a condition to restore the site for nature conservation purposes and public footpaths. Therefore, future use of the lake for water storage would require permission for change of use, although Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company holds an option to purchase this lake from RMC. Tarmac has applied to vary the restoration plans for North Somerley, which means that there will be only a small waterbody. There is a possibility that in the future Wessex Water would use this as an additional intake pound from the River Avon.

NATURE CONSERVATION

Existing Situation

2.23. Parts of the Blashford Lakes study area have been designated for their importance for overwintering waterfowl, wetland habitat, wetland birds, and other features. Table 2.1 summarises the type of designation and the reason for designation. Figure 2.6 shows the boundaries of these designations.

National Designations

2.24. The Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covers several of the lakes in the study area. In addition, the River Avon System SSSI covers the River Avon and its tributaries, including Dockens Water, which crosses the Blashford Lakes study area.

2.25. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, sets out SSSI legislation. The CROW Act strengthened the law giving greater power to English Nature to enter into management agreements, to refuse consent for damaging operations, and to take action where damage is being caused through neglect or inappropriate management. Local authorities and other public institutions now also have a statutory duty to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs both in carrying out their operations, and in exercising their decision making functions, which includes planning decisions.

2.26. The areas of Blashford Lakes covered by the SSSI designations are covered by a list of ‘Operations Likely to Damage’ (OLDs) the special interest (as specified in the site
notification), including off-site and third party damage. Any proposals to carry out such operations require consultation with English Nature. This list is wide-ranging and comprehensive. It focuses heavily on recreation activities, such as the introduction of, or changes in, sporting, fishing, recreational or other activities likely to damage features of interest and also includes the killing of any wild animal, the introduction of, or changes in, tree / woodland management, undertaking engineering works, introduction of, or changes in, game and waterfowl management and hunting practice.

**International Designations**

2.27. The Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site designations cover the same area as the Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) SSSI. The European SPA designation gives protection to the habitat supporting the internationally important birds within the designated area. The Avon Valley SPA sets out a number of conservation objectives that need to be taken into account (see Table 2.1). The Ramsar designation is to protect ‘wetland of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat’. The interests covered by Ramsar designation are wider ranging than that of the SPA, since the designation includes wetland habitats, rare plants and invertebrates, as well as breeding and wintering birds. The River Avon and its tributaries are being considered as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) because it contains habitat types and/or species that are rare or threatened within a European context.

2.28. Conservation objectives have been prepared for the cSACs. Conservation objectives for the Ramsar and SSSI interests are expected to be completed by September 2004.

**The Importance of Blashford Lakes for OverWintering Waterfowl**

2.29. The SPA and Ramsar site designations recognise that the Avon Valley is of international importance for Bewick’s swan and gadwall. Although the numbers of Bewick’s swan have decreased the valley still supports 2% of the British population. They are particularly associated with the floodplain of the valley, but the swans are known to use the Blashford Lakes study area to roost and as a refuge from disturbance. The internationally important gadwall population is largely associated with the Blashford Lakes study area, although they use the valley for feeding when it is flooded.

2.30. In addition, Blashford Lakes can play an important role in providing a secure roost site for wintering European white-fronted geese, and nationally important populations of coot and pochard use the Blashford Lakes study area. These are all species recognised within the SPA and Ramsar citations as being of national importance. In addition, the lakes regularly accommodate nationally important numbers of shoveler and occasionally nationally important numbers of teal. The Ramsar site designation recognises the importance of the assemblage of over-wintering waterfowl and the need to maintain a diverse range of habitats required to support this assemblage.

2.31. Five of the lakes make a significant contribution to the SPA: Ibsley Water, Mockbeggar, Blashford, Ivy (all within the SPA) and Kingfisher Lakes. Linbrook and
Snails Lakes (both within the SPA) and North Somerley make a reasonable contribution to the SPA but to a lesser degree.

2.32. Other features of importance within the Avon Valley SSSI/Ramsar site include notable assemblages of breeding birds, including great-crested grebes, grey heron, mute swan, tufted duck, water rail, little ringed plover, common tern, kingfisher, and cetti’s warbler, and for breeding waders including lapwing, snipe, and redshank. Some of these species currently breed or are dependent upon the lakes during their life cycle, or would benefit if habitat conditions were improved within or surrounding the lakes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Designation</th>
<th>Date of designation</th>
<th>Area of Blashford Lakes covered by designation</th>
<th>Reason for designation (italics refer to species particularly associated with Blashford Lakes)</th>
<th>Conservation objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</td>
<td>1993 (this is an amalgamation of three previously notified SSSIs with extensions and deletions)</td>
<td>Mockbeggar, Rockford, Ivy, Ellingham, Snails, Blashford and Linbrook Lakes and the eastern part of Ibsley Water</td>
<td>National and international importance for migratory waterfowl and wading birds (particularly gadwall, coot, mute swan). Outstanding flora including several nationally rare and scarce species. Diverse aquatic flora and fish fauna in river channels and associated dykes. The Avon Valley floodplains consist of species rich grasslands. The River Avon supports a small population of otters.</td>
<td>In preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon Valley – Bickton to Christchurch Special Protection Area (SPA)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Follows same boundary as SSSI</td>
<td>Nationally important population of an Annex 1 species – Bewick’s Swan (Article 4.1) Internationally important wintering population of gadwall (Article 4.2) Notable are also nationally important wintering populations of white-fronted geese, pochard and coot. The site also supports a nationally important assemblage of breeding birds, associated with lowland open water and its margins.</td>
<td>Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition the habitats for Bewick’s swan and gadwall with particular reference to: • open water • standing water • floodplain grazing marsh A Favourable Condition Table has been produced by English Nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon Valley – Bickton to Christchurch Ramsar Site</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Follows same boundary as SSSI</td>
<td>Qualifies under Criteria 1a, 2a and 3c of the Ramsar Convention, which aims to protect wetland of international importance, especially as waterfowl habitat. Greater range of habitats than any other chalk river in Britain. The diversity of habitats supports a notable assemblage of breeding wetland birds, and wintering waterfowl (Criterion 1a) Diverse assemblage of wetland plants and animals, including several nationally rare species (Criterion 2a) Internationally important numbers of wintering gadwall (Criterion 3c). Notable are also nationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl (Bewick’s swan, European white-fronted geese, pochard and coot)</td>
<td>In preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Designation</td>
<td>Date of designation</td>
<td>Area of Blashford Lakes covered by designation</td>
<td>Reason for designation <em>(italics refer to species particularly associated with Blashford Lakes)</em></td>
<td>Conservation objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>River Avon intake and Dockens Water</td>
<td>The site is significant for the following habitat and species: Habitat – floating vegetation of <em>Ranunculus</em> of plain and sub-mountainous rivers. Dockens Water supports aquatic plant species that are characteristic more of bogs than rivers. The adjacent and associated habitats to the river and its tributaries comprise swamp, wet woodland and flood pasture habitats that are now rare both locally and nationally. Species – sea lamprey, brook lamprey, <em>Atlantic salmon</em>, <em>bullhead</em> and desmoulin’s whorl snail. The river system and its adjacent vegetation provide a variety of habitats for breeding, wintering and migrating birds. The system has an extremely diverse fish fauna with more species recorded in the Avon than in any other British river. The river system is also well used by water voles and water shrews, with occasional recent evidence of otter.</td>
<td>In preparation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| River Avon candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) | 1996 | River Avon intake and Dockens Water | Contains habitats and/or species which are rare or threatened within a European context: *bullhead*, rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water crowfoot, brook lamprey, sea lamprey, *Atlantic salmon*, desmoulin’s snail. | Subject to natural change, to maintain in favourable condition:  
  - The river habitat – floating formations of water crowfoot of plain and sub-mountainous rivers.  
  - The river as a habitat for populations of *Atlantic salmon* and *bullhead*, and populations of brook lamprey and sea lamprey  
  - And the river and adjoining land as habitat for populations of Desmoulin’s whorl snail |

NB To the east of the Blashford Lakes study area is the New Forest SSSI, SPA, Ramsar site and candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) (see Figure 2.6)
**Management**

2.33. The land within the ownership of the water companies, Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company, has been managed for nature conservation in the period since the Original Plan. Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company employ the Hampshire Wildlife Trust to manage all of their landholdings within the Blashford Lakes study area. Management of this land involves nature conservation in a multi-use environment, which means it is not possible to provide a single management prescription. In order to ensure nature conservation objectives are met, management plans have been, and are being, proposed.

**Changes since Original Plan**

2.34. The main change that has taken place since the Original Plan is the designation of large parts of the study area as described above. These include SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site designations, which provides legal protection for relevant habitats and species. The international designations follow the SSSI boundaries, with the exception of two locations in the north-east, just outside of the study area, where the New Forest SSSI boundary encompasses land not included under international designations. In addition public bodies have an obligation to protect and enhance nature conservation in the wider environment (e.g. under the CROW Act 2000), particularly in relation to those habitats and species set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Hampshire.

2.35. Hampshire County Council is currently carrying out an Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 50 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 for those parts of the Blashford Lakes study area designated as a site of European importance. Regulation 50 requires an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ of any plan or project that is likely to have a significant effect on the European site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The aim of the Appropriate Assessment is to help avoid the situation where such significant impacts could arise. Only in cases where there is an over-riding public interest would proposals that would lead to significant effects be allowed to proceed.

2.36. All consents relating to the use of the Blashford Lakes for water supply purposes are being separately assessed by the Environment Agency, and so are not covered by the Hampshire County Council Appropriate Assessment.

2.37. The Appropriate Assessment is currently in Second Draft Consultation form, written in March 2003. English Nature does not consider the Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan to constitute a ‘plan or project’ under the Regulations and therefore proposals within this Strategic Management Plan are not being considered for review. Nonetheless, the Strategic Management Plan has to reflect and be consistent with the Regulations, so the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment has

---

4 Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 50 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, Second Draft for Consultation, March 2003, Hampshire County Council
had a significant influence on the recommendations in this Strategic Management Plan. Individual plans or projects that may arise from the Strategic Management Plan may need to be subject to Appropriate Assessment before they are implemented (see Appendix 5). Whilst it is for the planning authority (or other regulatory authority as relevant) to undertake an Appropriate Assessment, the applicant has to provide sufficient information to enable the Assessment to take place. In practice, it is helpful to for the applicant to prepare the Appropriate Assessment for the planning/regulatory authority to consider in coming to a decision.

2.38. A detailed review of the findings of the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment is provided in Appendix 45. The key findings arising are as follows:

- With respect to internationally important numbers of migratory species, gadwall, and nationally important numbers of pochard and coot, a number of lakes (Mockbeggar, Ellingham, Rockford, and Linbrook Lakes) are considered to be in unfavourable condition. Snails Lake may be in unfavourable condition, and Blashford Lake is temporarily in unfavourable condition when disturbed in winter (e.g. during sailing). Ibsley Water, Ivy, Kingfisher, and North Somerley Lakes are considered to be in favourable condition. Whilst there is no indication that the Blashford Lakes study area as a whole is in unfavourable condition, in most cases there are clear indications that the SPA lakes are used less frequently due to human activity, gadwall are becoming more reliant on areas of open water that occur outside the SPA boundary (e.g. Kingfisher and North Somerley Lakes), and therefore the SPA is considered to be in unfavourable condition with respect to gadwall.

- Sufficient undisturbed open water remains at night within the study area for Bewick’s swan.

- Dockens Water is considered to be in unfavourable condition for Atlantic salmon and bullhead.

- The condition of the site for supporting a diverse assemblage of plants and animals, including rare, vulnerable or endangered species, is unknown.

- With respect to the Ramsar designation, there is no indication that the whole complex is in unfavourable condition for the important assemblage of waterfowl, but six of the 21 species that make up the assemblage are heavily reliant on three or fewer lakes, one of which (Mockbeggar Lake) is currently in unfavourable condition. In addition, some lakes appear to be under-performing with respect to waterfowl numbers, and this suggests that the habitats within the site may be in unfavourable condition for this interest feature, and surveys of breeding birds corroborate this.

2.39. The report assessed that the activities with the most potential for an adverse effect on the European features of interest were:

5 Data provided by English Nature relating to assessments undertaken between June 2002 and January 2003, record that, with the exception of Linbrook Lake, all other designated lakes are in unfavourable condition, and that Ibsley Water, Mockbeggar Lake are also in decline. The assessments found that Blashford Lake, Ellingham Lake, Ivy Lake, Linbrook Lake, and Rockford Lake are not achieving their conservation objectives.
17

• Habitat deterioration arising from the presence of alien species, including aquatic plants (New Zealand pigmyweed, and water fern), marginal/terrestrial plants, notably Himalayan balsam, and fauna, particularly signal crayfish, which affect not only some of the lakes, but also Dockens Water.

• Habitat deterioration arising from the presence of high densities of coarse fish in some of the lakes.

• Disturbance arising from public access, with particular concerns at Blashford, Ellingham, Linbrook, Rockford and Snails Lakes.

• Disturbance arising from fishing, particularly those fished without control, being Blashford, Linbrook, Rockford and Snails Lakes.

• Disturbance from water skiing on Ivy Lake (which has since been relocated to Ellingham Lake).

• Disturbance from shooting, particularly on those lakes outside the SPA (e.g. North Somerley), and which therefore do not need English Nature consent.

2.40. The concerns raised in the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment about the condition of the site of European importance, and the effects of activities on the condition, have a significant bearing on the Strategic Management Plan.

SPORT

Existing Situation

2.41. Blashford Lakes have become an important location for sports/recreational clubs. Current uses include (see Figure 2.7):

• Sailing on Blashford Lake by Spinnaker Sailing Club. This is a well-established dinghy sailing club with a membership of approximately 1,000 people. The club has a national status being affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association. The club’s committee has been developing the training of sailing skills of children from the age of six upwards. This includes funding club-owned boats. Facilities have also been developed to enable disabled sailors to learn dinghy-handling skills.

• Water skiing by Ivy Lake Water Ski Club. Until recently water skiing took place on Ivy Lake, but planning permission (77588) was granted in 2003 to relocate to Ellingham Lake. The Club has approximately 120 members and is affiliated to the British Water Ski and the British Disabled Water Skiing Association. It is the centre for disabled water skiing in southwest England.

• Fishing, which is carried out on a number of lakes:

- Christchurch Angling Club fish on Blashford Lake, Snails Lake, Rockford Lake, Moreys Lake (including Meadow Lake, King’s Lake and Vincent Lake), the Wash Pit, and the southern-most of Hucklesbrook Lakes.
- Ringwood and District Angling Association fish on Linbrook Lake (East), and Northfield Lake.

- Fishing by other private arrangements also takes place at Kingfisher Lake, Hurst Ponds and the two northern Hucklesbrook Lakes (within the New Forest Water Park).

• The New Forest Water Park, which operates at Hucklesbrook Lakes. This is a commercial operation where water-skiing, jet skiing and aqua rides take place in addition to fishing.

• Headlands Adventure Centre, which is located at Hurst Ponds where activities such as fishing and canoeing take place.

2.42. In addition to the above recreational uses, Somerley Estate has sporting rights on Mockbeggar Lakes, Ibsley Water, Moreys Lakes and North Somerley. There has been some discussion between Somerley Estate and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company as to whether sporting rights include shooting and fishing, but only shooting is currently carried out. Within the SSSI, English Nature issues annual licences, with an interim annual agreement to allow duck shoots limited to six days per season/winter. Elsewhere, shooting is unregulated.

Changes since Original Plan

2.43. Since the Original Plan the following key changes have taken place:

• The move of water-skiing from Ivy Lake to Ellingham Lake, with planning permission granted in 2003, which was in line with the Original Plan.

• Christchurch Angling Club have stopped fishing on Ivy Lake in exchange for increased fishing rights on Blashford Lake. Some limited stock removal still takes place on Ivy Lake for a limited period of time in order to remove specimen fish, subject to agreement with English Nature.

• Windsurfing no longer takes place on Snails Lake, and with the exception of Hurst Pond canoeing does not take place on any of the lakes as was specified in the Original Plan.

ACCESS & BIRD WATCHING

Existing Situation

2.44. The study area is used by local people for walking, including dog walking, via a limited number of footpaths. The Avon Valley long-distance footpath also passes through the study area, although this is not heavily used.

2.45. There is limited public car parking at the lakes. This includes lay-bys off the lanes in the area, and a formal car park for the use of the area of open space adjacent to the Wash Pit. There are also private car parks for users of the sport/recreational clubs, and a car park for users of the Blashford Study Centre. The level of car use is unknown.
2.46. The lakes are used for bird watching and there is a bird hide at Ivy Lake with limited access via the Study Centre, and screens for bird watching at Mockbeggar Lake. Additional hides may be secured through legal agreements relating to Rockford Lake and other current mineral proposals in the study area being determined by Hampshire County Council.

2.47. **Figure 2.8** shows existing access, and the location of birdwatching facilities at the lakes.

2.48. In current mineral restoration plans a number of permissive footpaths and bridleways are proposed (see **Figure 2.8**), with the aim that the majority become adopted as definitive public rights of way in the future:

- The Tarmac Blashford Quarry restoration proposals at North Somerley include a bridleway to the west of the A338 (in order to be used as a cycleway, the route needs first to be designated as a bridleway).
- The Tarmac Mockbeggar Quarry restoration proposals include a new north-south footpath to link between Mockbeggar Lane and the Avon Valley footpath, which cuts east-west across the northern boundary of the site.

2.49. In addition, restoration proposals at Rockford Lake and Ibsley Water include footpaths, although detailed alignments are yet to be agreed.

**Changes since Original Plan**

2.50. Since the Original Plan, the following footpaths have been established:

- The proposed footpath to the west of Ellingham Lake is now in place as a permissive footpath.
- There has been a first round of consultation in relation to the footpath proposed around the eastern and southern banks of Blashford Lake (to create a circular footpath). This has been controversial with immediately adjoining residents and to some extent fisherman (i.e. those interests that feel they might be affected directly) although the Footpath Group of the Consultative Committee feel that a route is possible. There may also be nature conservation constraints in relation to this route.
- A footpath has been created from North Poulner Road in Ringwood, to the west of Poulner (Northfield) Lake, on land belonging to Ringwood and District Anglers Association and Ringwood Town Council. This will be designated as a public right-of-way.

**EDUCATION**

**Existing Situation**

2.51. The Blashford Study Centre opened in 1996, and is funded by New Forest District Council, Wessex Water, and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company, known as the Blashford Partnership. The location of the Study Centre is shown in
2.52. The Study Centre is well used by school groups. The nature trails leading along the western banks of Ivy Lake and Dockens Water are used for educational purposes, and are in the vicinity of the Study Centre.

2.53. The Blashford Partnership considers that in the future the use of the Study Centre could be extended.

**LANDSCAPE**

**Existing Situation**

2.54. Blashford Lakes are a unique man-made feature set within the low-lying open landscape of the River Avon Valley. The floodplain comprises low-lying remnant water meadows and meadow pasture or rough grassland bordering the meandering course of the river. The gravel river terraces are predominantly in agricultural use, with hedgerows along the field boundaries.

2.55. The landscape of Blashford Lakes is an incongruous feature of the valley landscape. It is more enclosed and consists of the lakes themselves, watercourses including Dockens Water and Lin Brook, which feed into the River Avon, hedgerows, and areas of woodland, roads, footpaths and a number of residential properties. The lakes are largely hidden from view from the surrounding roads and lanes by trees and hedgerows. The mineral workings at Ibsley Water are screened by a bund along its western and south-western boundary.

2.56. Blashford Lakes are situated within the Avon, Test, Itchen and Meon River Valleys Landscape Character Area in the Landscape Strategy produced by Hampshire County Council. The Avon Valley is distinguished as being a broad and generally open valley with rich floodplain habitats and a flat slightly raised gravel terrace. The floodplain supports occasional reedbeds, marshes and former water meadows. There is also grazing on the floodplains with arable horticulture and market gardening on the Avon terrace.

2.57. The Character Area description states that the river valleys are very attractive for recreational uses such as fishing and water sports on mineral workings restored as lakes. Whilst the character of Blashford Lakes is different from the wide and open Avon river valley, their recreational use is recognised as being distinctive and valuable within the River Valleys Character Area as a whole.

2.58. Blashford Lakes are within the Upper Avon Valley Landscape Character Area of the New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment (see Figure 2.9). Principles for landscape management of this Character Area include development of sensitive mineral restoration plans to help minimise loss of wetland habitat, management of existing woodlands, planting of indigenous species, management of grasslands as hay meadow and unimproved grazing marsh, and the possibility of suitable sites for the

---

*Figure 2.8.* A Warden is employed by Hampshire Wildlife Trust and also funded by the Blashford Partnership.
rare black poplar. The lakes are within the ‘Gravel/ Mineral Extraction’ and ‘River Terrace Farmlands’ landscape types.

Changes since Original Plan

2.59. The landscape at Blashford Lakes is still being created in areas where mineral working is still active. Since the Original Plan, vegetation has become more established in areas of recent mineral working and has been managed on land owned by the two water companies by Hampshire Wildlife Trust.

2.60. In the future, the landscape character at Blashford Lakes will considerably change as mineral extraction comes to an end and restoration takes place.

2.61. The lakes where mineral extraction is soon to end offer an opportunity to influence the future landscape through restoration plans. Current restoration proposals on Ibsley Water and for continuing working on Rockford Lake include profiling of the lake so that it will be more beneficial for nature conservation. This will also help to make the lakes more natural with shallower banks and more littoral vegetation at the lake margins.

AGRICULTURE

Existing Situation

2.62. Currently only limited grazing takes place in the study area, for example:

- In the area of land east of the RMC processing plant at Snails Lane.
- On land to the west of the A338 at Tarmac’s Blashford Quarry.
- On a small parcel of back-up grazing land for the New Forest, and agricultural land, at Mockbeggar Quarry.
- On land east of Blashford Lake.
- On land to the north and east of Rockford Lake.

2.63. Some grazing is proposed around the reed bed to be created at North Somerley Lakes, and on proposed agricultural land to the south. Discussions are also taking place with Hanson about potential grazing with a nature conservation remit on land separating Ibsley Water from the A338.

INTERACTION OF USES

2.64. The wide range of land uses described above demonstrate the richness and diversity of activity that takes place in the Blashford Lakes study area — it is of considerable value in many different ways. This has resulted in a location that delivers economic, recreation and amenity benefits. Some of these are of international and national importance, such as nature conservation, regional importance such as mineral production and sailing, and local importance such as walking and canoeing. In many instances, these activities take place side-by-side without serious issues arising, which
was confirmed through consultation responses and field survey work undertaken as part of this study. For example:

- Recreation groups have been at the lakes for a long period of time (e.g. Ivy Lake Water Ski Club has been operating for 20 years, and Spinnaker Club for about 40 years). The nature conservation value of the lakes has come about whilst the clubs have been operating. The clubs also value the natural environment in which they operate. Night fishing on Blashford Lake helps to provide security to the clubhouse and boats. The clubs recognise that nature conservation now has greater weight than previously, due to the designations providing legislative protection. However, there are concerns about the change in the balance at the lakes in favour of nature conservation, and how it will affect their future use.

- The use of the lakes for water storage and supply has to date been generally compatible with recreational uses of the lakes and nature conservation. The occasional issue has arisen, for example the water-ski club experienced some difficulty in getting their boat into the jetty when the Ivy Lake was drawn down. The possible affects on nature conservation interests in the future if draw down were to take place more frequently is unknown.

2.65. However, there are some aspects at Blashford Lakes where different uses may on occasion result in tensions or conflicts. Often the degree of conflict may not always be as real as is perceived by some of the parties affected. In other cases, real tensions exist that need to be acknowledged, as has been highlighted by the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment, although it is important to keep these in perspective. There are often simple solutions to resolve existing or potential issues, and during much of the year, such tensions may not exist at all or are fairly minor. There are a number of initiatives, such as the review of consents and preparation of water management plans that will help inform the management of the lakes to minimise the potential for conflicts. The main issues addressed in the Strategic Management Plan are as follows:

- **Water storage and supply and nature conservation and recreation:**
  - If the lakes are to be drawn down more often in the future, the use of the lakes by boats could be affected, and the amount of waterweed present could be affected which is the food of over-wintering waterfowl. The likely effects are uncertain so should be further investigated, although draw down has encouraged weed in the past, which has had to be cut to allow sailing to take place.

- **Recreation and nature conservation:**
  - Walkers, especially those with dogs, can cause disturbance to waterfowl on the lakes. It is not uncommon for dogs not kept on a lead to go swimming in the lakes, which can cause birds to take flight (see Appendix 6).
  - Shooting may be detrimental to nature conservation by killing and causing disturbance to waterfowl on a certain number of days per year.
- Fishing can be detrimental to nature conservation. Fish stocks, such as carp, can limit submerged aquatic plant growth by direct disturbance effects, and by increasing levels of water turbidity and reducing light levels. They also can impact upon other wildlife through predation (e.g. pike taking waterfowl young). There therefore needs to be careful balance and control of fish stocking. Reduced levels of submerged aquatic plants during the winter months are likely to have knock-on implications for the use of the lake by waterfowl that depend on aquatic plants as a food source. Anglers can also inadvertently cause disturbance to birds, and damage bank-side and submerged vegetation, although disturbance effects to waterfowl are not well understood.

- Activities such as water-skiing and sailing can cause disturbance to birds, although some waterfowl habituate to this noise and activity. Generally birds prefer not to be disturbed and will leave lakes where there are boats and lots of shoreline disturbance. Waterfowl tend to stay on the less disturbed lakes. Since water-skiing is restricted to the summer months, the potential for disturbance is significantly reduced.

- **Conflicts between recreational uses:**
  - The consultation process revealed concerns about the potential disturbance to anglers by walkers, especially those with dogs.
  - Water-skiing and fishing are seen by some to be incompatible on the same lake at the same time. Night fishing was seen to be acceptable provided anglers are careful to remove all lines and hooks which may cause injury to water skiers.

- **Invasive/alien species and nature conservation:**
  - Several invasive species observed at the site including Japanese knotweed (in a few isolated locations), Himalayan balsam (associated with the riparian corridors of the Lin Brook and Dockens Water), water fern (seen only in Mockbeggar Silt Ponds) and New Zealand pigmy (extensively distributed across the study area), can affect the ecological integrity and value of the Blashford Lakes study area for nature conservation.
  - Blue-green algae is present on Blashford Lake, which can be harmful to human and animal health (e.g. if dogs drink from the lake).

- **Local amenity:**
  - Mineral working can be detrimental to local amenity if controls are not adhered to, because of noise and dust from site working and associated traffic, visual impact, and the long-term nature of the operations. However, conditions and legal agreements attached to planning permissions together with the design and layout of the proposals aim to minimise the environmental impacts that may be caused. Although mineral operations in the study area have been taking place over a number of years, they are not permanent.
- Night fishing could cause disturbance to local residents through noise, particularly from bite alarms.

2.66. The areas of potential conflict between uses mostly relate to disturbance from activities being carried out at the site and their effect on the nature conservation interest at the lakes, in particular the bird species protected by the international designations, as revealed by the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment. Although these activities were already taking place at the lakes when they were designated, a key aim of the Strategic Management Plan should be to ensure that the balance of uses at the lakes, and the management of the lake resources, complies with relevant legislation that applies to the designations. In many instances, this will simply mean introducing management controls on the activities that take place at the lakes, particularly where no such controls currently exist, such as restricting fishing or access during the period that over-wintering waterfowl visit the lakes. In addition, the potential for disturbance is more significant in some parts of the Blashford Lakes study area than others, particularly where lakes make a significant contribution to the nature conservation designations.

2.67. Other factors which are taken into account in the Strategic Management Plan include:

- Nature conservation designations give a large amount of protection to habitats used by over wintering waterfowl. Key issues relating to activities that were present when designated were the pattern of use and level of disturbance at the time, although it should be noted that the qualification of site as being worthy of SSSI designation does not mean that its condition at that time was favourable (i.e. under appropriate management to sustain the interest). Future uses and management, or changes in uses and management, should not have a significant effect by disturbance of these species or have an impact upon their habitat, and should seek to ensure that the designated sites are in favourable condition.

- There are a number of privately owned lakes in the study area. There is less opportunity to influence the management of these lakes, except under relevant legislation (which applies to all designated sites) and through planning and potentially through National Park policies. Management objectives for these lakes are therefore also included in this Strategic Management Plan.

OPPORTUNITIES

2.68. A number of opportunities emerged during the course of the research that should be taken into account in the Strategic Management Plan:

- The lakes where mineral working is completed or coming to an end offer an opportunity for influencing after use and restoration plans. Funding may also be available for associated land uses such as footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, and nature conservation management through legal agreements.

- Lakes where mineral working will soon end offer an opportunity for reprofiling the banks to improve aquatic habitat and biodiversity potential.
• There are opportunities to further enhance the nature conservation (biodiversity) interest of some lakes and other areas of the Blashford Lakes study area through improved management.

• There are opportunities for further public access to the lakes, particularly once mineral operators have finished their operations. However, the extent and controls over access need to be carefully considered so as not to be detrimental to nature conservation.

• There are further opportunities for educational interpretation at the site.

• There is the opportunity to reconsider the balance of uses and the uses of individual lakes, as the lakes complex nears completion.

New Forest National Park (Designation) Order 2002

2.69. The Blashford Lakes study area is within the proposed boundary of the New Forest National Park, as submitted in the Designation Order by the Countryside Agency to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in March 2002. A public inquiry is taking place to determine the final boundary.

2.70. The Public Consultation report into the draft boundary produced by the Countryside Agency provides reasons as to how the boundary was defined. The detailed boundary considerations state that ‘Blashford Lakes and several active gravel workings are included for ecological and recreational reasons’.

2.71. National Parks have two purposes, which were updated in the 1995 Environment Act:

• To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks.

• To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks.

2.72. If the study area were to be included in the National Park, this would strengthen opportunities to pursue conservation and recreation objectives. However, it is recognised that in National Parks situations can arise where conservation and recreation can come into conflict. In cases of irreconcilable conflict between these purposes, the ‘Sandford Principle’ applies, where greater weight should be attached to conserving wildlife, natural beauty and cultural heritage than to promoting understanding and enjoyment of the area by the public.

2.73. The New Forest Committee has published a ‘Strategy for the New Forest’. The report states that it is envisaged that if the New Forest is designated a National Park this Strategy will help inform the policies and action of any future National Park Authority, and will therefore act as a ‘stepping stone’ towards a statutory National Park Management Plan. This Strategy identifies Blashford Lakes as an area that could

---

9 New Forest Committee (June 2002) Strategy for the New Forest (Working Draft for Consultation)
be assessed for further opportunity for outdoor recreation near to the Forest in order to help relieve pressure on the more sensitive habitats and landscape in the Forest itself. It also sees Ringwood as a ‘gateway’ to the Forest. It should be noted, however, that as the Avon Valley (including parts of the Blashford Lakes study area) has equivalent nature conservation designation to the New Forest, it will be important to ensure that its own nature conservation interest is protected and enhanced where necessary.
3. **STRATEGIC AIM & KEY PRINCIPLES**

### INTRODUCTION

3.1. The Original Plan has performed well since it was published ten years ago, albeit that many of the proposals have yet to be implemented because of ongoing mineral workings. It has provided a flexible decision-making framework that has resulted in some successes. The Original Plan helped to clarify the role of the lakes complex in providing a strategic water supply source. The nature conservation interest of the lakes has been maintained and most are now subject to national, European, and international conservation designations. The lakes are home to thriving sports clubs with national and international events. The development of the Blashford Study Centre has proved successful in catering for school groups, and a number of community programmes.

3.2. However, there has been difficulty in implementing some aspects of the Original Plan. It has not been possible to progress many of the proposals because they relate to sites where mineral working has been ongoing. For example, very few management agreements have been secured, and only one new footpath has been created during the last ten years. Implementation of the Original Plan has been largely restricted to land owned by the two water companies. In addition, despite the nature conservation designations that have been applied, the nature conservation interest has not achieved its full potential and, in many instances, it is under-performing.

3.3. The review of the Original Plan has to take into account a number of changes that have occurred since it was published. Perhaps most significantly, there is now a statutory duty to conserve the nature conservation interest of the lakes in line with the designations.

3.4. In preparing the revised version of the Strategic Management Plan, therefore, the objective has been to build on the strengths of the Original Plan, to address aspects where it has been less successful, and take into account any changes in the legislative and policy context. Where possible (and appropriate) the Strategic Management Plan aims to be consistent with the Original Plan in order to provide certainty and avoid change for change’s sake. The Strategic Management Plan also seeks to take into account the views of those with an interest in the future of Blashford Lakes with the aim of maximising opportunities to achieve synergies between different interests, and minimising conflicts.

3.5. This chapter sets out the overarching framework of the Strategic Management Plan, comprising the Strategic Aim and Key Principles for guiding development and management of the study area.

### STRATEGIC AIM

3.6. The Strategic Aim of the Plan is:

*To ensure that existing and future uses at Blashford Lakes, including water storage and supply, sport and recreation, nature conservation, mineral working*
and restoration, and residential amenity, are mutually accommodated as far as is practicable, within the framework set by legislation.

**KEY PRINCIPLES**

3.7. The ten Key Principles for guiding development at the lakes are set out below. The Key Principles are intended to give strategic guidance whilst allowing for the Strategic Management Plan to have a degree of flexibility over time. These Principles should be followed for any decision on future proposals and management if the Strategic Aim is to be successfully achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Principles:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Opportunities to achieve multiple objectives</strong> (e.g. water storage and supply; nature conservation; sport and recreation; access) should be pursued rather than single objectives (i.e. win-win solutions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Ensure safe and reliable water supply</strong> from specific lakes, within previously agreed drawdown limits, until further research has been undertaken to establish an appropriate management regime for water supply that is consistent with nature conservation and recreation objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Protect and enhance the nature conservation interest</strong> of the Blashford Lakes study area as a whole, and in particular those areas designated for their nature conservation value and protected by legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Where there is a clear and obvious conflict</strong> between legal and policy obligations for nature conservation and other uses, nature conservation should take precedence, except where there is a proven over-riding public need for water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Preserve and enhance the landscape,</strong> recognising that the lakes have their own unique character within the wider context of the Avon Valley, and carry out management to improve the landscape and nature conservation value of the lakes and land areas in between the lakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Ensure that the restoration of mineral workings</strong> is co-ordinated and managed, and carried out to a high standard in keeping with nature conservation, amenity and landscape objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Maintain and manage current well-established sport and recreational uses</strong> at the lakes, and seek enhancement in such uses, within constraints set by nature conservation objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Improve footpath access</strong> for local residents and visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Improve educational interpretation</strong> at the lakes, including the nature conservation and historic interest of the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. <strong>Implement the Strategic Management Plan</strong> through engagement with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
landowners, users of the lakes, local residents, and other interest groups, under the continued auspices of the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee, with the aim of extending its remit to cover those lakes currently outside the ownership of the water companies.

Key Principle 1: Opportunities to achieve multiple objectives (e.g. water storage and supply; nature conservation; sport and recreation; access) should be pursued rather than single objectives (i.e. win-win solutions)

3.8. The principles of sustainable development require that, as a society, we should aim to make the most efficient use of available resources. At Blashford Lakes this can be achieved by seeking to accommodate within the study area a range of activities that satisfies the interests of different users and stakeholders. For example, it is possible for recreation and nature conservation to co-exist. In practice, however, there is often a need to manage and control some activities to maintain the integrity of an individual lake or of the lakes complex as a whole, both now and in the future.

Key Principle 2: Ensure safe and reliable water supply from specific lakes, within previously agreed drawdown limits, until further research has been undertaken to establish an appropriate management regime for water supply that is consistent with nature conservation and recreation objectives

3.9. The primary objective of Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company is to fulfil their statutory duty to secure a safe and reliable water supply for their customers. To do this, they need to realise the potential for future water storage and supply, but in a way that is consistent with statutory requirements regarding nature conservation.

3.10. The Blashford Lakes study area represents an important strategic resource for the two water companies. Although to date they have not been used for this purpose to the extent anticipated in the Original Plan, there may be a need to do so in the future, taking into account development proposals in the area, the need to manage all their sources of water supplies in the most sustainable and efficient way, and the effects of climate change.

3.11. There are a number of considerations that need to be taken into account in determining how to best manage the lakes as a water supply source:

- The need for flexibility, from the water companies point of view, as to which lakes to abstract from, which will be influenced by factors such as water quality.

- The need to avoid or minimise potential conflicts that drawdown of water might have on nature conservation objectives and recreation interests for any particular lake.

- The effects of use of the River Avon as a source of water, and the implications that this might have on the nature conservation objectives of this important nature feature.
• The environmental and other effects that might arise at alternative sources of water supply from those available at Blashford Lakes, in order to determine the optimum use of all water supplies available to the water companies.

3.12. The effects of drawdown on individual lakes, and on the lakes complex as a whole, are not very well understood. Better information is needed if all the above considerations are to be properly addressed in managing the lakes for water supply. It is recommended, therefore, that the necessary research takes place to determine the potential effects both within the study area and beyond (e.g. the River Avon) of drawdown on all interests, including water quality, nature conservation and recreation. In the meantime, it is recommended that previously agreed drawdown limits continue to apply, until better information is available to inform more detailed water management operations.

**Key Principle 3: Protect and enhance the nature conservation interest of the Blashford Lakes study area as a whole, and in particular those areas designated for their nature conservation value and protected by legislation**

3.13. The nature conservation importance of Blashford Lakes is now well established, as indicated by the national and international designations that apply to much of the study area. The nature conservation interest relates not only to the role that the lakes play for migratory waterfowl, but also for the habitats and associated wetland flora and fauna that they represent.

3.14. However, the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment and other available ecological information suggest that the lakes complex is not fulfilling its ecological potential. Even for some of the lakes designated under the Habitats Directive, it is considered that the lakes are in ‘unfavourable condition’. Where this is the case, an important objective of the Strategic Management Plan should be to restore and maintain the lakes to favourable condition – a requirement under legislation. The aim should be to maximise the nature conservation potential of the study area as a whole, whilst allowing for activities to be pursued that are consistent with nature conservation objectives.

**Key Principle 4: Where there is a clear and obvious conflict between legal and policy obligations for nature conservation and other uses, nature conservation should take precedence, except where there is a proven over-riding public need for water supply**

3.15. The designation of some of the lakes under European and UK law for their nature conservation interest places certain statutory obligations on regulatory bodies to ensure that this interest is properly safeguarded.

3.16. Within areas designated as SSSIs, there is a requirement to consult English Nature on ‘Operations Likely to Damage the Interest’, and under the CROW Act English Nature has greater power to refuse consent for such operations, and to take action where damage is being caused. Also under the CROW Act, local authorities and other public bodies have a statutory duty to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs. The Habitats Regulations, applicable to SPAs, requires
consents to be reviewed to determine the effects on European nature conservation interests.

3.17. Such legislation places considerable obligations on the local authorities and English Nature with respect to nature conservation, and these have become more stringent since publication of the Original Plan.

3.18. Other activities and proposals in the Blashford Lakes study area therefore must be compliant with these statutory obligations. The local authorities and English Nature wish to discharge these obligations reasonably, taking into account the interests of other stakeholders. However, where there is a clear and obvious conflict with statutory duties relating to nature conservation, these duties should be given due weight. This will have an effect on how the study area is managed, particularly with respect to access and recreation, although this Strategic Management Plan puts forward a management strategy that seeks to allow for these interests to be pursued consistent with nature conservation objectives.

3.19. An area where there is a possibility of a conflict between statutory duties of different bodies is with respect to water supply. It is anticipated that, through the application of Key Principle 2, an appropriate arrangement can be agreed that satisfies the interests of both nature conservation and water supply. However, in extreme circumstances, such as severe drought conditions, a decision between the two may one day need to be made.

Key Principle 5: Preserve and enhance the landscape, recognising that the lakes have their own unique character within the wider context of the Avon Valley, and carry out management to improve the landscape and nature conservation value of the lakes and land areas in between the lakes

3.20. The nature conservation interest of the Lakes is only one of its special natural characteristics. Blashford Lakes represent a unique character area within the wider character areas defined by the River Avon to the west, and the New Forest to the east. Although the lakes are entirely a result of human intervention – the extraction of minerals and subsequent filling of water to create a character type dominated by standing water – they are still very much a natural feature. Indeed, it this character that has led to its nature conservation interest becoming established.

3.21. The unique characteristics of Blashford Lakes will continue long after mineral extraction has ceased. However, as a predominantly natural area, it is important that future development and proposals, and restoration of former quarries, not only provide the opportunities for nature conservation and recreation, but also make a positive contribution to the wider landscape. Development and management proposals, therefore, should be of a scale and design consistent with the unique character type of Blashford Lakes, whilst at the same time complementing the wider floodplain character of the Avon Valley, and views afforded from the New Forest, the aim being to provide a coherent link in the landscape between the New Forest and the River Avon. Attention should therefore be paid to minimising adverse visual impact and adhering to a high standard of design quality, and to developing physical and visual links with surrounding character areas.
Key Principle 6: Ensure that the restoration of mineral workings is co-ordinated and managed, and carried out to a high standard in keeping with nature conservation, amenity and landscape objectives

3.22. Although the established mineral workings in the study area are coming to an end, there is still a considerable amount of activity continuing on established sites such as the ready mix concrete plants, concrete block works, and processing of minerals imported from outside of the study area (e.g. at Blashford Quarry). In addition, an application has been received by Hampshire County Council for an extension to Ibsley Quarry, north of Mockbeggar Lane. In many instances, restoration has not been completed, or is underway.

3.23. The formation of mineral and waste policy, and the processing, monitoring and enforcement of mineral and waste applications is carried out by Hampshire County Council as the mineral and waste planning authority. The Strategic Management Plan therefore aims to consolidate the work that is already being undertaken by Hampshire County Council in consultation with other interests, and to provide the framework by which future proposals can be determined, in line with nature conservation, amenity and landscape objectives.

Key Principle 7: Maintain and manage current well-established sport and recreational uses at the lakes, and seek enhancement in such uses, within constraints set by nature conservation objectives

3.24. In drawing up the Strategic Management Plan, it is important to recognise that there are a number of sport and recreational uses that have been established for many years at the lakes. Some of these are more formalised, requiring built facilities and infrastructure, such as sailing at Blashford Lake, and water-skiing recently relocated to Ellingham Lake. Others are less formalised, such as fishing, which takes place at several lakes across the study area.

3.25. The Original Plan states that the basic principles that have guided the planning of recreation uses and facilities in the past have been to:

- Provide facilities for local people.
- Provide facilities for specialist recreation activities that will not increase pressures on the New Forest.
- Relieve recreational pressure on the New Forest.

3.26. The Original Plan recognised that many of the existing activities were established in an ad-hoc fashion, often subject to temporary permissions, associated with restoration work often executed without regard to the potential after-use of the site. The Original Plan therefore sought to bring greater certainty and clarity to the use of the lakes for recreation.

3.27. The Strategic Management Plan aims to continue this approach, whilst recognising that the weight to be given to nature conservation has increased due to statutory requirements. The aim, therefore, is to provide for recreation activity within the overall Strategic Management Plan, in line with Key Principle 1, but in a form,
location, and timing that is consistent with other requirements. This means that there will be a need for greater regulation over some activities that currently take place on the lakes. However, opportunities to enhance the recreational potential of the lakes are sought where possible and appropriate.

3.28. For example, the Spinnaker Club have called for agreement that the trees around Blashford Lake should be managed for the benefit of both recreational users and nature conservation, including coppicing, pollarding or thinning lakeside trees over three metres in height. They also claim that there is strong demand for access to inland waters with facilities, which could be satisfied at Rockford Lake, if Ibsley Water were not to be available as originally planned, possibly taking advantage of Spinnaker Club’s facilities off Ivy Lane. The Strategic Management Plan seeks to respond positively to such suggestions, setting out the criteria that would need to be met in order for such activity to take place.

Key Principle 8: Improve footpath access for local residents and visitors

3.29. It has long been an objective of the local authorities to improve footpath access to and through the lakes, thereby increasing its amenity value. However, in deciding where and how this should take place, a number of considerations should be taken into account:

- Opportunities to complete the footpath network where gaps currently exist.
- Links with surrounding footpath networks, and with points of interest to be found (or created) in the study area.
- The impact on the nature conservation interest of the lakes, particularly disturbance to waterfowl.
- Land ownership, and the effects on the amenity and security of local residents adjacent to potential footpath routes.
- The impact on other users of the lakes, including those who fish.
- How use of the footpaths should be regulated, including timing (season), and control of dogs.
- Access to the footpath network, including from nearby residential areas, by car, and the needs of disabled people and those without access to the car.

3.30. As with other recreational uses, therefore, careful thought needs to be given to ensure that opening up the study area for walkers takes place in a form, location and time that is compatible with the overall objectives for the study area as a whole.

Key Principle 9: Improve educational interpretation at the lakes, including the nature conservation and historic interest of the area

3.31. Blashford Lakes offers many opportunities for education, not only formally through the school curriculum, but also for people of all ages. Currently, such education provision is limited to the Blashford Study Centre (and activities associated with it),
one of the successes of the Original Plan implemented through the Blashford Partnership.

3.32. There are opportunities to improve the education and awareness of local people and visitors alike of the interest and special qualities of the study area. This is particularly the case given the designation of the New Forest as a National Park.

3.33. Education and awareness of users of Blashford Lakes, whether they are sailors, water-skiers, fishermen, dog-walkers or bird watchers, can all help to reduce the impact of activities on the lakes, which are the very resource that is being enjoyed, and can help foster a greater understanding between users of each other’s motivations for using the lakes.

3.34. Education therefore needs to be holistic, addressing all the qualities that Blashford Lakes has to offer, but must take place in a form that is compatible with the overall objectives of this Strategic Management Plan.

Key Principle 10: Implement the Strategic Management Plan through engagement with landowners, users of the lakes, local residents, and other interest groups, under the continued auspices of the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee, with the aim of extending its remit to cover those lakes currently outside the ownership of the water companies

3.35. Many of the above principles are concerned with achieving the right balance of activities on the lakes within the framework provided by the statutory duties that have to be discharged by public bodies.

3.36. However, Blashford Lakes is seen as a common resource by many different parties representing a diverse range of interests. Whilst much of the land is in the ownership of Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company, there are also a number of landowners who hold land within the study area. Apart from landowners, there are many other people with an interest in the future of Blashford Lakes, whose views until now have either been reflected in the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee, or have not been fully engaged with in the past.

3.37. The successful implementation of the Strategic Management Plan requires not only support from the sponsoring organisations, but all those with an interest. This will require further efforts to engage with those who currently are largely outside of the process, and for all to be prepared to listen to others’ views, and to seek solutions that provide a suitable and reasonable balance for all those concerned.

3.38. This Strategic Management Plan seeks to provide a framework by which this can happen, but it will require great efforts from all if it is to be fully and properly implemented.
4. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

4.1. This chapter sets out how the Key Principles developed for the Strategic Management Plan have been applied to the study area in order to achieve the Strategic Aim. The study area is divided into management units based upon each of the lakes and their environs. The two main watercourses flowing through the lake are also the subjects of management proposals, as are key features of interest and pockets of land.

4.2. A summary of the main management proposals is provided below.

RATIONALE UNDERPINNING THE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

4.3. The Strategic Aim seeks to accommodate a range of uses at the lakes. This is reflected in the first of the Key Principles, which is to pursue multiple objectives rather than single objectives. However, this needs to be balanced against other requirements, particularly legislative ones relating to nature conservation, where it may not always be possible to achieve win-win solutions on a single given lake.

4.4. In order to determine the activities that should take place in different management units of the Blashford Lakes study area, the following issues have therefore been taken into account:

- Whether or not the management unit is designated for its nature conservation interest, or has an interest that is equivalent to such interest, whether designated or not.

- The condition assessment with respect to the Habitats Regulations for each relevant management unit, as described in the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment.

- The existence or otherwise of extant planning permissions, and where relevant existing proposed after-uses.

- The extent to which there are established uses, and the effects that these may be having on the nature conservation interest of the management unit or the study area as a whole, in the light of relevant legislation and statutory duties on public bodies.

- The ability of the management unit to accommodate continuing or additional activity, and the management arrangements that would need to apply, in order for those activities to take place in a manner compatible with the management unit’s nature conservation status.
MAIN MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

4.5. The main management proposals are summarised below in relation to the main uses at the lakes. The management proposals include a number of actions that need to be undertaken to implement the Strategic Management Plan. The Key Actions that need to be undertaken are highlighted and numbered in bold. The work that needs to be done to deliver the Key Actions is described in Chapter 5.

Mineral Working and Restoration

4.6. The Strategic Management Plan takes into account the restoration plans of the four mineral sites:

- Blashford Quarry (west of A338).
- Ringwood Quarry (including Rockford Lake, Snails Lake, Linbrook Lake (West), and associated processing plant.
- Ellingham and Ringwood Pit (Ibsley Water and Ellingham Lake).
- Ibsley Quarry (North of Mockbeggar Lane).

4.7. The management proposals for these sites build on the proposed afteruses set out in the minerals permissions, as described in Appendix 3.

4.8. The Strategic Management Plan also acknowledges an extension application to Ibsley Quarry (north of Mockbeggar Lane), currently being determined by Hampshire County Council.

4.9. The key actions with respect to mineral working and restoration are therefore to ensure:

- Satisfactory restoration of the current mineral workings in line with development plan policies and the Strategic Management Plan (Key Action 1).
- Satisfactory aftercare of restored mineral workings in line with development plan policies and the Strategic Management Plan (Key Action 2).

Water Storage and Supply

4.10. Policy AV-2 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that, with the exception of Mockbeggar Lake, the use of lakes created by sand and gravel workings in the Blashford-Ibsley area for water storage will be permitted, provided that:

- Proposals include appropriate provision for recreational use and nature conservation interest.
- The development would not have a significant adverse effect on the Avon Valley SSSI, the ecological value of nearby watercourses, the Avon Valley floodplain, and the environs of the lakes.
• Any associated bank reprofiling would be in keeping with the landscape character of the area, and important existing landscape features are retained.

• Private water supplies are safeguarded.

4.11. For the purposes of this Strategic Management Plan, Figure 4.1 sets out the management proposals for water storage and supply at the lakes. Water supply should be a primary purpose of the following lakes:

• Blashford Lake.
• Ellingham Lake.
• Ellingham Pound.
• Ibsley Water (subject to appropriate permissions).
• Ivy Lake.

4.12. Other lakes with the potential for water storage and supply are:

• Rockford Lake (subject to appropriate permissions).
• North Somerley Lake (subject to appropriate permissions).

Further Studies

4.13. In developing the Strategic Management Plan, it has been recognised that further studies are necessary to create a fuller picture of the ecological and hydrological baseline at Blashford Lakes (Key Action 3). This is particularly important to inform more detailed nature conservation management, particularly in relation to the objectives linked to the various designations applying to Blashford Lakes, plus BAP habitats and species. This is also needed to advise the water companies in relation to the drawdown of the lakes for water supply and the potential impact this will have on ecology and recreation. Another advantage of these studies is that this will provide baseline data that can then be used to monitor the future effects of the Strategic Management Plan.

4.14. The research should be sufficient to provide recommendations as to:

• The preferred maximum levels and frequency of drawdown.
• The order in which lakes should be used for water supply.
• Whether it would be more appropriate to have regular drawdown of the lakes within a specified range or whether drawdown should only take place on an essential need basis.

4.15. There are many considerations apart from hydrology that are already taken into account in arriving at operating plans for drawdown and the order of use of lakes for water supply, including water quality, nature conservation, amenity and recreation, and all these factors should feed into the research.
4.16. In generating a greater understanding of the water environment and water supply and storage in the Blashford Lakes area, special consideration needs to be given to its interaction with the River Avon, given the importance of the Avon Valley’s nature conservation interest. The Environment Agency is currently reviewing consents within the Avon Valley with respect to the River Avon cSAC and Avon Valley SPA. Other current Environment Agency initiatives of relevance to Blashford Lakes and its relationship with the River Avon include a River Characterisation Project and a Groundwater Modelling Programme. These aim to identify how existing work, under the Habitats Directive can be co-ordinated on a catchment/aquifer basis to develop one project to fulfil the requirements of all existing projects. The Rivers Characterisation project will consider initiatives such as the EU LIFE in Rivers project (which also involves English Nature) and Water Level Management Plans to help avoid duplication of effort. The River Avon Valley Liaison Group, mainly comprised of conservation organisations, plays an important role in discussing issues of mutual interest relating to the Avon Valley.

Nature Conservation

Overarching Strategy for Nature Conservation

4.17. Policy AV-1 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that the northern part of Ibsley Water, Ivy Lake, Mockbeggar Lakes, Rockford Lake, and any new lakes created by mineral workings in the Avon Valley will be safeguarded for nature conservation, and that development which would prejudice the special interest of the sites subject to statutory nature conservation designations will not be permitted.

4.18. With respect to this Strategic Management Plan, Figure 4.2 sets out the management proposals relating to nature conservation at the lakes. A more detailed explanation of nature conservation management at Blashford Lakes is described in Appendix 6.

4.19. The main areas relevant to nature conservation within the study area are divided into three categories:

- Designated sites to be managed in line with statutory requirements and nature conservation objectives.
- Sites not designated to be restored to achieve nature conservation objectives.
- Sites not designated where nature conservation interest should be conserved and/or enhanced.

Designated Sites to be Managed in Line with Statutory Requirements and Nature Conservation Objectives

4.20. Section 3 describes the significance of many of the lakes in the study area for nature conservation. The primary aim for those that are subject to conservation designations is to ensure that their ecological integrity is maintained. Designation brings various statutory duties of protection to be discharged by English Nature, local authorities and other public institutions, such as preventing ‘Operations Likely to
Damage the nature conservation interest, or similarly refusing to grant planning consent to proposals that could have a significant impact. English Nature are developing ‘conservation objectives’ for the designated sites, which aim to ensure that the habitats are in favourable condition for the special interest that they support.

4.21. The key reference point for this currently is the Second Appropriate Assessment. The following lakes are in favourable condition and the aim should therefore be to ensure that this continues (Key Action 4):

- Ibsley Water (eastern part).
- Ivy Lake.

4.22. The remaining lakes and watercourse that are subject to designations are in unfavourable condition, and the priority for these, therefore, will be to take the necessary steps to control and manage activities and uses that are currently causing this situation to exist (Key Action 5). The aim should be to restore these lakes to favourable condition:

- Ellingham Lake.
- Linbrook Lake (East).
- Mockbeggar Lake.
- Rockford Lake (eastern part).
- Snails Lake.
- Dockens Water.

Sites not Designated which should be Restored to achieve Nature Conservation Objectives

4.23. There are a number of sites within the study area where restoration is taking place, or is due to take place once mineral working ends:

- Ibsley Quarry.
- Ibsley Water (western part).
- Linbrook Lake (West).
- North Somerley Lake.
- Rockford Lake (western part).

4.24. The restoration plans for these sites should be implemented as required by Hampshire County Council, to achieve agreed conservation objectives. In particular, Ibsley Water and Rockford Lake, but also potentially Ibsley Quarry and North Somerley Lake, offer the potential to make a significant contribution to the nature
conservation interest of the study area, especially the over-wintering wildfowl that it supports (Key Action 1).

4.25. Ibsley Water is now the largest single body of open water within Blashford Lakes. It therefore has the potential to be the most important winter refuge for waterfowl in the study area. It is the only gravel lake large enough to provide sufficient open water to retain waterfowl undisturbed by passive recreation around its perimeter, and the designated portion is also currently in favourable condition according to the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment. If Mockbeggar Lakes and Silt Ponds can also be brought back to favourable condition, then together with Ibsley Water, these lakes will provide a considerable expanse of water to accommodate waterfowl species displaced from other lakes in the wider study area. It is recommended that disturbance to these lakes is minimised, particularly during the winter, in order that they can provide sufficient disturbance free open water to accommodate waterfowl displaced from any other lake.

Sites not Designated where Nature Conservation Interest should be Conserved and/or Enhanced

4.26. The remaining parts of the study area already include established uses. Some have developed significant nature conservation interest, in which case this interest should be conserved (Key Action 6):

• Goblin’s Lake.
• Kingfisher Lake.
• Land surrounding the Wessex Water Treatment Plant.
• Lin Brook.

4.27. Other areas are not contributing significantly to nature conservation. Opportunities should be pursued to enhance their nature conservation value where possible (Key Action 7):

• Ellingham Pound.
• Hucklesbrook Lake.
• Hurst Ponds.
• Morey’s Lakes (excluding Goblin’s Lake).
• Poulner (Northfield) Lake.
• Wash Pit.
• Hardstanding at Ellingham Drove.
• Public Open Space North of Wash Pit.
Further Studies

4.28. As explained in Appendix 6, it is recommended that ecological survey work be carried out to inform future management of the lakes for nature conservation objectives.

4.29. **General conservation management:** To inform more general nature conservation management at the lakes, it is recommended that a simple habitat mapping exercise be carried out across the entire Blashford Lakes study area to inform specific management prescriptions at each individual lake, and to provide a strategic habitat map that can be used to monitor future change in habitat extent and quality (Key Action 8).

4.30. **Waterfowl monitoring:** The effects of disturbance on waterfowl populations throughout the study area should be monitored to ensure that this objective is achieved, and that sufficient capacity for waterfowl populations is maintained. Monitoring of waterfowl populations is already undertaken by Hampshire Wildlife Trust, and this should continue. The RSPB are also monitoring bird populations in the wider South Wessex area as part of a ‘WeBS Alert’ project, which could be of relevance to Blashford Lakes (Key Action 9).

4.31. **Aquatic plant survey and monitoring:** To inform long-term management of the lakes for overwintering waterfowl, it is recommended that a baseline aquatic plant-monitoring programme is developed (that can be related to existing duck count data) to confirm the distribution and abundance of submerged aquatic plant growth in individual lakes. To inform the analysis, the survey should also include the recording of physical parameters of the lakes and other relevant data on lake management (see Appendix 6 for more detail) (Key Action 10).

4.32. **Alien Species:** It is recommended that the control and eradication of *Crassula* within Blashford Lakes is taken forward as a high priority study that recognises that effective control of the plant needs to be addressed at a strategic as well as an individual lake level (Key Action 11). The study should confirm the extent of the problem, by assessing the distribution and abundance of the submerged growth form on an individual lake basis, and develop a control strategy, that minimises knock-on impacts on wintering waterfowl.

4.33. The study should also investigate the control and eradication of the other alien plant species that occur within the study area, namely Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and water fern (*Azolla filiculoides*).

4.34. Given the confirmed presence of signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) in Mockbeggar Lakes, and the potential physical and ecological damage this species can cause, it is recommended that a survey be undertaken to assess the distribution of native and non-native crayfish species in the Blashford Lakes, Dockens Water and Lin Brook.

4.35. A number of alien species have been identified in the Blashford Lakes study area, which can harm native species. More detailed recommendations on the approach that should be adopted to understand the extent and impact of alien species, and management options, is provided in Appendix 6. The management response to
alien species found in each of the management units will be dependent upon the results of the above recommended studies.

Sport

4.36. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on the following Avon Valley lakes: Hightown Lake, Hucklesbrook Lakes, Hurst Ponds, Kingfisher Lakes, Moreys Lakes, North Somerley, Poulner Lake. Recreational uses which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests, will be permitted on: Blashford Lake, Ellingham Lake, Ibsley Water, Linbrook Lake, Snails Lake.

4.37. Figure 4.3 sets out the management proposals relating to sport at the lakes, proposed by the Strategic Management Plan. A summary of the main proposals is provided below:

- Sailing should be maintained on Blashford Lake, assuming that sufficient undisturbed capacity for waterfowl exists on other lakes during the over-wintering period (Key Action 12).
- Fishing should continue at Blashford Lake, Hucklesbrook Lakes, Hurst Ponds, Kingfisher Lake, Linbrook Lake (East), Meadow, King’s and Vincent Lakes, Poulner Lake, and the Wash Pit. Where these lakes are part of the SPA, or contribute significantly to the SPA (i.e. Blashford Lake, Kingfisher Lake, Linbrook Lake (East)), a specific study to investigate and monitor the effects of fishing on the nature conservation interest either through habitat deterioration and disturbance should take place. Where it is found that a significant adverse effect is occurring, appropriate controls should be introduced (e.g. time limiting or zoning of fishing, or in exceptional circumstances fishing stopped completely). For those lakes where fishing takes place that do not make a significant contribution to the SPA (i.e. Hucklesbrook Lake, Hurst Ponds, King’s, Meadow and Vincent Lakes, Poulner Lake, and the Wash Pit), it is proposed that fishing continues at present, but that encouragement should be given to improve the nature conservation interest of these lakes. For Rockford Lake and Snails Lake, fishing should only be allowed to continue if it can take place without causing a significant effect on the nature conservation interest of the lakes. In any event, fishing should be subject to the proper permissions and consents, and regulated to minimise disturbance during sensitive periods or in sensitive locations (Key Action 13).
- Water ski-ing should continue at Ellingham Lake, subject to nature conservation objectives being achieved (Key Action 14).
- Consideration should be given to allowing for controlled (e.g. timing, zoning) water-based non-motorised recreational activity (e.g. sailing, canoeing) on Rockford Lake, but only if it can be demonstrated that there will not be significant adverse effects on the nature conservation interest of the lake or Dockens Water. Particular regard will need to be had to ensuring there is no disturbance to over-wintering waterfowl (Key Action 15).
- Active watersports should be maintained at Hucklebrook Lakes. Low-key recreation (e.g. non-powered water sports) should be allowed to continue at Hurst Ponds.

- Shooting is an issue of concern at Mockbeggar Lakes and Ibsley Water as this is in direct conflict with nature conservation designations and designations. Shooting should no longer be permitted in these locations. Controls should also be sought on lakes outside the SPA, but which contribute to it (e.g. North Somerley Lake), where adverse effects can be shown to be occurring. Ideally, shooting should be stopped altogether (Key Action 16).

4.38. The above proposals would require Rockford Lake to be added to the second group of lakes under Policy AV-4 of the Local Plan. Kingfisher Lake would need to be moved from the first group of lakes under this policy to the second group, to reflect its nature conservation interest (Key Action 17).

Access and Parking

4.39. Policy AV-5 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that facilities to enhance the interpretation and enjoyment of wildlife will be permitted in the Blashford Lakes area. Policy AV-6 states that the area of lakes immediately to the north of Ringwood, including Poulner Lake, the Wash Pit, and Linbrook Lakes, be designated as a country recreation area.

4.40. Figure 4.4 shows the management proposals under this Strategic Management Plan relating to access and parking at the lakes. The strategy for access in the Blashford Lakes study area is to develop further the network of linked footpaths to connect specific sites of interest, and where possible, to provide for walking facilities off the roads.

4.41. Footpaths and bridleways already proposed in mineral restoration plans are:

- A bridleway to the west of the A338 (which this Strategy recommends should become a definitive public right of way, with provision for cyclists, if feasible).

- A footpath connecting Mockbeggar Lane with the Avon Valley Path.

4.42. The following routes are proposed in addition to existing footpaths and those proposed as part of mineral restoration plans (Key Action 18):

- A north-south footpath potentially connecting Mockbeggar Lane and Ellingham Drove. Two indicative routes are shown. This route would link with bird hides proposed for Mockbeggar Lakes, with the potential for additional bird hides if appropriate and feasible, and would provide a link with the existing footpath to the north of Rockford Lake, and a proposed extension to this footpath running east-west to the north of the Wessex Water Treatment Plant, linked to the Blashford Study Centre. There is also the potential to create a link with the former Ibsley Control Tower, possibly through woodland to the south of the Tower (subject to agreement with the landowner). The Mockbeggar Lakes/Ibsley Water Management Plan suggests that this footpath should be screened and sunken, and should link two hides between the Silt Ponds, but should not link to
Mockbeggar Lane. It also states that access restricted should be strictly controlled. The extension north to Mockbeggar Lane would therefore need to be carefully investigated to ensure that no significant adverse effects would arise.

- A north-south footpath to the east and south of Ellingham Lake to link with the Study Centre, and the bird hide between Ellingham Lake and Ivy Water. This footpath would link with the existing permissive path to the west of Ellingham Lake, and the public right of way on the west of the A338 leading to Morey’s Lakes. Care would need to be taken to ensure no damage to Dockens Water.

- A north-south footpath to the west of Rockford Lake connecting Mockbeggar Lake with Ivy Lane and the Avon Valley Path. A bird hide could possibly be constructed along this path to provide views across Ivy Lake or Rockford Lake.

- East of Rockford Lake, to take the Avon Valley Path off Highwood Lane.

4.43. In addition, an additional footpath to the south and east of Blashford Lake, which would create a circulate route around the lake, has been proposed for some time, and was included in the Original Plan. This should only be introduced if it can be shown that no significant disturbance to waterfowl, and adjoining properties, can be achieved.

4.44. All of the above paths should be of a permissive status in the short term ideally with the long-term aim of their becoming definitive rights of way, unless special circumstances suggest otherwise. In particular, there is the potential for disturbance to waterfowl during the over-wintering season from casual public access. During this period (and at other times of the year if disturbance to nature conservation interests is identified), access to these routes may need to be restricted (e.g. nature conservation visits and use of the hides may be appropriate of properly supervised). It may also be necessary to place restrictions on the walking of dogs (e.g. on leads only, or not at all) depending upon the potential effects on waterfowl. The paths should be waymarked, and notices placed on them at strategic points to ensure that users are aware of the need to keep disturbance to a minimum. At strategic locations along the paths (both existing and proposed), the provision of occasional bench seating should be considered, particularly at those points that afford views across the lakes area.

4.45. In accordance with sustainability principles, the Strategic Management Plan does not promote access by car. The aim should be to encourage people using the lakes to access from the south by foot via existing parking, preferably within the built-up area of Ringwood, or by cycle. However, it is recognised that people will still wish to access Blashford Lakes by car and, in particular, provision should be made for disabled people and those with difficulty in walking (e.g. the elderly). The potential for further car parking provision should therefore be explored (Key Action 19). Four locations appear to offer scope for additional parking:

- The hard standing north of Rockford Lake, off Ellingham Drove, which is well screened, and would link with footpaths running east-west along the northern boundary of Rockford Lake, and the possible footpath to the east of Mockbeggar Lakes. Care would be needed to ensure no damage to Dockens Water.
• In the vicinity of Ellingham Pound, with easy access to the Study Centre, also potentially to include coach parking.

• To the south-west of Linbrook Lake (West), just to the south of the ready mix and processing plant, to be accessed off Woolmer Lane.

• To the east of the former airfield control tower, opposite Forelock Farm, but dependent upon bringing the tower into use as an educational, interpretation and viewing facility.

4.46. There is also limited potential to expand or formalise the parking arrangements at Blashford Study Centre to provide public access at certain times of the day/year. In all instances, parking should be well screened by appropriate planting.

Agriculture and Grazing

4.47. Opportunities to provide for further agricultural use of land within the study area, particularly as back-up grazing for the New Forest should be pursued (Key Action 20). Locations that offer such potential include:

• South of Ellingham Drove north of Rockford Lake.
• East of Blashford Lake.
• East of Linbrook Lake (East).
• West of Ibsley Water.
• West of Ellingham Lake.
• At Ibsley Quarry.
• North and east of Mockbeggar Lakes.

Education

4.48. The Strategic Management Plan aims to increase the educational use of the lakes. Proposals comprise:

• Additional use of the Blashford Study Centre, which should be promoted to a wider range of potential interests beyond schools (e.g. local residents groups, further education, cubs, scouts, brownies and guides, other organised parties, etc.) (Key Action 21). This could include the extension of the existing building to create a Visitor Centre.

• The potential use of the former airfield control tower adjacent to Mockbeggar Lake for educational purposes/bird watching/historic interpretation, together with possible access routes to the tower. A study should be undertaken to explore the feasibility (financial and environmental, and potential funding sources) of such usage (see ‘further studies’ below).
4.49. Linked to the above, a comprehensive strategy for interpretation and education of the study area should be drawn up, and links with any such initiatives for the River Avon and New Forest explored (Key Action 22).

4.50. The interpretation and education strategy should aim to highlight:

- The historical interest of the site – as a former Second World War airfield.
- The importance and variety of the nature conservation interest of the study area.
- The evolution of the lakes as a source for sand and gravel extraction, and how the quarries have subsequently been restored for a range of purposes.
- The role of the lakes for water storage and supply.
- The use of the study area as a recreational resource of regional importance.
- The location of Blashford Lakes as a gateway to the New Forest, given its position within the proposed National Park, also providing a recreation facility that can take some pressure off the heart of the New Forest.
- The role that Blashford Lakes plays in the lives of surrounding communities.

4.51. The existing educational role of the Blashford Study Centre is highly valued by users, and so future provision should aim to build on the good work already being undertaken, such as:

- The ‘wise use of resources’, which could be illustrated with respect to water and mineral extraction.
- The location of the lakes within walking/cycling distance of Ringwood and other nearby communities could demonstrate the importance of accessible high quality countryside close to where people live, reducing the need to use a car.
- The health benefits of using the lakes, either through sport or for walking and bird watching.
- The management of the lakes for nature conservation, and the importance and role that the lakes play within a network of European sites.

4.52. Opportunities should be taken to increase the provision of educational material throughout the study area, such as interpretation and information boards at key locations (e.g. access gateways to Blashford Lakes, at car parks, at the hides, the Water Treatment Plant, The Control Tower, etc.). The interpretation boards should aim to explain the points of interest at the lakes. Promotional leaflets and more detailed information could be produced, possibly linked to a dedicated Web Site. It will be important in such education and interpretation information to show how everybody can help towards making the lakes an attractive place to visit, in order to foster a communal duty of care. Any information should provide a contact number for further help, and also to point people in the right direction should they wish to help or become involved in activities (including management) at the lakes.
Further Studies

4.53. The consultation responses received indicated that there is support for making use of the former RAF Ibsley Control Tower, which is located to the south of Mockbeggar Lake.

4.54. It is recommended that a feasibility study should be undertaken to consider the potential use of the control tower for historic interpretation relating to the use of the RAF base during the Second World War and potentially for nature conservation interpretation or bird watching (Key Action 23). Possible access routes to the tower should also be investigated.

4.55. It is likely that such a use would require significant investment, which could not be met by the landowner, Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company. Therefore sources of funding would need to be identified to cover both capital and revenue costs, for example Heritage Lottery Funding.

4.56. In the short term, the control tower should be made safe and further deterioration of the structure prevented.

PROPOSALS FOR LAKE-BASED MANAGEMENT UNITS

4.57. This section provides more detailed explanation of the management proposals for different management units within the Blashford Lakes study area. The management units are shown in Figure 4.5 and an overview of the management proposals for the study area is shown in Figure 4.6.

4.58. A consistent structure is used for each of the management units that comprises:

- Name of landowner.
- Management proposals in the Original Plan.
- Analysis of current character, status and activities.
- Overall objectives for the management unit.
- Detailed management proposals.

Blashford Lake

Ownership

4.59. Blashford Lake is owned by Wessex Water.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.60. The Original Plan proposed that this lake be divided into four areas:

- The proposed use for the central part of the lake was to be primarily for water storage and supply together with intensive recreation (sailing, boardsailing, canoeing, angling).
• The north-east of the lake, and adjoining land, was to be given over to Spinnaker Club facilities, including car and boat parking.

• The south-east corner of the lake was to become a conservation area, and carefully managed to discourage both anglers and members of the public.

• The remaining perimeter areas were to be strengthened with additional planting and on-going management, with a footpath developed around the lake following the bridleway along the northern flank and eastern and southern banks, linked to the strip of land between Snails and Blashford Lake, but avoiding the conservation area.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.61. Comprising approximately 21 hectares of open water, Blashford Lakes is one of the oldest lakes in the study area and is host to several different uses including water storage and supply, sailing by Spinnaker Club, and fishing by Christchurch Angling Club in fixed swims. It is predominantly surrounded by trees and scrub, except for open areas to the north-west, where the sailing facilities are based.

4.62. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Blashford Lake, which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests/

4.63. The lake is designated for its nature conservation interest (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar site). The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment notes that this lake has the highest mean peak count of gadwall of all the lakes, but that daytime disturbance in winter affects the use of the lake by waterfowl including gadwall. When disturbed the lake will temporarily be in unfavourable condition. In addition, Blashford Lake has a low mean peak count for total waterfowl compared to lake size and average mean, suggesting it is under performing, and that it is in unfavourable condition for this feature.

4.64. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that deepening of the lake for water supply is likely to have had an effect on aquatic plant growth, but that recovery is now likely to have taken place. It also notes that the lake suffers from algal blooms, which requires further investigation. Whilst the footpaths to the north and west (part of the Avon Valley Path) of the lake may give rise to some disturbance, in the absence of sailing the lake is sufficiently large to provide a sanctuary area so long as the proposed circular path in the south and west is not in use. When sailing takes place, waterfowl are displaced to other lakes, but there is sufficient capacity on other lakes within the study area to temporarily support displaced birds so long as no other lake is disturbed.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.65. The overall objectives for Blashford Lake are to:

• Continue to cater for the existing diverse range of activities, but with management controls introduced in order for Blashford Lake to return to favourable nature conservation status.
• The proposed uses of the lake are water storage and supply, sailing, and fishing, subject to management controls.

4.66. Completion of the circular path to the south and east of the lake should be reconsidered, subject to assessment of the potential disturbance to waterfowl, and to properties located to the east of the lake along Highwood Lane.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.67. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• Nature conservation – the main aim should be to bring this lake back to favourable condition. The main habitat features within and adjoining Blashford Lake should be mapped and evaluated in order to determine specific management prescriptions. This should include a detailed assessment of the south-eastern corner of the lake, previously set aside as a nature conservation area, in order that its full potential is realised, and an assessment of the potential negative effects of bankside tree cover on the use of the lake by waterfowl.

• Water storage and supply – Blashford Lake represents a key resource for the storage of water, and it is currently a lake of first resort for water supply within the overall study area. The role of Blashford Lake for water storage and supply should continue, but further research should take place to establish the appropriate regime for managing water levels and water supply in order to be consistent with nature conservation requirements, and the role of the lake as the only one in the study area currently used for sailing.

• Sailing – this water-based activity should continue on Blashford Lake. It is not proposed to limit sailing during the winter, when there is greatest potential to displace wildfowl. However, this is on the assumption that the degree of disturbance elsewhere in the study area is controlled so that waterfowl displaced during sailing on Blashford Lake can be accommodated on other lakes. Monitoring of the effects of sailing on waterfowl should take place to ensure the lake returns to favourable condition. The assessment of the effects of bankside tree cover on waterfowl should also take into account the optimum conditions required for sailing on the lake, and the concern of local residents that a belt of vegetation be retained to screen their properties. The assessment should lead to management recommendations for the bankside vegetation that will achieve the appropriate balance between all these interests.

• Fishing – as with sailing, it is proposed that fishing should continue on Blashford Lake. Monitoring of the effects of sailing on waterfowl should take place to ensure the lake returns to favourable condition. In order to reduce disturbance, fishing should be excluded from the nature conservation area in the south-east corner of the lake.

• Agriculture – land to the east of Blashford Lake should be used for agriculture, in particular as back-up grazing for the New Forest.
• Access – The footpath access to the west and north of Blashford Lake is an integral link in the route of the Avon Valley Path. Here, attention should be to screening, for example through planting, of native shrub species to reduce the potential of disturbance to waterfowl, subject to the assessment of bankside vegetation described above. The circular path to the south and east of the lake should only be introduced if it can be shown that no significant disturbance to waterfowl, and adjoining properties, can be achieved. It is likely, in any event, that any such footpath would need to be subject to controls, particularly in winter when there is the greatest chance of disturbance to waterfowl. As a result, if it is decided to go ahead with the path, it should be of permissive status.

Ellingham Lake and Ellingham Pound

Ownership

4.68. Ellingham Lake and Pound are owned by Wessex Water.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.69. The proposals for Ellingham Lake and Pound in the Original Plan were as follows:

• For water storage and supply, and to accommodate a measure of specialist water based recreation, such as the relocation of water skiing from Ivy Lake.

• The eastern and southern margins of the lake were to remain as a buffer between the lake and Dockens Water, and strengthened with appropriate planting to inhibit access to the corridor at both the southern and northern ends.

• A public footpath was to be created along the western bank of the lake, with this bank managed for amenity purposes.

• No public casual access to Ellingham Pound.

• Access from Ellingham Drove controlled by Wessex Water.

• The area to the north of Ellingham Pound designated and managed for nature conservation.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.70. Ellingham Lake comprises approximately 10 hectares of open water, plus Ellingham Pound to the north. Ellingham Lake forms part of the water storage and supply scheme of Wessex Water. Ellingham Pound acts as the intake pound from the River Avon. Mineral extraction has ceased at Ellingham Lake. The lake has steep banks, with the perimeter of the lake predominantly tree covered. The area between Ellingham Lake and the intake Pound provides an area of sand dominated bare ground substrate of value to specialist invertebrates. The footpath proposed in the Original Plan to the west of Ellingham Lake has been introduced as a permissive path, albeit without the express consent of English Nature.
4.71. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Ellingham Lake, which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests.

4.72. Permission (77588) has been granted to Ivy Lake Water Ski Club to relocate to Ellingham Lake. The permission states that water skiing and club related activities might only take place between certain hours in March, April, May, June, September and October, and that no water-skiing should take place between 1 November and 28 February in order to protect winter wildfowl on the site. The permission also requires an environmental management scheme to be prepared to address issues such as surface water drainage, monitoring of water quality, protection of Dockens Water, and for defining buffer zones adjacent to SSSI Ellingham Lake and for avoiding disturbance to protected species within the SSSI. There are also conditions in relation to water protection and pollution, landscaping, and after-care.

4.73. The lake is designated for its nature conservation interest (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar site). The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that the lake is in unfavourable condition with respect to gadwall and other over-wintering waterfowl, such as Teal which have been associated with Ellingham Lake, and which are an important component of the waterfowl assemblage to which the Ramsar designation applies. This is partly due to the deep and steep sided banks, but also because the lake is lined with scrub and trees resulting in an inadequate open and undisturbed landscape. Hanson Aggregates and Hampshire County Council have come to an agreement to complete restoration of this lake. According to the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment, the lack of suitable restoration was considered as contributing towards an adverse effect on its nature conservation status.

4.74. Whilst the lake currently does not contribute significantly to the SPA, its designation as such requires that it should brought back into favourable condition. The lake is known to be the subject of alien species, New Zealand pigmyweed.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.75. The overall objectives for Ellingham Lake and Ellingham Pound are:

- Continued use of Ellingham Pound as the intake pound for water from the River Avon, and use of Ellingham Lake for water storage and supply.

- Permitting use of Ellingham Lake for water-skiing.

- Managing activities on and around Ellingham Lake to return its nature conservation status to favourable condition, including agricultural uses to the east of the lake.

- Introduce a new permissive footpath to the east of Ellingham Lake, and monitor the effects of all adjacent footpaths on disturbance to waterfowl, and introduce controls if necessary.

- Create a new area of parking to the north/east of Ellingham Pound, to include coach parking.
• Educational interpretation, linked to the Blashford Study Centre.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.76. The detailed management proposals are as follows:

• Nature conservation – negotiations between Hanson Aggregates and Hampshire County Council regarding restoration of Ellingham Lake have recently resulted in an agreement that means the steep-sided banks will be re-profiled in order to create conditions suitable for aquatic vegetation development. The scrub-covered area to the north of Ellingham Pound should be managed for nature conservation, and the bare ground (sand dominated substrate) between Ellingham Lake and Ellingham Pound for its invertebrate interest. Illegally stocked fish should be removed.

• Water storage and supply – The objective of using Ellingham Lake for water storage and supply should continue, but further research should take place to establish the appropriate regime for managing water levels and water supply in order to be consistent with nature conservation requirements. Ellingham Pound should continue as the intake pound from the River Avon.

• Water-skiing – permission for this water-based activity to relocate from Ivy Lake to Ellingham Lake has been granted. The permission states the conditions that should apply with respect to water-skiing, which this Strategic Management Plan supports.

• Agriculture – land to the west of Ellingham Lake should be used for agriculture, in particular as back-up grazing for the New Forest.

• Access – A new permissive footpath should be created along the eastern and southern boundary of Ellingham Lake to link the Blashford Study Centre with the bird hide between Ellingham and Ivy Lakes, and continue to link with the existing permissive path to the west of Ellingham Lake. The alignment of the path should take into account the need to minimise disturbance to waterfowl and Dockens Water. The effects of the proposed footpath and the footpath to the west of Ellingham Lake should be assessed to determine whether there is significant disturbance to waterfowl, particularly during the winter months. If it is determined that there are such significant effects, the footpaths should be open only outside of the wintering waterfowl season. The proposed parking to the north/east of Ellingham Pound should link via existing access to Blashford Study Centre, and screened with appropriate vegetation. It should be designed to accommodate a small number of coaches for educational purposes.

• Educational interpretation – as described above, controlled access, incorporating access to Dockens Water whilst avoiding adverse impacts, should be allowed to continue, to allow for nature conservation study linked to the Blashford Study Centre.
Hucklesbrook Lakes

Ownership
4.77. The two northern lakes are owned by New Forest Water Park. The southernmost lake is owned by Christchurch Angling Club.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan
4.78. Hucklesbrook Lakes fell outside the area covered by the Original Plan, so no proposals for the use and management of this lake were put forward.

Current Character, Status and Activities
4.79. Hucklesbrook Lakes are somewhat divorced from the remainder of the lakes complex, being found some 1km north of the village of Ibsley. The northern two lakes are used by the New Forest Water Park for water-skiing, fishing, aquarides (i.e. towing of inflatable craft), wakeboarding, and jet skiing. New Forest Water Park advertises its facilities for corporate events. The Water Park is open from Easter to early November.

4.80. The southernmost lake is used for coarse fishing by Christchurch Angling Club as one of a number of fishing facilities in the Dorset/Hampshire area.

4.81. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Hucklesbrook Lakes.

4.82. The lakes are currently not subject to any nature conservation designations. However, Hucklesbrook Lakes are adjacent to the River Avon, which is designated as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit
4.83. The overall objectives for Hucklesbrook Lakes are as follows:

- Continued use of the two northernmost lakes as a regional resource for watersports.
- Continued use of the southernmost lakes for fishing.
- General improvements to the landscape character and nature conservation interest of the lakes.

Detailed Management Proposals
4.84. The detailed management proposals are as follows:

- Watersports – operations should continue as at present, with due regard paid to the site’s location adjacent to the nationally and internationally designated River Avon, in the management and future development of the Water Park.
- Fishing – operations should continue as at present.
• Nature conservation – the landowners should be encouraged to consider the nature conservation potential of the three lakes, which could be determined through ecological survey work. The need for improvement to screening between the lakes and the River Avon should be investigated to ensure there are no adverse effects arising from disturbance. Care should be taken to ensure that such screening does not adversely affect the character of the wider open landscape that is associated with this stretch of the River Avon. Other improvements would need to be sought through agreement with the lake owners on the basis of the ecological assessment.

Hurst Ponds

Ownership

4.85. Hurst Ponds are owned by New Forest District Council and Headlands Adventure Centre.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.86. Hurst Ponds fell outside the area covered by the Original Plan, so no proposals for the use and management of this lake were put forward.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.87. Hurst Ponds are located between Kingfisher Lake and Headlands Business Park at the southernmost end of the Blashford Lakes study area. The southernmost of the two ponds is used for fishing and canoeing. It is believed that the northernmost pond is also used for fishing. The Avon Valley Path can be found to the east of the Ponds. The Lin Brook corridor separates Hurst Ponds from the outer limits of Ringwood to the south. The lakes are well screened by trees and scrub.

4.88. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Hurst Ponds,

4.89. Hurst Ponds are not covered by any nature conservation designations. The area around the Hurst Ponds is allocated in the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) as public open space, providing access for the north-west of Ringwood.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.90. The overall objectives for Hurst Ponds are as follows:

• Continued use of the southernmost pond for low-key recreation (e.g. non-powered water-sports).

• Continued use of both ponds for fishing.

• General improvements to the nature conservation interest of the ponds.
**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.91. The detailed management proposals are as follows:

- Low-key recreation – activities should continue as at present.
- Fishing – angling should continue as at present.
- Nature conservation – the landowners should be encouraged to assess the nature conservation potential of the ponds, which could be determined through ecological survey work. Any improvements identified would need to be sought through agreement with the lake owners.

**Ibsley Quarry (future North Mockbeggar Lake)**

**Ownership**

4.92. Ibsley Quarry is owned by Tarmac/Sita.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.93. Ibsley Quarry fell outside the area covered by the Original Plan, so no proposals for the use and management of this lake were put forward.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.94. Restoration is now taking place for nature conservation, and agriculture (grazing and crops). A north-south footpath is also proposed to the east of Ibsley Quarry, to link Mockbeggar Lane with the Avon Valley Path, which runs through the northern part of the site.

4.95. The original restoration plan proposed to fill the excavation with inert material and restore to agriculture. However, due to inadequate material being available to restore the site solely to agriculture, permission has been granted by Hampshire County Council to vary restoration to agriculture, a shallow water body and reed bed, back up grazing land for the New Forest and a footpath extension to Avon Valley Path. A legal agreement has been attached to this permission ensuring the long-term management of the site for nature conservation.

4.96. Tarmac have recently submitted to Hampshire County Council an application accompanied by an Environmental Statement for a northerly extension to the site proposing restoration to water for nature conservation.

4.97. Ibsley Quarry is currently not covered by any nature conservation designations.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.98. The overall objectives for Ibsley Quarry are as follows:

- Complete restoration to nature conservation and agriculture.
- Complete footpath link between Mockbeggar Lane and the Avon Valley Path.
• General improvements to, and management of, the nature conservation interest of the lake and surrounding land.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.99. The detailed management proposals are as follows:

• **Agriculture** – restoration to agriculture should be compatible with the nearby uses of the New Forest (e.g. as back-up grazing), and the landscape character of the Avon Valley, and where possible should seek to incorporate habitat features to encourage biodiversity interest (e.g. through seeding with flower-rich mixed grassland suitable for hay-making and extensive grazing).

• **Access** – the aim should be to provide for a public right of way footpath between Mockbeggar Lane and the Avon Valley Path as part of the restoration proposals.

• **Nature conservation** – the restoration of the lakes should include shallows and graded banks to encourage littoral aquatic plant growth. The restoration proposals include provision for an extensive area of reedbed to the north of the lake, which is supported, as this would provide a diversity of habitats within the Avon Valley, and help to contribute towards the local and national biodiversity targets.

**Ibsley Water**

**Ownership**

4.100. Ibsley Water is owned by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.101. The Original Plan included the following proposals for Ibsley Water:

• **Use as one of two lakes whose potential for water storage and supply should be maximised.**

• **Provide for recreational use such as angling, sailing, boardsailing or canoeing (with possibly training level facilities for rowing, canoeing and sub-aqua diving), but that zoning should take place for water-based activity to ensure that the amenity of Ibsley residents should not be adversely affected.**

• **Give attention to Ibsley’s potential for accommodating wintering waterfowl, given the potential of other areas within the study area for nature conservation enhancement. This might be reinforced by a combination of area and time-sharing with recreation uses. One suggestion was that the northern and north-eastern areas could be maintained free of water-based activity all year round while bankside fishing would be permitted over the western, middle and southern parts of the lake.**

• **In the longer term, as the lakes area became established, consider the appropriateness of development of a combined set of facilities incorporating**
centralised changing accommodation for users of Ibsley and Ellingham Lake, a field
studies interpretation centre to provide a focus for nature conservation interest,
and a limited commercial function (e.g. shop/cafeteria) for both groups and other
members of the public. A possible location was suggested to the south east of
Ibsley Water, north of Ellingham Drove. Car parking facilities with links to the
footpath system could have been located here.

- The south-western and western shores of the lake should be managed to provide
a footpath system together with amenity planting, possibly providing an outdoors
picnic/recreation area linked to the central facilities. Any wartime air-raid shelters
should be retained, and consideration given to their conversion into bat shelters.

- The northern bank of the lake should be designed to provide a physical and visual
buffer zone between Ibsley Water and Ibsley Village, managed for nature
conservation with controlled public access.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.102. Mineral working will be completed by December 2004. The gravel spine separating
the west and east of the lake has been removed to create a large lake of
approximately 45 hectares, with lake profiles and promontories conducive to nature
conservation. The ROMP application has revised the restoration from an engineered
reservoir to open water for water storage and nature conservation purposes
surrounded by land at original ground levels (00065190M).

4.103. An extension to the Conbloc Plant of 12 years (72196) has been permitted by
Hampshire County Council and includes a Section 106 Agreement which secures a
Charitable Trust to manage a community fund for the benefit of the community and
the environment within the Blashford Lakes study area. Planning permission has also
recently been granted by Hampshire County Council to retain the Ready Mix plant
(250 metres further east) for the same timescale as the Conbloc Plant.

4.104. The lake is part of the second stage of the water storage and supply scheme granted
permission in 1992. Subject to securing abstraction permissions, the lake will be used
by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company.

4.105. Policy AV-1 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit
(February 2003) states that the northern part of Ibsley Water will be safeguarded for
nature conservation, and that development that would prejudice the special interest
of the site subject to statutory nature conservation designations will not be
permitted. Policy AV-4 states that recreational uses which do not prejudice any
water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests will be
permitted on Ibsley Water.

4.106. The lake is already the most important for waterfowl, and makes a significant
contribution towards supporting coot and probably also gadwall populations. Only
the eastern part of the lake is currently designated as an SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site
(as the western part of the site was subject to mineral working at the time of
designation), but this is expected to extend to the whole lake when designations are
reviewed. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that Ibsley Water is
currently in favourable condition with respect to internationally important numbers of gadwall, and nationally important numbers of coot. The extent of alien species (e.g. *Crassula*) distribution under water remains uncertain.

4.107. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that, without controls, turbid water arising from mineral workings, in particular the most northern silt-washing lagoon situated between Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lake, will affect the SPA, and may result in an adverse effect. There may also be an adverse effect on Mockbeggar Lake.

4.108. Somerley Estate has sporting rights, with permission for six shoots per year under an interim annual agreement.

4.109. Although Ibsley Water is the only lake large enough to guarantee sufficient area capable of providing a disturbance free zone if disturbed on all sides, the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that winter use of any proposed footpath to the east of Ibsley Water may have a significant effect.

4.110. The eastern margins of the lake are included within the Mockbeggar Lakes/ Ibsley Water Management Plan produced by Hampshire Wildlife Trust. This recommends that the boundaries of the nature conservation area of Ibsley Water should be changed, so that it covers the eastern half of the lake to provide one large integral nature conservation area of eastern Ibsley Water, Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds. The aim of this is to reduce disturbance from walkers in the winter, and provide an undisturbed area of bankside for breeding water birds in the spring and summer. The Water Management Plan also calls for the rest of the lake not to be used for noisy sports, and for the whole lake to be free of recreational use in the winter.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.111. In view of the significance of Ibsley Water for nature conservation, and its potential importance as a refuge for waterfowl displaced from other lakes within the study area, once mineral extraction has been completed and the lake has been fully restored, the uses of Ibsley Water and its surroundings as proposed in the Original Plan should be re-assessed, in line with the proposals in the Mockbeggar Lakes/Ibsley Water Management Plan. However, this Strategic Management Plan does not consider that Ibsley Water should be used for water-based recreation at any time of the year. It is proposed, therefore, that that the overall objective for Ibsley Water should be to:

- Permit use of the lake for water storage and supply (subject to appropriate permissions).
- Protect and enhance the value of the lake for nature conservation, with access to the public on a controlled basis, and with the potential for agriculture to the west of the lake investigated.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.112. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:
• Water storage and supply - the lake should be safeguarded for water storage and supply, subject to securing appropriate permissions. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the best way to manage possible drawdown of the lake for water supply, taking into account its nature conservation status, and the potential effects of signal crayfish burrowing on bank integrity.

• Nature conservation – as the largest lake within the Blashford Lakes study area, Ibsley Water has perhaps the most significant potential for nature conservation, particularly with respect to over-wintering waterfowl. Current restoration proposals will result in lake bank profiles that will improve conditions for emergent and littoral vegetation development. The large size of the restored lake will also be attractive to wintering waterfowl as it provides them with safety from bankside predators.

• Agriculture – land to the west of Ibsley Water should be investigated for agricultural use, in particular as back-up grazing for the New Forest, subject to potential effects on the nature conservation interest of the site.

• Access – It is proposed that a new permissive north-south footpath be created between or within the vicinity of Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lakes and Silt Ponds. The Water Management Plan suggests that the walkway should be sunken and screened. Potentially, this could link Mockbeggar Lane in the north to Ellingham Drove in the south. The use of the footpath should be controlled in the winter months, and during the breeding season, to prevent disturbance to waterfowl, and other breeding birds. The possibility of a bird hide to be accessed from the footpath should be considered. A further bird hide should be considered along the southern margin of Ibsley Water, accessed from the lay-by on Ellingham Drove, or from the proposed car park north/east of Ellingham Pound.

Ivy Lake

Ownership

4.113. Ivy Lake is owned by Wessex Water.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.114. The Original Plan stated that:

• In the short to medium term, Ivy Lake should function as a strategic reserve for water supply, but that as more lakes are added to the scheme, it will ultimately become a lake of last resort for water supply.

• In the short term, water skiing should be permitted to continue until a suitable alternative location became available.

• In the medium to longer term, the associated after-use should be nature conservation, perhaps with a limited degree of compatible recreation (e.g. bankside coarse fishing), ensuring that the integrity of the Dockens Water corridor is maintained by preventing access.
• To the west of Ivy Lake, any opportunities for strengthening and extending the Dockens Water corridor should be taken, with no access on a casual basis for members of the public.

• The northern and southern-western borders of the lake should be strengthened by additional planting to act as buffer zones to inhibit access into the Dockens Water corridor.

• The southern border of the lake should, subject to agreement between nature conservation and recreation interests, accommodate angling. Angling should be controlled on a limited area basis and restricted to agreed times of the year to minimise disturbance to breeding birds and wintering waterfowl. There would be no access to members of the public on a casual basis.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.115. The lake is currently used for water storage and supply. It has nature conservation interest, particularly because it is a shallow lake with a good range of littoral and bankside habitats, including a transition from emergent littoral aquatic vegetation into wet woodland along its northern shoreline. Ivy Lake is designated as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. It makes a significant contribution to the SPA in terms of the total waterfowl, and to the SSSI/Ramsar designation for coot and pochard.

4.116. The lake is used by the Blashford Study Centre for educational purposes, and there is a hide for bird watching on its western shore.

4.117. The lake was recently used for water-skiing by Ivy Lake Water Ski Club (except Nov – Feb), although temporary planning permission has not been renewed due to concerns about disturbance negatively affecting its nature conservation interest. Planning permission has now been given for water skiing to be moved from Ivy Lake to Ellingham Lake.

4.118. Fishing on the lake has already stopped in exchange for greater fishing rights on Blashford Lake.

4.119. Policy AV-1 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that Ivy Lake will be safeguarded for nature conservation, and that development that would prejudice the special interest of the site subject to statutory nature conservation designations will not be permitted.

4.120. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that Ivy Lake is considered to be in favourable condition with respect to internationally migratory species (gadwall). The effects of water storage were not considered, and the effects of alien species (e.g. *Crassula*) are uncertain.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.121. The overall objectives for Ivy Lake are to:

• Maintain the use of the lake for water storage and supply.
• Enhance the nature conservation value of the lake.
• Use the lake as a resource for educational interpretation.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.122. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• Water storage and supply - the lake should be safeguarded for water storage and supply, subject to securing appropriate permissions. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the best way to manage possible drawdown of the lake for water supply, taking into account nature conservation interests. **Should this lake continue to be identified to be used as a last resort? – John Eastwood/Rue Ekins to advise.**

• Nature conservation – Ivy Lake is one of the shallowest of the lakes in the study area and is currently considered to be in favourable condition with respect to gadwall populations, a situation that should continue. The proposals in the Original Plan, with respect to strengthening the buffer between the lake and Dockens Water should continue to be pursued, with management of the vegetation as appropriate to increase its nature conservation value (e.g. for breeding birds). The effects of alien species should be monitored and controlled where necessary. Whilst angling no longer takes place on the lake (and there are no proposals in this Strategic Management Plan to re-introduce angling), the presence of fish and unconsented angling should be monitored, and if a problem is identified, appropriate action taken.

• Access and educational interpretation – current access to Ivy Lake, now that water-skiing has stopped, is on a controlled basis leading from Blashford Study Centre to the hide on the western shore of Ivy Lake, and to Dockens Water. It is proposed that this continues as at present. Opening up of access on a more casual basis is not recommended.

**Kingfisher Lake**

**Ownership**

4.123. Kingfisher Lake is owned by a consortium of private owners.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.124. Kingfisher Lake fell outside the area covered by the Original Plan, so no proposals for the use and management of this lake were put forward.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.125. Kingfisher Lake is the most southerly of the lakes in the Blashford Lakes study area, with private residential dwellings and gardens adjoining its southern end. Used primarily for private coarse fishing, an application for a stock pond (66849) was approved in 2000 by NFDC with landscaping conditions, although these remain to be implemented.
4.126. The Avon Valley Path skirts the western border of the lake, but public access is restricted by a high fence and screen planting.

4.127. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Kingfisher Lake.

4.128. Although Kingfisher Lake lies outside the nature conservation designations, it is considered by English Nature (as recorded in the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment) to make a significant contribution to the SPA, SSSI and Ramsar designations. It has the second highest mean count for both gadwall and coot of all the lakes, with the lake regularly supporting a significant number of gadwall. It is therefore considered to be in favourable condition with respect to internationally important migratory species.

4.129. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that any increase in fishing on this lake is likely to have a significant effect on the SPA. The current situation therefore needs to be reviewed to ensure that adequate controls are put into place to ensure adverse effects are avoided.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.130. The overall objective for Kingfisher Lake is to:

- Maintain the use of the lake for fishing as at present, such that it continues to make a significant and positive contribution to amenity, nature conservation in general and the SPA in particular.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.131. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- **Fishing** – fishing on the lake takes place under private ownership. As no problems with this arrangement are known to exist, it is not proposed to make any changes to this situation. However, it is recommended that regular monitoring of over-wintering waterfowl be undertaken, to provide reassurance that there is no adverse effect. It is recommended that, should any specific adverse effects be identified, agreement be sought with the landowner to introduce suitable controls to bring the lake back to favourable condition.

- **Nature conservation** – in addition to the specific proposals to monitor the relationship between fishing and waterfowl, it is recommended that other opportunities to improve the nature conservation interest of the lake and its surroundings are pursued, in a way that is compatible with its status as a private fishing lake. In the first instance, an on-site ecological assessment should be undertaken to determine its strengths and weaknesses. The owners should be encouraged to work closely with English Nature and Hampshire Wildlife Trust to further this objective.

- **Access** – no changes are proposed.
Linbrook Lake (East)

Ownership

4.132. Linbrook Lake (East) is owned by a private individual, Raymond Brown.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.133. The Original Plan:

- Assumed that Linbrook Lake (East) would continue to be developed in accordance with planning consents and in line with specific guidelines in the Avon Valley Local Plan for the Hurst Ponds area.
- Proposed that more extensive shallows be created to permit reed swamp and tall reed communities to be established, and the existing meadow grassland areas enhanced by further planting.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.134. The proposed after-use for Linbrook Lake (East) was for quite passive recreation, such as walking, fishing and nature study. Ringwood & District Anglers Association uses it for private coarse fishing, but consent for this has now lapsed. In 2000 applications to NFDC for more intensive fishing (applications 69167 and 69103) were refused. In 2003, a temporary permission (72740) was granted for a change of use for coarse fishing between 15 February to 13 March, and 16 June to 31 October.

4.135. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Linbrook Lake, which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests.

4.136. Linbrook Lake (East) lies within the SPA, SSSI and Ramsar designations. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment considers the lake to be in unfavourable condition. The small size and linear shape of the lake means that waterfowl are confined to a small area of open water and are easily disturbed. The effects of disturbance are likely to be greater due to changes in land management, including scrub clearance, associated with increased angling activity. It is considered that future controls through agreement with English Nature should be introduced to minimise ecological and disturbance effects. Alien species (Crassula and Japanese knotweed) are known to be present.

4.137. Linbrook Lake (East) was included under Policy AV-6 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) as part of a proposed Country Recreation Area intended to improve informal recreation facilities for Ringwood and reduce pressures on the New Forest. A footpath currently passes to the south of Linbrook Lake (East), adjacent to the Lin Brook. It is not clear whether users cause disturbance to waterfowl using Linbrook Lake (East).

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.138. The overall objective for Linbrook Lake (East) is to:
• Return the lake to favourable condition for nature conservation.

• Maintain the use of the lake for fishing as at present, such that it continues to make a significant and positive contribution to amenity.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.139. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• **Fishing** – any granting of permission for fishing on Linbrook Lake (East) should be such that it is subject to controls agreed by English Nature (e.g. zoning and timing), in order to bring the lake back to favourable condition with respect to its size. As a condition of granting permission, it is recommended that regular monitoring of over-wintering waterfowl is undertaken, to determine that the effects of fishing are as intended. Should any adverse effects be identified, it is recommended that agreement be sought with the landowner to introduce suitable controls to bring the lake back to favourable condition.

• **Nature conservation** – in addition to the specific issues regarding fishing, it is recommended that the landowner should be encouraged to manage the lake and its surroundings to enhance its nature conservation interest, in a way that is compatible with the pursuit of fishing. The presence of alien species (e.g. *Crassula* and Japanese knotweed) needs to be established and controls introduced as appropriate. As noted above, the overriding aim is to return the lake to favourable condition.

• **Agriculture** – land to the east of Linbrook Lake (East) should be used for agriculture, in particular as back-up grazing for the New Forest.

• **Access** – no additional access is proposed, but it is recommended that monitoring of disturbance from the adjacent footpath be undertaken. Should significant disturbance be identified, then, as a public right of way, awareness-raising signage should be introduced to encourage users not to disturb waterfowl.

**Linbrook Lake (West)**

**Ownership**

4.140. Linbrook Lake (West) is owned by RMC Aggregates Southern.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.141. The Original Plan:

• Assumed that Linbrook Lake (West) would continue to be developed in accordance with planning consents and in line with specific guidelines in the Avon Valley Local Plan for the Hurst Ponds area.

• Proposed that Linbrook Lake (West) may at some stage be allowed to develop transitional vegetation in the later stages of infilling (e.g. Common reed, *Phragmites*).
**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.142. Linbrook Lake (West) is currently being used for silt disposal from the RMC processing plant. This has led to the lake becoming very turbid due to high levels of suspended fine sediment. Restoration proposals in the approved ROMP for the whole of the Ringwood Quarry provide for afteruses of nature conservation and public footpaths. It is anticipated that this lake will be primarily safeguarded for nature conservation.

4.143. The eastern extremity of Linbrook Lake (West) is designated as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment does not specifically address Linbrook Lake (West).

4.144. Linbrook Lake (West) was included under Policy AV-6 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) as part of a proposed Country Recreation Area intended to improve informal recreation facilities for Ringwood and reduce pressures on the New Forest. A footpath currently passes to the south of Linbrook Lake (West), adjacent to the Lin Brook. Policy AV-4 of the states that recreational uses will be permitted on Linbrook Lake, which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.145. The overall objective for Linbrook Lake (West) is to:

- Successfully restore the lake primarily for nature conservation.
- Introduce a new parking facility at the eastern end of Woolmer Lane, to the south of the Ringwood Quarry minerals processing plant.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.146. The detailed management proposals with respect to Linbrook Lake (West) are as follows:

- Nature conservation – the lake should be restored for nature conservation afteruse as proposed in the Original Plan. This, however, will be dependent upon final water levels conducive for reed bed establishment. However, restoration to reed bed may not be the most suitable option. The area could potentially be filled and restored to dry land, possibly with woodland planting, and accommodating a new footpath required under agreement with Hampshire County Council. It is recommended that discussions with RMC be undertaken to enable this potential to be realised if possible.

- Parking – the potential for a new area of parking at the end of Woolmer Lane should be investigated. This location would provide easy access to the public right-of-way and Avon Valley path to the south-east.
Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds

Ownership
4.147. Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds are owned by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan
4.148. The Original Plan proposed that:

- Mockbeggar Lake be designated for nature conservation with the ultimate objective of it being managed as a nature reserve. It was proposed that the main access to the site be from Ellingham Drove, with a subordinate entry point, perhaps to the north. On-site arrangements were to be strictly controlled to minimise disturbance, through the use of careful planting/screening, fencing, gates and discrete hides.

- Mockbeggar Silt Ponds be substantially in-filled but left as a series of shallow wet ponds for nature conservation enhancement investigated. However, it was suggested that, should it not be possible to retain all or part of the silt ponds for wetland/pond conservation enhancement, the restored areas should be planted to establish a buffer between Mockbeggar Lake and Ibsley Water, which in the Original Plan was to be used for recreation.

- If the silt pond area could be restored and enhanced for nature conservation, it was proposed that the strip of land between the silt ponds and Ibsley Water be set aside and planted to act as a buffer between the silt ponds and originally proposed recreation on the future Ibsley Water. While views to the east would be afforded, access to Mockbeggar on foot should be precluded.

Current Character, Status and Activities
4.149. The current character and status of Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds is heavily influenced by its relationship with Ibsley Water. This has become particularly evident in recent months following the removal of the gravel spine dividing the eastern from the western half of Ibsley Water, which led to the collapse of an existing open channel ‘sluice’ between Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lake, and a subsequent dramatic reduction in water levels within the Mockbeggar management unit.

4.150. Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds are designated as SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. They are managed by Hampshire Wildlife Trust for nature conservation. The Trust has produced a Mockbeggar Lakes/ Ibsley Water Management Plan, which sets out their preferred management of the lakes and other conservation features of interest in this area. The lake’s shallow water and littoral and emergent vegetation are important for nature conservation. Mockbeggar Lake is the third most important lake for gadwall, and has previously supported a significant numbers of this species. However, the 2002/2003 data indicate that gadwall no longer use the lake in such high numbers, and that it is now in unfavourable condition. There are coarse fish in the lake, which have been introduced artificially, with a proposal to remove these populations to relocate them to King’s Lake. \textit{Crassula} is present in Mockbeggar Lake.
4.151. Whilst the effects of reduced water levels had an immediate effect, the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment suggests that turbid water from the silt lagoons is the most likely reason for the current unfavourable condition. This is likely to have affected the growth of aquatic plants and will continue to have an adverse effect until stopped and recovery takes place. It has been noted by Hampshire County Council that the silt ponds system, which should filter the water so that it is clear when it enters Mockbeggar Lake, is ineffective. Three of the four silt ponds have been filled with silt, and the fourth cannot cope with the quantity of water entering into it. Hanson have been requested to remedy this as a matter of urgency.

4.152. With respect to managing water levels, two proposals have been put forward for a connection between Mockbeggar Lake and Ibsley Water. The first is the location of the existing open channel connection in the north-east corner of Ibsley. The second is in the south-east corner of the lake with an open channel excavated due south to the southernmost Mockbeggar Silt Pond. The southern link is the preferred option, since this is easier to access, would cause last disturbance to nature conservation interests, and would allow Ibsley Water to overflow into the lagoon whilst maintaining Mockbeggar Lake at a higher water level. If this option is to be pursued, it is likely that the northern connecting channel will be backfilled with suitable low permeability and inert material, and the existing vertical or near vertical slopes along the Ibsley Water side of the dividing strip of land between Mockbeggar and Ibsley Water filled to stabilise the strip. It is also proposed that controls are introduced to ensure that both Mockbeggar and Ibsley Water can rise to 22.2m OD.

4.153. To the south of the lake is a former aircraft control tower associated with the former Ibsley airfield. This building requires remedial work to prevent further deterioration.

4.154. In 2000, a temporary permission was approved by NFDC for the erection of three viewing and access points to the Mockbeggar Lake complex (690705). Somerley Estate has sporting rights (an annual consent has been given for shooting for the last 2 years by English Nature). In January 2003, shooting was permitted for six shoots per year on an interim annual basis.

4.155. Policy AV-1 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that Mockbeggar Lakes will be safeguarded for nature conservation and that development that would prejudice the special interest of the site subject to statutory nature conservation designations will not be permitted.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.156. The primary objectives for Mockbeggar Lakes and Silt Ponds are to:

- Restore the lake and silt ponds to favourable condition in line with their nature conservation designations, for management as a nature reserve.

- Provide for controlled access and potentially agricultural uses in such a way that is compatible with this nature conservation interest.
Detailed Management Proposals

4.157. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- **Nature conservation** – the main issues with respect to Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds are with respect to turbidity and water levels. It is recommended as a matter of urgency that the perceived problems be resolved surrounding the use of the Mockbeggar Silt Ponds, and the strain being placed on the only silt pond that is currently operational. The Water Level Management Plan should be put into effect, based on the preferred option of the southern link between the southernmost silt pond and Ibsley Water. The coarse fish populations should be removed. The silt ponds should be managed as reed beds with areas of open water, whilst ensuring that reedbeds do not develop into willow, and that the variety of habitats proposed in the Original Plan are encouraged to develop.

- **Agriculture** – land to the north and east of Mockbeggar Lakes should be used for agriculture, in particular as back-up grazing for the New Forest, subject to their being no conflict with nature conservation objectives.

- **Access** – As described under the proposals for Ibsley Water, it is proposed that, if feasible, a new north-south permissive footpath be created between Ibsley Lake and Mockbeggar Lakes and silt ponds. This could potentially link Mockbeggar Lane in the north to Ellingham Drove in the south. The use of the footpath should be controlled during over-wintering and breeding bird seasons. The possibility of an additional bird hide to be accessed from the footpath should be considered. Figure 4.4 indicates two potential routes and indicative hide locations, which should be investigated further to determine their feasibility and potential effects. Such investigations should consider appropriate controls over use of the footpath, such as seasonal opening, access restricted to certain interest groups (e.g. for education or nature conservation), and access arrangements applying to dogs. The Hampshire Wildlife Trust Water Management Plan suggests that any walkway(s) should be screened/sunken.

**Moreys Lakes (includes Goblin’s Lake, King’s Lake, Meadow Lake, and Vincent Lake, and the area of Blashford Quarry west of the A338, and south of Ellingham Drove)**

**Ownership**

4.158. Moreys Lakes are owned by Somerley Estate.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.159. The Original Plan states that it was anticipated that the final uses of this area would continue to be determined by the local planning authority. As a result, there were no detailed proposals put forward, but the following issues were covered:

- Parts of the complex (Goblin’s Lake and the stock pond) were due to be infilled.

- Fishing was anticipated to continue on the remaining lakes, while opportunities for environmental enhancement should be considered.
• The western margins adjacent to the Avon Valley may offer scope for nature conservation development and enhancement by the creation of shallows and planting of appropriate species.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.160. Fishing takes place on Meadow Lake, King’s Lake and Vincent Lake by Christchurch Angling Club, with access from the A388 to parking to the north of Meadow Lake. Goblin’s Lake and Pond have some nature conservation value. Somerley Estate has sporting rights.

4.161. The lakes are within the area of the former Blashford Quarry (which also extends north to cover North Somerley Lake). Current restoration plans are subject to the completion of a legal agreement, but include a proposed new footpath to the west of the A338 in the vicinity of Goblin’s Lake, and other proposals to improve nature conservation.

4.162. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Moreys Lakes.

4.163. Whilst these lakes may have some effect on the bird populations, they were not considered within the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment, as they do not contribute significantly to the SPA. Impacts are unlikely to contribute significantly towards any cumulative effects. Moreys Lakes are not subject to any conservation designations.

4.164. To the east of the group of lakes making up Moreys Lakes lie Shaves Green and Goblin’s Green, the latter being associated with Blashford Farm.

4.165. The area of land to the north of Goblin’s Lake, west of the A338 and south of Ellingham Drove, is part of Blashford Quarry currently being worked by Tarmac, and is subject to a restoration proposal to restore largely to agriculture (grazing) and woodland.

4.166. Between Ellingham Drove and Goblin’s Lake is the location of the Blashford Quarry plant site. This plant is of strategic importance to Hampshire County Council’s planning and management of minerals of waste in the county.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.167. The overall objectives for Morey’s Lakes are to:

• Safeguard the Blashford Quarry plant site for minerals/waste processing, until the appropriate time for restoration to agriculture and woodland that part of Blashford Quarry included within this area, which should also be managed for nature conservation, together with access improvements.

• Maintain fishing on Meadow Lake, King’s Lake and Vincent Lake. Safeguard Goblin’s Lake for nature conservation, and improve the nature conservation value of the Morey’s Lake group of lakes in general.


**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.168. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- **Blashford Quarry plant site** – the South East Regional Minerals Strategy Consultation Draft (South East England Regional Assembly, September 2003) stresses the need to identify sites for processing/recycling of minerals, and so this site may need to continue as a processing/recycling site for the foreseeable future, taking into account its existing established use and easily accessible location off the A338. In the longer term, and only at such time that the need for processing/recycling at this location no longer is required, restoration to agriculture (grazing) and woodland should take place, in line with the proposals submitted by Tarmac to Hampshire County Council. If and when this takes place, care should be taken to ensure that the restoration is in character with the open character of the Avon Valley, as appropriate, and that opportunities to incorporate features of benefit for nature conservation are incorporated, including the planting of native hedgerow and tree species as appropriate. Any fill used for restoration should not pose a risk of pollution to groundwater or watercourses.

- **Fishing** – Meadow Lake, King’s Lake and Vincent Lake should continue to be used for fishing in line with current arrangements.

- **Nature conservation** – Goblin’s Lake should be primarily safeguarded for nature conservation. The lake should be surveyed to determine its current ecological status, and proposals introduced to improve its nature conservation value and management. Shaves Green and Goblin’s Green should similarly be surveyed and their nature conservation value improved where possible, such as the control of scrub and encouragement of flower-rich meadow habitats. Nature conservation management should include the monitoring of New Zealand pigmyweed on the lakes and of Japanese knotweed on Meadow Lake. Every effort should be made to maximise the biodiversity potential in the wider countryside.

- **Access** - a public footpath/cycleway should be introduced to link with the existing public footpath that runs northwards from Ford Cottage to Goblins Green (which should be upgraded to facilitate cycling). This footpath/cycleway should run via Shaves Green to be aligned parallel to the A338, and be screened by appropriate planting from A338 as shown in the proposed restoration plan. Given that this part of the Blashford Lakes study area is not subject to nature conservation designations, it is considered that if possible this should become a public right of way, rather than a permissive route.

**North Somerley Lake**

**Ownership**

4.169. The freehold of North Somerley Lake is owned by Somerley Estate, with Wessex Water as leaseholder.
Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.170. At the time of the Original Plan, this area was still being worked by Tarmac for minerals. It was envisaged, at that time, that:

- The lake would be brought into the water storage and supply scheme.
- The final uses were to be in accordance with the planning consent at the time, with restoration after use being fishing, with opportunities to develop the area’s nature conservation value.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.171. Mineral extraction by Tarmac is complete. However, restoration has not yet taken place.

4.172. Planning permission is soon to be issued to vary restoration plans to create a small, narrow lake with a reed bed in the northern part of the site, and the southern part of the site to be returned to grazing through infilling with silt from the Blashford plant. Legal agreements have been drawn up for nature conservation management and a bridleway along the eastern edge of the site. These should be signed in the near future. However, Hampshire County Council state that the future need for North Somerley Lake as a future silt lagoon should not be ruled out, since it may be required if an application to process mineral from Plumbley Wood Preferred Area is ever received and approved.

4.173. The lake is also part of the second stage of the water storage and supply scheme granted permission in 1992. However, there are no current plans to bring the lake into use for water storage.

4.174. Somerley Estate has shooting rights. Fishing rights have been sold to Wessex Water.

4.175. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on North Somerley Lake.

4.176. Although not the subject of any nature conservation designations, the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that the existing lake that has been created from mineral extraction makes a useful contribution to the SPA in terms of the total waterfowl population and the numbers of gadwall. As such, it is considered to be in favourable condition. However, shooting and fishing rights are both likely to disturb over-wintering birds and cause an adverse effect (if unregulated). The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment also maintains that the re-engineering of this lake either to create a new silt lagoon to achieve the planned restoration profile or for the use in connection with water supply will have a direct impact on the plants that have colonised the lake and is likely to create turbid water. This is likely to have an adverse effect. The proposed bridleway along the east is likely to disturb waterfowl unless adequate restrictions on access are imposed and the path is suitably screened. Without these mitigation measures, the bridleway is likely to have an adverse effect.
Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.177. The overall objective for North Somerley Lake is to:

- Successfully restore the lake to the north for nature conservation, and safeguard future use for water storage purposes if this is required.
- To restore the land to the south for agriculture.
- To provide for access compatible with the lake’s nature conservation interest.

Detailed Management Proposals

4.178. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- Nature conservation – the nature conservation potential of the lake and its surrounding land should be realised. However, it is recognised that this management unit is not within the part of Blashford Lakes study area that is the subject of nature conservation designations, even though it makes a contribution to those designations. Therefore, other uses for this lake including its use for water storage should be accommodated if required. A review of the restoration and construction of the silt lagoons is required to ensure that the current ecological value is not affected.

- Agriculture – the southern part of the management unit should be restored to agriculture as proposed, with nature conservation benefits sought where possible.

- Water storage and supply – North Somerley Lake should be safeguarded for water storage purposes, potentially as a further intake pound if required.

- Access – although the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that there is potential for disturbance to the lake from a footpath, it is proposed that the bridleway/cycleway be extended along the eastern boundary of the management unit to link in with the footpath to the south of Ellingham Drove. This will enable people to walk, ride or cycle away from the road, and also reduce potential disturbance to the designated Ibsley Water to the east of the A338. It is proposed that appropriate planting take place between North Somerley Lake and the bridleway/cycleway in order to reduce the risk of disturbance to overwintering waterfowl on the lake. It is recommended that the bridleway be secured as a definitive public right of way, if possible.

- Shooting – this is an important resource for the Somerley Estate but concerns exist about the effect that shooting may be having on internationally and nationally important bird species. In addition, there are potential concerns about risks to public health and safety, for example to users of the bridleway/cycleway. The effects of shooting should continue to be monitored and managed to reduce any adverse effects on internationally and nationally important bird species. Ideally, shooting should stop altogether.
Poulner (Northfield) Lake

Ownership

4.179. Poulner Lake is owned by Ringwood & District Anglers Association.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.180. The Original Plan stated that:

- The silt lagoons at Poulner were too steep and too actively used to be of any ecological interest, but that in the longer term they may present an opportunity for nature conservation enhancement.

- Poulner Lake’s wooded and shallow margins may have nature conservation potential and therefore should be evaluated for potential enhancement.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.181. Fishing takes place at fixed swims by the Ringwood & District Anglers Association. The management unit contains a private access road and small car park for members.

4.182. There is some nature conservation interest in the form of bankside vegetation. However, the lake does not appear to contribute to the SPA in terms of bird numbers. Japanese knotweed is present at the lake.

4.183. Poulner Lake is not covered by nature designations and was not specifically assessed under the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment. The western part of Poulner Lake is proposed for inclusion in Gorley Road Toad Pond Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), which is a local designation proposed by Hampshire County Council through the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration.

4.184. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Poulner Lake. The lake was also included under Policy AV-6 as part of a proposed Country Recreation Area intended to improve informal recreation facilities for Ringwood and reduce pressures on the New Forest. A permissive footpath, proposed also as a cycleway under policy DW-T14.20 of the Adopted Local Plan, runs adjacent to the western bank of Poulner Lake.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.185. The overall objective for Poulner Lake is to:

- Retain the use of the lake for fishing, but to improve the lake’s overall nature conservation and amenity interest.

Detailed Management Proposals

4.186. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- Fishing – whilst it is proposed that fishing should continue, Ringwood & District Anglers Association should be encouraged to enhance the nature conservation
interest of the lake, particularly in relation to introducing sloping banks and to encourage aquatic plant colonisation.

- **Nature conservation** – the steep banks offer potential nesting habitat for kingfisher and sand martin. Selective planting of the borders of the lake with native trees and shrubs would help to screen the lake further and improve nature conservation interest provided this does not result in significant shading of the littoral edge habitats. More shallow water habitats should be created where appropriate. The potential existence of the population of common toads should be ascertained, and if they exist, their protection from disturbance and adverse impacts sought through designation as a SINC.

- **Amenity** – Poulner Lake is part of the wider Country Recreation Area in the Local Plan, and opportunities to achieve its full potential for amenity purposes should be pursued. These include education and interpretation, and forging links with the adjoining public open space. Being adjacent to the built up area of Ringwood, this lake and its environs offer a significant opportunity for non-car access close to where people live.

### Rockford Lake

**Ownership**

4.187. Rockford Lake is owned by RMC Aggregates Southern.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.188. In the Original Plan, Rockford Lake was being worked by Hall Aggregates (South Coast) Ltd, and it was envisaged that in the 1990s the lake would be brought into the water storage and supply scheme. The lake was divided into four areas:

- The lake itself was proposed for the same status as Ivy Lake – a strategic reserve, on the assumption that Ibsley, Ellingham and Blashford Lakes were to be primary supply sources. The associated afteruse was to be nature conservation, involving the development of features in appropriate places (spits, refuges, shallows, steep banks) in keeping with water storage requirements, together with a planting scheme directed towards the establishment of a range of suitable habitats. Controlled recreation was to be permitted over a limited area managed on a time-share basis.

- The northern flank, where it lies adjacent to Dockens Water, was proposed to be planted to strengthen and widen the corridor.

- The south-eastern part of the lake and its banks were to be designed to accommodate scoops, islands and shallows, with the objective of nature conservation and enhancement. Whilst the existing public footpath system was to be retained, casual public access was not to be encouraged.

- The most southerly and north-eastern shores were to be developed for bankside angling, subject to agreement, controlled on a time basis so as not to interfere with nature conservation interests at periods of greatest sensitivity. Access was
to be from Ivy Lane, possibly with limited car parking facilities, to be accommodated on the land between south Ivy Lake and south Rockford Lake, screened by existing trees.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.189. Active wet mineral working is being carried out by RMC in the south-west corner of the lake. Extraction will finish by December 2003 and restoration is due to be completed by June 2004. The approved ROMP states that restoration will be to nature conservation purposes and public footpaths, with a detailed restoration plan to be submitted by RMC.

4.190. Unconsented fishing is carried out by Christchurch Angling Club in all areas of the lake apart from where active mineral extraction is taking place.

4.191. The lake is part of the second stage of the water storage and supply scheme granted permission in 1992. Therefore it may be brought into use for water storage in the future, subject to appropriate permissions. There are no plans to use the lake for this purpose at present, and this is not currently an afteruse in the approved ROMP.

4.192. The New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit Draft (February 2003) does not provide for recreational uses on Rockford Lake. Policy AV-1 states that Rockford Lake will be safeguarded for nature conservation, and that development that would prejudice the special interest of the site subject to statutory nature conservation designations will not be permitted.

4.193. The eastern two-thirds of the lake is designated as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that the lake is considered to be in unfavourable condition due to the high levels of water turbidity caused by the ongoing extraction of minerals by wet-working methods. It is anticipated that when mineral operations cease, and water turbidity reduces, conditions will be suitable for the growth of submerged aquatic plants.

4.194. The footpath to the north of the lake has open access and its use is considered likely to disturb any waterfowl that in future may use the lake. Whilst fishing does not currently affect the lake’s nature conservation interest (as turbidity is the major adverse effect at present), it may do in future unless adequately controlled.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.195. The primary objective for Rockford Lake should be to:

- Ensure that the lake is restored to favourable condition for nature conservation. Whilst this objective should be sought during on-going mineral working where possible, it should become a requirement once mineral working has ceased.

4.196. In addition, other uses could be considered for this lake to take the pressure of recreational activity off other lakes, and in the light that this Strategic Management Plan suggests that water-borne recreation should not take place at Ibsley Water. However, if such activity were to take place, it would need to be in a controlled manner that does not significantly affect the lake’s nature conservation interest. Such
ancillary uses could include water storage and supply, non-motorised water sports, fishing, and public access. If such uses were to be permitted, this would require an amendment to Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.197. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- **Nature conservation** – the proposals set out in the Original Plan should be pursued, so that the lake reaches its full potential. This will include development of features in appropriate places (spits, refuges, shallows, steep banks) in keeping with water storage requirements, together with a planting scheme directed towards the establishment of a range of suitable habitats, subject to detailed ecological survey. The southeastern lake margins should be designed to accommodate scoops, islands and shallows, with the objective of nature conservation and enhancement. Monitoring of alien species, New Zealand pigmyweed should take place, and a programme of control implemented.

4.198. All the following proposals should only be introduced following an assessment of the potential impacts on the nature conservation interest of the management unit, to ensure that there is no significant conflict with its designation as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site:

- **Water storage and supply** – the potential use of Rockford Lake for water storage and supply has long been recognised, but in line with previous reports, this should be as a secondary source to the primary water supply lakes of Blashford, Ellingham and Ibsley Water. Further research should take place to establish the appropriate regime for managing water levels and water supply in order to be consistent with nature conservation requirements. The use of Rockford Lake for water storage and supply will need to be subject to appropriate permissions.

- **Watersports** - non-motorised watersports, such as sailing or canoeing, should be permitted on the lake, but only during the summer months in order to minimise disturbance to over-wintering waterfowl. The feasibility of sharing use of the Spinnaker Club’s facilities on Blashford Lake should be sought, with additional parking and launch facilities provided to the south of the lake. Other possible access points include in the vicinity of the public house to the east of Rockford Lake. However, it may be more appropriate to consider access for watersports from the northern shore of Rockford Lake, utilising the proposed parking on the hard standing off Ellingham Drove. The need for launch, storage, boat/canoe parking, and changing facilities would need to be the subject of a detailed study, which should consider demand and potential users, funding, detailed issues regarding siting and management, and potential effects on nature conservation including Dockens Water, which would need to be bridged in order to reach Rockford Lake. Provision for use by nearby Moyles Court School should be explored. Only if it can be determined that such activity and facilities can be introduced without significant adverse effects on nature conservation objectives, should they be allowed to proceed, and monitoring should take place to ensure that no adverse effects occur in practice.
• Fishing - it is proposed that, should fishing be permitted, it should take place along the northern shore, with a closed season is introduced in the winter months in order to minimise disturbance to waterfowl. The effects of fishing on nature conservation objectives should be monitored.

• Access - a north-south footpath is proposed to the west of Rockford Lake, to connect to the north with the footpath alongside Dockens Water and Ellingham Drove, and the proposed north-south footpath adjacent to Ibsley Water. To the south, the footpath should connect with Ivy Lane and beyond to the footpath alongside Blashford Lake. The use of the footpath should be screened by selective planting to reduce possible disturbance to overwintering waterfowl. The path should be permissive, with access during the over-wintering waterfowl season restricted. A bird hide could be located along this path to provide views of Rockford Lake and/or Ivy Lake. The existing footpath to the north of Rockford Lake should be better screened from the lake, by the planting of low shrubs to minimise disturbance to waterfowl.

Snails Lake

Ownership

4.199. Snails Lake is owned by RMC Aggregates Southern.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.200. As Snails Lake lies outside the scope of Wessex Water, it was assumed in the Original Plan that the use of this area was to be determined by the local planning authority. Because of the doubts that existed over the lake at the time of the Original Plan (i.e. whether it was to be used for board sailing, an emergency supply of water to Wessex Water, or the disposal of silt), it was proposed that investigations be undertaken to ascertain if infilling could be engineered in such a way as to permit a shallow body of water to remain of the same area as the lake existing at that time to allow the continuation of some recreation activities.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.201. Fishing, which does not have consent and is unregulated, takes place by Christchurch Angling Club along all of the banks of the lake except the eastern bank adjacent to the haul road. This is still used by RMC to transport material from Rockford Lake to the processing plant. Part of the haul road will subsequently be excavated for sand/gravel by RMC. Windsurfing has now ceased and, under the ROMP, the whole lake is to be managed for nature conservation as part of the legal agreement. Residential development abuts the lake on the central northern and central southern shores.

4.202. Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) states that recreational uses will be permitted on Snails Lake, which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests.
4.203. Snails Lake is designated as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. There is some bird interest, especially when shooting is being carried out at Mockbeggar/Ibsley Water, when displaced birds are thought to move onto this lake. The lake rarely makes a significant contribution to total waterfowl. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment notes that numbers of coot have decreased, and the numbers of gadwall using the lake have dramatically reduced in the past two years. Whilst the reasons for this are unclear, the lake may now be in an unfavourable condition. Changes in the aquatic plants due to the presence of alien species (e.g. New Zealand pigmyweed), or from excessive fish stocking could be contributory factors, and there is also the potential for increased disturbance from anglers. The Avon Valley Path runs adjacent to the lake along its eastern border.

4.204. Future extraction of the remaining minerals could cause turbid water with a potential knock-on negative effect on aquatic plant growth and use by waterfowl, which is likely to cause an adverse effect.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.205. The overall objectives for Snails Lake should be to:

- Ensure that the lake is restored to favourable condition for nature conservation. Whilst this objective should be sought during on-going mineral working where possible, it should become a requirement once mineral working has ceased.

- Allow fishing to continue only when its effects on the integrity of the lake for nature conservation have been determined.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.206. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- Nature conservation – Snails Lake should be returned to favourable condition for nature conservation, as soon as possible, and certainly following cessation of mineral extraction. The ecological status of the lake should be determined, particularly with respect to its low bird numbers, in order that the causes are established and management responses formulated. Monitoring and control of alien species should take place. Controls should be agreed with the mineral developer to reduce disturbance to the lake, and to minimise the risk of the water becoming turbid during gravel extraction.

- Fishing – the continuation of fishing should be reviewed. It should be subject to the appropriate permissions, and should only be allowed to continue once its effects on the condition of the lake have been established, and it can be demonstrated that it can take place without adverse effect on the lake’s nature conservation status. If it were to continue, appropriate controls are likely to be needed, for example, with respect to the stocking of fish species, and the time-limiting of fishing, so that over-wintering waterfowl are not disturbed. It may also be necessary to restrict fishing to fewer locations around the lake in order to minimise disturbance.
Wash Pit

Ownership

4.207. The Wash Pit is owned by Ringwood & District Anglers Association.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.208. The Wash Pit fell outside the scope of the Original Plan, and therefore no proposals were put forward.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.209. This is a small privately owned lake close to the residential area of Ringwood. In addition to fishing, there is also evidence of fish rearing. There is minimal nature conservation interest at the lake. Japanese knotweed and New Zealand pigmyweed are present.

4.210. The lake is not subject to any nature conservation designations. The Wash Pit was included under Policy AV-6 of the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) as part of a proposed Country Recreation Area intended to improve informal recreation facilities for Ringwood and reduce pressures on the New Forest.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.211. The overall objective for the Wash Pit is to:

• Maintain fishing on the lake and to carry out nature conservation management where appropriate, and improve its amenity interest.

Detailed Management Proposals

4.212. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• Nature conservation – the owners of the Wash Pit should be advised of enhancement measures that could be undertaken to improve the nature conservation interest of the Wash Pit, such as the management of alien species including Japanese knotweed and New Zealand pigmyweed.

• Fishing – fishing should be allowed to continue, with due regard given to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects on the nature conservation interest. If significant adverse effects are established, then appropriate controls should be introduced to minimise such effects.

• Access – the potential for improving the accessibility and interpretation of the Wash Pit should be investigated, in order to improve the interest for casual users of this part of the Blashford Lakes study area.
PROPOSALS FOR WATERCOURSE MANAGEMENT UNITS

Dockens Water

Ownership

4.213. Dockens Water passes through various ownerships within the Blashford Lakes study area.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.214. Dockens Water was not identified as a separate management unit in the Original Plan. However, proposals for Dockens Water were identified within some of the other land management units. These comprised:

- Strengthening and extending the corridor to the west of Ivy Lake, with no access on a casual basis for members of the public. To the north and south-west of Ivy Lake, additional planting to act as buffer zones to inhibit access into the corridor was suggested, with access for nature conservation interests agreed and managed by Wessex Water, and members of the public encouraged to use other areas.

- The eastern and southern margins of Ellingham Lake were to remain as a buffer between the lake and the Dockens Water corridor with appropriate planting to inhibit casual public access to the corridor at the northern and southern ends, although with provision for naturalists on a managed basis.

- Planting undertaken to the northern flank of Rockford Lake to strengthen and widen the corridor.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.215. Dockens Water has high nature conservation importance being designated as an SSSI and candidate SAC. To the west of the study area, it becomes part of the Avon Valley SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. Dockens Water is an acid stream draining the New Forest heathlands supporting plant communities that are more characteristic of bogs than rivers.

4.216. The stream is likely to be valuable for breeding salmonid fish species, and also for bullhead.

4.217. The course of Dockens Water has been changed due to mineral workings at Ellingham Lake. The relationship between Dockens Water and surrounding drainage and water-bodies is quite complex, with links between Mockbeggar Lake, Ellingham Lake and Ivy Lake and silt lagoon all potentially having an effect on the integrity of Dockens Water. The relationship is described in detail in the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment. The main issues for Dockens Water with respect to drainage are:

- The effects of drainage from Ivy Lake silt lagoon (which acts as an overflow from Ivy Lake, and from Mockbeggar Lake via Ivy Lake when water levels in Mockbeggar are above 21.68m AOD).
• The breaching of the channel of Dockens Water during times of high flow, draining into the silt lagoon, which combined with overflows from Ivy Lake, mean that flows out of the silt lagoon are uncontrolled.

• Unstable banks arising from the deepening of Ellingham Lake, with the potential for the narrow margin between the lake and Dockens Water to be breached, which would result in Dockens Water draining into Ellingham Lake.

4.218. Elsewhere, the main issues are in relation to Dockens Water are:

• Vulnerability to disturbance arising from footpath access adjacent to Dockens Water, for example where it flows between Rockford Lake and Ellingham Drove.

• The presence of alien species, such as Himalayan balsam, and possibly signal crayfish.

4.219. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that Dockens Water, in the vicinity of the mineral workings, is considered to be in unfavourable condition. The mineral extraction activities have reduced the extent of the surface water channels and the flow rates. Alien species, such as signal crayfish, are likely to have a significant effect. It is possible that they have spread along the corridor from the River Avon.

4.220. The stream is used by the Blashford Study Centre for educational purposes.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.221. To overall objectives for Dockens Water are to:

• Return the watercourse to favourable condition for nature conservation.

• Provide for educational interpretation.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.222. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• Nature conservation – it is clear that there are a number of issues relating to Dockens Water that require further investigation and resolution. The first of these is with respect to the relationship between Dockens Water and Ellingham Lake, Ivy Lake and silt lagoon, and on occasion Mockbeggar Lake. It is recommended that detailed examination of the operation of sluice gates, water level management regimes between the lakes and silt lagoon, and the stability of the bank between Dockens Water and Ellingham Lake is undertaken, and proposals drawn up to ensure that the integrity of Dockens Water is maintained. With respect to alien species, a survey is required to determine the presence of signal crayfish, and management controls introduced to minimise any potential adverse effects. In line with the Original Plan, the Dockens Water corridor throughout the Blashford Lakes study area should be strengthened with appropriate planting to discourage casual access.
• Educational interpretation – the Dockens Water corridor represents an important educational resource, linked to the Blashford Study Centre, and it is proposed that controlled access for this purpose be maintained and improved.

4.223. The EU LIFE in Rivers project may provide a source of funds for the above work.

**Lin Brook Corridor**

4.224. The Lin Brook passes through various ownerships within the Blashford Lakes study area.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.225. The full length of the Lin Brook was not identified as a separate management unit in the Original Plan. However, it was recommended that the Lin Brook corridor offered an opportunity for environmental enhancement strengthening relationships with both amenity and more general nature conservation interests, through an improved footpath system combined with habitat development and enhancement where appropriate.

**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.226. The Lin Brook does not fall within any nature conservation designations, although it flows just to the south of Linbrook Lake which is designated as an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

4.227. Whilst there is less information on the ecological status of Lin Brook than Dockens Water, it appears to have similar nature conservation interest. A footpath currently runs alongside the whole length of the Lin Brook. Around Kingfisher Lake, this becomes the Avon Valley Path.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.228. The overall objectives of the Lin Brook are to:

• Enhance the nature conservation potential of the watercourse and corridor.

• Improve managed access to it for amenity and educational purposes.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.229. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• Nature conservation – it is recommended that an ecological survey of the Lin Brook take place to determine its ecological status, and to identify where management measures are required. The aim of management should be to strengthen the integrity of the corridor and to improve its nature conservation value. For example, it may be appropriate to open up selected sections of the Lin Brook to increase light penetration. Any alien species identified should also be controlled.
• Access – the footpath adjacent to the Lin Brook should be reviewed to ensure that it is provides an attractive amenity resource. However, buffer planting should be considered where it is thought that damage to its nature conservation interest might arise, and in order to strengthen the integrity of the corridor.

PROPOSALS FOR LAND BASED MANAGEMENT UNITS

Blashford Study Centre

4.230. Blashford Study Centre is owned and funded by the Blashford Partnership.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.231. The Original Plan recommended that:

• A field studies centre be provided to the south-east of Ibsley Water to provide a focus for nature conservation interests, and a limited commercial function (e.g. shop/cafeteria) for both education groups and other members of the public.

• Any interpretation/information function should seek to provide an overall appreciation of the lakes area embracing sand and gravel extraction, agriculture and forestry, water storage and supply, recreation, amenity, nature conservation, historical heritage (e.g. the former airfield), and game conservancy interests, rather than be limited to any one particular group.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.232. It was decided to locate the Blashford Study Centre to the east of Ellingham Pound, with access from Ellingham Drove. A warden is employed by Hampshire Wildlife Trust, and funded by the Blashford Partnership.

4.233. The Study Centre is currently only used for educational purposes, primarily for school groups. There is no shop/cafeteria, and so it does not act as a Visitor Centre.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.234. The overall objective for Blashford Study Centre is to:

• Build on the success of the Study Centre, by appealing to a wider range of users, and by creating further links to areas of interest in the Blashford Lakes study area.

Detailed Management Proposals

4.235. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

• Education – the Blashford Study Centre should be promoted to a wider range of interests beyond schools (e.g. local residents groups, further education, cubs, scouts, guides, etc., organised parties, and local users such as anglers).

• Visitor Centre – it is acknowledged that the case still needs to be made for extending the facilities of the Study Centre to include provision for visitors to Blashford Lakes, both organised parties and casual visitors. It is recommended
that this should nonetheless be the aim in the medium term, to make best use of the resource that exists. In the summer, it is likely that this could would cater for a wide range of interests, whereas in the winter months, specific activities linked to bird watching and nature conservation could be provided for. There may need to be a need to consider how parking at the centre could be expanded or formalised to cater for larger numbers without damaging nature conservation interests, with an overflow car park at the hard standing off Ellingham Drove (see below), linked by footpath access. Provision should also be made for safe cycle parking. The potential for low-key café and shop facilities should be investigated as part of the Study Centre range of facilities provided.

- Interpretation – the interpretation provided within the Centre is currently of a good standard. It is proposed that interpretation facilities be introduced at key points of interest (e.g. Dockens Water, Hides, viewpoints, car parking, etc.) around Blashford Lakes, linking into the Study Centre by access paths. The Strategic Management Plan recommends that, where there is likely to be a potential conflict with nature conservation objectives (e.g. over-wintering waterfowl or breeding birds), these access paths should be permissive, and managed to prevent disturbance.

4.236. Any proposals for future use of the Blashford Study Centre and related facilities including access will need to take into account potential impacts on nature conservation represented by the designations that apply to this part of the Blashford Lakes study area.

Hardstanding and Land at Ellingham Drove

Ownership

4.237. The hardstanding and land at Ellingham Drove is owned by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.238. It was assumed at the time of the Original Plan that this area at some point may be developed and restored to an agreed afteruse, and that Wessex Water may be interested in its potential for water storage or development. No specific recommendations were put forward, although it was recognised that the site could be put to a number of uses including limited water storage, restoration to wetland nature conservation, possibly site for field studies/interpretation centre plus car parking, agriculture/woodland/amenity. Access would be from Ellingham Drove.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.239. The hard standing and access onto Ellingham Drove is not to be worked for minerals. The site is screened from Rockford Lake by a belt of trees and shrubs, but it has an open aspect onto Ellingham Drove. Its contribution to the character and identity of the area is currently very limited. The land is sometimes used for horse grazing.
4.240. The Blashford Study Centre has now been established north of Ivy Lake, and so it is unlikely that there will be sufficient demand for a second field studies/interpretation centre.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.241. The overall objective for the hard standing is to:

- Optimise its potential for nature conservation.
- Consider its potential for incorporating agricultural uses.
- Provide for parking associated with footpath network, and potentially a location to access Rockford Lake for water based recreation.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.242. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- Nature conservation – the ecological status of the hardstanding area should be assessed, and where possible management undertaken to improve its potential.
- Agriculture – the sites offers potential for agriculture, in particular as back-up grazing for the New Forest, which should be investigated as part of the package of uses for this site.
- Parking – this site offers some potential for car parking for visitors and users of Blashford Lakes and its footpath networks, plus a secondary access point for the Study Centre. Any car park should make provision for ‘blue badge’ holders, and should include an interpretation board explaining the interest of the Blashford Lakes study area, and how to respect its interest. The car park should be suitably screened by native tree and scrub planting, whilst ensuring that the security of cars is not compromised. The proposals for Rockford Lake identify the possible opportunity to use the lake in the summer months for water-based recreation, subject to strict criteria being met, particularly with regard to nature conservation objectives. If it can be shown that such uses can take place without significant adverse effects, and the need for additional facilities is justified, then the hardstanding may offer an appropriate location for access to the lake.

**Ibsley Control Tower and Associated Land to the South**

**Ownership**

4.243. Ibsley Control Tower is owned by Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company. The landowner of the woodland to the south is not known.

**Management Proposals in the Original Plan**

4.244. Ibsley Control Tower was not addressed in the Original Plan.
**Current Character, Status and Activities**

4.245. Ibsley Control Tower is associated with the former Ibsley airfield. The building is of significant heritage interest, but is in a poor state of repair. The Tower lies within the SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.

4.246. The Control Tower is advantageously located with views across Mockbeggar Lake and Silt Ponds, and towards the New Forest in the east.

4.247. The condition and interest of the woodland to the south of Control Tower is not known, but is believed to contain both coniferous and deciduous species. Ordnance survey maps state that the woodland includes a ‘Fir Walk’ to the west and a ‘Cherry Orchard’ in the east. To the south of the woodland is a school and playing fields.

**Overall Objectives for Management Unit**

4.248. The overall objective should be to:

- Investigate the feasibility of using Ibsley Control Tower for interpretation and as a viewpoint.

**Detailed Management Proposals**

4.249. The detailed management proposals with respect to this management unit are as follows:

- Interpretation and access – Ibsley Control Tower represents a potential asset to the Blashford Lakes study area, given its location and history. The main issues are with respect to funding and access (see below). To bring the Tower back into good condition, and to convert into a location for historical and nature conservation interpretation, and a viewpoint across the lakes, is likely to be expensive. Nonetheless, this potential, and possible sources of funding, should be explored.

- Access – this is potentially a sensitive issue given the designations that apply to the site. Ideally, access would be through the woodland to the south of the Tower, so that it could link into the footpath network that links to Blashford Study Centre. Access to the west of the woodland may cause too much disturbance to Mockbeggar Lakes, but should nonetheless be investigated. Alternatively, access could be provided from lane to the east of the Tower, with a small car park introduced for users. In any event, access may need to be permissive for the benefit of specified users, and at certain times of the day/year to prevent either harm to nature conservation interests, or vandalism to the Tower itself.

4.250. Any proposals for future use of the Ibsley Control Tower and related facilities including access will need to take into account potential impacts on nature conservation represented by the designations that apply to this part of the Blashford Lakes study area.
Land in the Vicinity of Wessex Water Treatment Plant

Ownership

4.251. The Treatment Plant is owned by Wessex Water.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.252. No specific proposals were included in the Original Plan for this management unit.

Current Character, Status and Activities

4.253. The land near the Wessex Water Treatment Plant is important for lower plants, mosses and lichens, and associated invertebrate populations. It is currently not being managed actively, with rabbit grazing controlling the sward.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.254. The overall objectives for this management unit are to:

- Investigate and manage for nature conservation.
- Provide an access link between car parking north of Rockford Lake and the Blashford Study Centre.

Detailed Management Proposals

4.255. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- Nature conservation – an ecological survey should be undertaken to understand the management unit’s nature conservation interest and potential. From this, management recommendations can be established, although it may be most appropriate to allow it to be managed naturally by rabbits.

- Access – currently there is a missing link between Rockford Lake and Blashford Study Centre, to the north of the Treatment Plant. It is recommended that a permissive link is introduced to complete this link, and allow access from the proposed car park on the hard standing off Ellingham Drove to the Blashford Study Centre, and to some of the area’s points of interest. An interpretation board explaining the purpose and workings of the Treatment Plant could be established at a suitable location along this path, and the possibility of educational visits to the Treatment Plant investigated.

Public Open Space North of Wash Pit

Ownership

4.256. The public open space north of the Wash Pit is owned by Ringwood Town Council.

Management Proposals in the Original Plan

4.257. No specific proposals were included in the Original Plan for this management unit.
Current Character, Status and Activities

4.258. The public open space to the north of the Wash Pit was included in the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration Revised Deposit (February 2003) as part of a Country Recreation Area to the north of Ringwood (Policy AV-6), intended to improve informal recreation facilities for Ringwood and reduce pressures on the New Forest. Under Policy DW-T14.20, it was proposed that a cycleway be constructed to the Countryside Recreation Area, from Poulner Road northward adjoining Poulner Lake. Whilst used an amenity area, the public open space is in need of management to fulfil its potential.

Overall Objectives for Management Unit

4.259. The overall objective for this management unit is to:

- Improve the management and access of the public open space for the benefit of the public and nature conservation

Detailed Management Proposals

4.260. The detailed management proposals with respect to each use are as follows:

- Nature conservation – this site should be surveyed for its ecological potential and management recommendations formulated to improve its ecological interest. It is likely that this potential includes species-rich meadow, which would need to be managed through an appropriate grass-cutting regime, with removal of arisings to prevent nutrient build-up.

- Amenity – the facilities provided at the public open space need to evaluated and reviewed for the variety, suitability and condition. The open space needs to be made more welcoming to all, with a diversity of habitats and congregational areas (e.g. for picnics, children’s play areas), and interpretation of the surrounding points of interest (e.g. Poulner Lake, the Wash Pit, and Lin Brook). Access by walking and cycling should be encouraged for residents of Ringwood, and also for visitors to the area.
5. IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

5.1. This section sets out ways in which the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan can be delivered and managed. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of those bodies, organisations and individuals with an interest in the study area. Key actions to implement the Plan, and recommendations for its monitoring and are put forward.

BLASHFORD LAKES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

5.2. One of the key principles of the Plan is to:

‘Implement the Strategic Management Plan through engagement with landowners, users of the lakes, local residents, and other interest groups, under the continued auspices of the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee, with the aim of extending its remit to cover those lakes currently outside the ownership of the water companies’

5.3. The Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee is an advisory body for those who will be involved in implementing the Strategic Management Plan. As such, it has no specific powers, nor does it have its own source of funding. However, it provides the main forum by which the different organisations and individuals with an interest in the Blashford Lakes study area can express their views and have an influence over how proposals are taken forward.

5.4. The Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee comprises representatives of all the relevant stakeholders who have an interest in Blashford Lakes, including landowners, recreational groups, County and District Councils, Government agencies, and NGOs such as the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. It meets bi-annually to consider the future of the Blashford Lakes area. There is also a separate Footpath Group of the Consultative Committee, which is involved with advising on footpath proposals at the lakes.

5.5. The Strategic Management Plan should act as a reference point for the Consultative Committee to guide the future of the study area. As the Strategic Management Plan has been extended to cover lakes and areas of land additional to those that were included within the Original Plan, it is suggested that additional stakeholders are invited to join the Consultative Committee, where they have specific responsibilities, interests or contributions to make, particularly landowners who are not currently represented on the Committee (Key Action 24).

5.6. The Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee is currently chaired by a representative of the water companies. Whilst this stewardship has worked well to date, serving the Blashford Lakes study area to good effect, the introduction of a new Strategic Management Plan offers the opportunity to review whether this is the most appropriate arrangement for the future, particularly as the study area has now been extended to cover significant tracts of land outside of the ownership of the water companies.
5.7. Given this context, and the diversity of interests in the Blashford Lakes study area, it is recommended that a new chair for the Consultative Committee be considered who would be able to take a wider perspective of the whole study area. In this respect, it would appear that the most appropriate candidate would be New Forest District Council (Key Action 25). As the local planning authority, with a remit to represent and promote the public interest including those living in the District, New Forest District Council is well placed to provide a balanced and objective lead for Blashford Lakes, taking all interests, statutory duties and responsibilities into account.

5.8. These arrangements should be subject to review, pending agreement on the respective roles and duties of the New Forest National Park Authority, once established. In any event, the National Park Authority, once established, should be invited to join the Consultative Committee.

BLASHFORD LAKES STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

5.9. Whilst the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee provides a forum for discussion of matters relating to the study area, an executive vehicle is required to drive forward the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan. This vehicle needs to include organisations that can make things happen.

5.10. The Blashford Lakes Steering Group was set up to oversee the preparation of the Strategic Management Plan, and represents those organisations with statutory regulatory duties, sources of funds, and responsibilities for management of the study area. It is therefore recommended that this Group continue to provide the primary focus for implementing the Strategic Management Plan (Key Action 26). The members of the Blashford Lakes Steering Group are:

- Hampshire County Council (as the minerals and the waste planning authority, the local highways authority, with responsibility also for public rights of way).
- New Forest District Council (as the local planning authority, responsible for local planning policy and for determining applications for all planning proposals with the exception of minerals and waste, and also with a remit for promoting the amenity and recreational enjoyment of the Blashford Lakes area).
- English Nature (the statutory agency for nature conservation, with a specific remit with respect to designated nature conservation sites).
- Environment Agency (as the statutory agency responsible for reviewing and issuing water abstraction licences, and a regulatory role with respect to waste management).
- Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company (as the statutory undertakers for water supply, for which the Blashford Lakes study area is a strategic resource, and as major landowners).
- Hampshire Wildlife Trust (as the manager of land on behalf of the Blashford Lakes Partnership).
5.11. These arrangements should also be subject to review, pending agreement on the respective roles and duties of the New Forest National Park Authority, once established. In any event, the National Park Authority, once established, should be invited to join the Steering Group.

5.12. The role of the Blashford Lakes Steering Group should be to:

- Act as an overseer of activities taking place at Blashford Lakes, to ensure that they are in accordance with the Strategic Management Plan, and to provide advice and information to improve the management of the study area.

- Act as the co-ordinator of ongoing studies and monitoring of the Blashford Lakes study area.

- Be responsible for furthering the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan (e.g. drawing up a detailed action plan, carrying out works and maintenance, education and interpretation, improving and managing access, and management of the study area as a whole).

- Identify and access sources of funding to further the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan.

5.13. The Blashford Lakes Steering Group should meet on a regular basis as required (this will probably be in the region of two to three times a year) to undertake the above activities. It should report progress and any issues arising to the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee, which should play an overseeing role of the work of the Blashford Lakes Steering Group. The tasks to be carried out by the Steering Group should be undertaken without prejudice to the statutory duties of the organisations involved. It is recommended that New Forest District Council act as chair of the Steering Group, and in so doing provide the external reference point for enquiries about the Blashford Lakes study area, including implementation of the Strategic Management Plan, and the work of the Steering Group. This should be reviewed pending the establishment of the New Forest National Park Authority.

THE ROLES OF SPECIFIC STAKEHOLDERS

5.14. There are a number of stakeholders who have a specific role to play in executing the plan and the projects related to it. These are:

- Blashford Lakes Partnership.

- Minerals companies.

- Planning authorities.

- Government agencies.

- Wildlife bodies.

- Other interested parties (e.g. users of the lakes, local residents)
**Blashford Lakes Partnership**

5.15. The Blashford Lakes Partnership comprises Wessex Water, New Forest District Council, Hampshire Wildlife Trust and more recently Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company. Wessex Water and New Forest District Council jointly funded the construction of the Blashford Study Centre and fund the employment of a warden at the Study Centre, under the direction of the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company joined the partnership in 2002 and also contributes funds to the running of the Study Centre.

5.16. The Blashford Lakes Partnership has a specific role to play in implementing the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan. As its members include two of the major landowners in the area (Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company), the local planning authority (New Forest District Council), and one of the main bodies involved in active management of parts of the Blashford Lakes study area (Hampshire Wildlife Trust), it is in a strong position to implement proposals, at least with respect to land under control of the partners. For example, the Partnership may be a potential source of further funding to implement proposals associated with the greater use and possible extension of the Study Centre into a visitors centre.

5.17. The Original Plan was produced by Wessex Water to fulfil a condition attached to Stage 1 of their water storage and supply scheme. Wessex Water contracts Hampshire Wildlife Trust to manage all of their landholding. Wessex Water will therefore be a key player in implementing the proposals relating to their land in the Strategic Management Plan, with the assistance of Hampshire Wildlife Trust.

5.18. Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company is also a large landholder owning Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lakes. Hampshire Wildlife Trust is currently implementing the separate management plan they produced for Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lakes, which is supported by this Strategic Management Plan.

**Mineral Companies**

5.19. Tarmac and RMC Aggregates Southern are landowners at Blashford Lakes, whilst Hanson Aggregates have leased the land required for their mineral working from the water companies.

5.20. Mineral companies are required satisfactorily to restore their mineral sites in line with the permitted restoration plan. They also have a duty of aftercare for a period of five years. Some have entered into legal agreements for the long-term management for nature conservation of restored sites, and for the setting up of Charitable Trusts relating to the local environment. Mineral companies should be encouraged to develop their detailed restoration plans following the guidance in this Strategic Management Plan. Hampshire County Council, as the minerals planning authority, will consider this in their decisions.

5.21. The use of planning conditions attached to planning permissions, and the securing of legal agreements, offer the best opportunity to implement those proposals in the Strategic Management Plan that are linked to mineral workings. The Strategic Management Plan has sought to reflect the ROMPs that have been undertaken by
Hampshire County Council. However, it has sometimes been difficult for Hampshire County Council to achieve all of its preferred intentions for the restoration and management of the lakes. It is hoped that this Strategic Management Plan will give greater weight to the negotiations with the mineral companies to ensure that restoration takes place in accordance with the overall strategy for the Blashford Lakes study area.

Other Landowners

5.22. There are a variety of other landowners at Blashford Lakes including Somerley Estate, the fishing clubs (Christchurch Angling Club and Ringwood and District Anglers Association), and other individual private landowners.

5.23. The objective of the Strategic Management Plan is to try to engage with these landowners in order to encourage them to implement the proposals. The Consultative Committee will be an effective forum in which to discuss potential ways in which landowners can contribute.

5.24. The Hampshire Wildlife Trust, perhaps through the work of the warden based at the Blashford Study Centre, may be able to offer practical advice in relation to more detailed nature conservation management.

Planning Authorities

5.25. Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council should support the implementation of the Strategic Management Plan by taking it into consideration when making planning and policy decisions.

5.26. New Forest District Council are to consider whether to adopt the Strategic Management Plan as supplementary planning guidance/document (SPG/D) to the emerging Local Plan (subject to appropriate public consultation). If adopted as such, the Council will therefore be in a position to consider any future planning applications in light of both Local Plan policies and the SPG/D.

5.27. Hampshire County Council, as minerals planning authority, should consider any subsequent applications to vary restoration plans with regard to the Strategic Management Plan. Similarly where detailed restoration plans have still to be submitted these should also be consistent with the guidance contained in this Strategic Management Plan. The access network should be supported in the Local Transport Plan, in order to encourage people to access the lakes by walking, cycle, or public transport, rather than by car.

5.28. Funding may be available to implement the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan through the satisfactory completion of legal agreements associated with current and any future planning applications. For example, it is proposed to set up a community fund because of a legal agreement to extend the use of the concrete block plant for an additional 10 years by Hanson Con bloc. It may be possible to use part of this fund to implement the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan, particularly those proposals that are improving the enjoyment of the lakes for local residents. Opportunities for funding may also exist through the EU LIFE bid and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
5.29. An important consideration for the future will be the role of the proposed New Forest National Park Authority, and how this relates to the remits of the existing planning authorities. The New Forest National Park will have a duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks by the public. The Environment Act 1995 also gives further provisions for management of national parks and the duties of national park authorities. It gives national park authorities a duty to foster the economic and social well being of their local communities, requires national park authorities to prepare and publish a national park management plan, and makes national park authorities sole planning authorities for their area.

5.30. The Countryside Agency’s advice to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on Special arrangements for a New Forest National Park Authority (Countryside Agency, June, 2001) recommended that the National Park Authority should be the local planning authority for its area, responsible for delivery of functions under section 4a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (including structure planning, local planning, minerals and waste planning and development control), as provided for by section 67 of the 1995 Environment Act. However, it also recommended that the Secretary of State should advise the Authority and local authorities to establish clear, efficient and effective arrangements with neighbouring planning authorities which encompass:

- A joint structure plan (and joint minerals and waste plans) for the National Park, prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority with the Hampshire structure plan authorities, with an advisory role for Dorset and Wiltshire County Councils;

- A joint local plan for the National Park, prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority with New Forest District Council, with an advisory role for the other district councils with land which falls within the national park;

- A locally agreed scheme of delegation by the national park authority to other local authorities for development control casework. Such a scheme might provide for planning decisions with no overall impact on National Park purposes to be taken by local authorities, with the New Forest National Park Authority taking decisions on significant cases and retaining overall responsibility.

5.31. The results of the Inquiry into the New Forest National Park have yet to be published but these will clearly have an important bearing on future regulatory and management arrangements.

**Statutory Agencies**

5.32. Government agencies such as English Nature and the Environment Agency, which have an interest in Blashford Lakes, may be able to support the implementation of the proposals by including them in their own strategies and proposals.
5.33. English Nature is responsible for consenting Operations Likely to Damage (OLDs) and gives advice on planning and policy issues. On occasion it enters into management agreements for specific sites.

5.34. The Environment Agency is responsible for reviewing and issuing abstraction licences, with a view to the protection of the environment as well as maintaining a safe and secure supply of water for public consumption. It also monitors waste management licensed sites and provides comments to Hampshire County Council on waste planning applications as a statutory consultee. The Agency is currently reviewing consents, for which it is the competent authority, within the Avon Valley with respect to the River Avon cSAC and the Avon Valley SPA. The review is considering the potential impacts on designated interests because of a particular consent or combination of consents, such as abstraction licences. The review of consents is now in the Appropriate Assessment stage.

5.35. The Countryside Agency is also likely to have an interest in the lakes, given its remit to protect and enhance the countryside, promote the use and enjoyment of the countryside by those who live and visit it, and to support a thriving working countryside, rural communities, and rural business.

5.36. The Forestry Commission may have an interest in woodland and tree-related issues in the Blashford Lakes study area, including planting and management, taking into account the needs of users and nature conservation, and the impacts of climate change.

**Wildlife Bodies**

5.37. Hampshire Wildlife Trust is already employed by Wessex Water and Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company to manage their landholdings. Therefore, there is an opportunity for the Trust to be involved in the wider proposals in line with the Strategic Management Plan.

5.38. The Hampshire Wildlife Trust also has an opportunity to advise landowners and recreational groups as to the best way to manage their land holding in line with the Strategic Management Plan.

5.39. It may be necessary for specialists to be employed to carry out the ecological and hydrological surveys recommended in Appendix 6.

**Other Interested Parties**

5.40. Other interested parties include local residents, recreational groups, the Parish Council and interest groups, for example the RAF Ipsley Historical Group. It is recommended that these groups be canvassed for their support for the Strategic Management Plan, and possibly invited to join the Consultative Committee where they are not already members. Some, such as the Spinnaker Club and Ivy Water Skiing Club, are already fully engaged in promoting their interests within the wider future of the Blashford Lakes area.

5.41. Widening the use of the Study Centre should also help to gain wider interest in the lakes and support for implementing the proposals in the Strategic Management Plan.
There may also be an opportunity for community groups or individuals to become involved in voluntary nature conservation management, perhaps organised by the Warden at the Study Centre.

**KEY ACTIONS**

5.42. **Table 5.1** summarise the key actions contained in the Strategic Management Plan, and suggests which bodies should be involved in implementation, plus possible sources of funding where appropriate.

**MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN**

5.43. It is recommended that ongoing monitoring of the Strategic Management Plan be overseen by the Blashford Lakes Steering Group, reporting to the Consultative Committee, and planning authorities *(Key Action 27)*.

5.44. The Consultative Committee meetings should continue to be used for members to update others with the current situation with regard to their activity / land holding and any implementation of proposals in the Strategic Management Plan. Consideration should be given to the setting up of additional sub-committees should, in addition to the footpath sub-committee, in order to focus activities. Education and interpretation, and sport and recreation, are two areas where specific work needs to be carried out *(Key Action 28)*.

5.45. The Strategic Management Plan should be reviewed in approximately five years’ time *(Key Action 29)*. As was described in Chapter 3, it is envisaged that the more detailed management proposals will need to be reviewed on a more frequent basis than the Key Principles underpinning the Strategic Management Plan. The Strategic Management Plan will be key in influencing the restoration and aftercare of the four remaining minerals sites. Following the completion of works, there will be less opportunity for influencing changes in land use, but there will be a continuing requirement for the effective management of uses at Blashford Lakes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Ref.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Overseeing bodies</th>
<th>Implementing bodies/mechanisms</th>
<th>Key Issues/Processes to consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restoration and Aftercare of Mineral Workings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Action 1</strong> Satisfactory restoration of the current mineral workings in line with development plan policies and the Strategic Management Plan (Blashford Quarry west of A338; Ringwood Quarry including Rockford Lake, Snails Lake, Linbrook Lake (West); Ellingham and Ringwood Pit comprising Ibsley Water and Ellingham Lake; Ibsley Quarry north of Mockbeggar Lane)</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council to determine and oversee</td>
<td>Mineral companies, in accordance with mineral planning permissions, including agreed restoration plans and S.106 Agreements</td>
<td>Ensure that adequate procedures are in place for monitoring and enforcement of conditions and obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Action 2</strong> Satisfactory aftercare of restored mineral workings in line with development plan policies and the Strategic Management Plan (units as above)</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council to determine and oversee</td>
<td>Mineral companies, in accordance with mineral planning permissions, including agreed restoration plans and S.106 Agreements</td>
<td>Ensure that adequate procedures are in place for monitoring and enforcement of conditions and obligations. Consider how to continue management of restored sites once aftercare period expires</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Storage and Supply</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Action 3</strong> Research into, and strategy formulated, for the sustainable use of lakes for water storage and supply, taking into account effects on the River Avon, nature conservation and amenity interests (Blashford Lake; Ellingham Lake; Ellingham Pound; Ibsley Water; Ivy Lake; and potentially Rockford Lake; North Somerley Lake)</td>
<td>Environment Agency, with input on nature conservation objectives with respect to designated sites from English Nature</td>
<td>Water companies, in accordance with abstraction licences, and agreed strategy for water storage and supply, including drawdown limits, and order of lake drawdown</td>
<td>The Environment Agency is currently undertaking an Appropriate Assessment of the use of Blashford Lakes and the River Avon for water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature Conservation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Action 4</strong> Continue to protect and manage designated management units deemed to be in favourable condition in line with nature conservation objectives (Ibsley Water (eastern part); Ivy Lake)</td>
<td>English Nature</td>
<td>English Nature acts as the statutory adviser with respect to the designated sites, but appropriate management will depend upon individual landowners. Hampshire County Council or New Forest District Council will be</td>
<td>Under the Habitats Regulations, Appropriate Assessments will continue to be required for all plans or projects that either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have a significant effect on European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Ref.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Overseeing bodies</td>
<td>Implementing bodies/mechanisms</td>
<td>Key Issues/Processes to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>responsible for Appropriate Assessments dependent upon the type of planning consents being pursued. Hampshire Wildlife Trust to play an active role in management where agreement with landowners can be negotiated</td>
<td>nature conservation interest*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English Nature acts as the statutory adviser with respect to the designated sites, but appropriate management will depend upon individual landowners – steps will need to be pursued with landowners and those whose activities are affecting the interest to ensure that they are brought back into favourable condition. Hampshire Wildlife Trust to play an active role in management where agreement with landowners can be negotiated</td>
<td>Under the Habitats Regulations, Appropriate Assessments will continue to be required for all plans or projects that either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have a significant effect on European nature conservation interest*. Investigate potential sources of funding such as EU Life in Rivers and Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 5</td>
<td>Take necessary steps to restore sites designated for their nature conservation interest back to favourable condition (Ellingham Lake; Linbrook Lake (East); Mockbeggar Lake; Rockford Lake (eastern part); Snails Lake; Dockens Water)</td>
<td>English Nature</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust to play an active role in management where agreement with landowners can be negotiated Use the auspices of the extended Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee to encourage landowners to enter into management agreements. Investigate potential sources of funding such as EU Life in Rivers and Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 6</td>
<td>Continue to conserve and manage those management units not subject to designations but which make a significant contribution to the overall nature conservation interest of the study area (Goblin’s Lake; Kingfisher Lake; Land surrounding Wessex Water Treatment Plant; Lin Brook)</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust to play an active role in management where agreement with landowners can be negotiated</td>
<td>Use the auspices of the extended Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee to encourage landowners to enter into management agreements. Investigate potential sources of funding such as EU Life in Rivers and Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 7</td>
<td>Pursue opportunities to enhance the nature conservation interest of those management units that currently do not contribute to the interest of the study area (Ellingham Pound; Hucklebrook Lake; Hurst Ponds; Morey’s Lakes; Poulner (Northfield) Lake; Wash Pit; Hardstanding at Ellingham Drove; Public open space north of Wash Pit)</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust to play an active role in management where agreement with landowners can be negotiated</td>
<td>Use the auspices of the extended Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee to encourage landowners to enter into management agreements. Investigate potential sources of funding such as EU Life in Rivers and Heritage Lottery Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Ref.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Overseeing bodies</td>
<td>Implementing bodies/mechanisms</td>
<td>Key Issues/Processes to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 8</td>
<td>Carry out a comprehensive habitat mapping exercise to inform specific management prescriptions in line with Key Actions 1 and 2, 4 to 7</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust, in association with English Nature</td>
<td>Preparation of detailed management prescriptions for all areas covered by the Strategic Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 9</td>
<td>On-going systematic monitoring of waterfowl populations, with specific attention paid to internationally and nationally important species of waterfowl</td>
<td>English Nature</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust, or possibly BTO in agreement with landowners, and/or English Nature for designated sites</td>
<td>Waterfowl species and numbers should be monitored on a lake-by-lake basis, to provide an ongoing assessment of individual lakes, plus the study area as a whole. Monitoring should include records of potentially disturbing activities, including weather, recreational activities (formal and informal), and where possible lake conditions (e.g. turbidity, aquatic plant growth, fish stocks, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 10</td>
<td>Carry-out baseline aquatic plant monitoring to be repeated at regular intervals (e.g. annually)</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust in agreement with landowners, and/or English Nature for designated sites</td>
<td>Main focus should be designated waterbodies, but if resources allow this should be extended to other lakes in the study area, particularly those that make a significant contribution to the nature conservation interest of the study area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 11</td>
<td>Survey, control and, where feasible, eradication of alien species</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust in agreement with landowners, and/or English Nature for designated sites</td>
<td>Main focus should be designated waterbodies, but if resources allow this should be extended to other lakes in the study area, particularly those that make a significant contribution to the nature conservation interest of the study area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sport</strong></td>
<td>Monitor effects of sailing on Blashford Lake, and ensure that timings and zonings of sailing activity are in line with nature conservation objectives</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>New Forest District Council as local planning authority, with advice from English Nature</td>
<td>Will require co-operation of sailing club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 13</td>
<td>Monitor effects of fishing on the study area, and review consents accordingly to</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management</td>
<td>New Forest District Council as local planning authority, with advice from English Nature</td>
<td>Where temporary permissions exist, Appropriate Assessments may be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Ref.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Overseeing bodies</td>
<td>Implementing bodies/mechanisms</td>
<td>Key Issues/Processes to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ensure that activities are in line with nature conservation objectives</td>
<td>Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>English Nature</td>
<td>required where it is deemed that is likely to be a significant effect on European nature conservation interest*. Significant effects are less likely to occur if fishing is controlled and managed to avoid damage to habitats and to coincide with periods when over-wintering waterfowl populations are not present. Use the auspices of the extended Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee to encourage co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 14</td>
<td>Monitor effects of water-skiing on Ellingham Lake, and review consents accordingly to ensure that it is in line with nature conservation objectives</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>New Forest District Council as local planning authority, with advice from English Nature</td>
<td>Water-skiing currently has temporary permission, and takes place at times when disturbance to waterfowl species is unlikely, therefore Appropriate Assessments may not be necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 15</td>
<td>Investigate the feasibility of introducing non-motorised water-based recreation on Rockford Lake, subject to the achievement of nature conservation objectives</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>New Forest District Council as local planning authority, with advice from English Nature</td>
<td>Commission a separate detailed study, including Appropriate Assessment if necessary, to determine whether water-based recreation is feasible, and the conditions (e.g. types of activity, timing, zoning) that should apply. Liaise with the sailing club and Moyles Court School to establish demand and the role that they might play in implementing the proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 16</td>
<td>Pursue an end to shooting at Ibsley Water and Mockbeggar Lakes, and enter into negotiations to stop shooting elsewhere in the study area, where this is having a significant effect on nature conservation</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>English Nature</td>
<td>Enter into negotiations with the Somerley Estate, and use the auspices of the extended Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee to encourage agreements accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 17</td>
<td>Make amendments to Policy AV-4 of the New Forest District Local Plan to reflect the proposals regarding Rockford Lake</td>
<td>New Forest District Council</td>
<td>New Forest District Council as local planning authority</td>
<td>Take into account the role that the National Forest National Park will play in plan preparation for the proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Ref.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Overseeing bodies</td>
<td>Implementing bodies/mechanisms</td>
<td>Key Issues/Processes to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access and Parking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 18</td>
<td>Carry out detailed feasibility studies for potential footpath/cycleway routes proposed in Strategic Management Plan:</td>
<td>Footpaths Sub-Committee of the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee in liaison with the Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council, with advice from English Nature, and in liaison with landowners and other interested parties</td>
<td>Set up policy basis in Hampshire Local Transport Plan, and New Forest District Local Plan, and where possible implement through mineral permissions and restoration plans, through S.106 Legal Agreements. Subject to findings of feasibility studies, implement footpath/cycleway proposals, and control access (e.g. timings, dog walking, etc.) and regularly monitor. Consider need for Appropriate Assessment where there is potential for a significant effect on European nature conservation interest*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Between Mockbeggar Lane and Ellingham Drove including links to Ibsley Control Tower and a route to the north of the Water Treatment Plant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• East and south of Ellingham Lake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• West of Rockford Lake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• East of Rockford Lake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• South and east of Blashford Lake Include in studies feasibility for erecting additional bird hides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 19</td>
<td>Carry out detailed feasibility study for additional parking:</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council</td>
<td>Set up policy basis in Hampshire Local Transport Plan, and New Forest District Local Plan. Consider need for Appropriate Assessment where there is potential for a significant effect on European nature conservation interest*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hard standing off Ellingham Drove</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In the vicinity of Ellingham Pound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Off Woolmer Lane.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• East of the former Airfield Control Tower.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Blashford Study Centre.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture and Grazing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 20</td>
<td>Pursue opportunities to consolidate and increase the contribution of agriculture to the study area, in particular back-up grazing for the New Forest</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>New Forest District Council, and Hampshire County Council as part of minerals restoration proposals</td>
<td>Determine co-ordination with landowners, proposed National Park Authority, and commoners of the New Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education and Interpretation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 21</td>
<td>Investigate feasibility of extending use of Blashford Study Centre, possibly to include Visitor Centre, and implement</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group, in conjunction with Blashford Lakes</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Partnership</td>
<td>Liaise with local education authority and other regarding potential users (e.g. local amenity groups; historical societies, residents societies, wildlife groups, etc.). Investigate funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Ref.</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Overseeing bodies</td>
<td>Implementing bodies/mechanisms</td>
<td>Key Issues/Processes to consider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 22</td>
<td>Set up and implement education and interpretation strategy</td>
<td>Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan Steering Group</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council, with inputs from other interested organisations, such as members of the Blashford Lakes Partnership, with possible funding from New Opportunities Fund or proposed Community Fund</td>
<td>Investigate funding sources, including the Blashford Lakes Partnership, New Opportunities Fund, or proposed Community Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Action 23</td>
<td>Investigate feasibility of converting Ibsley Control Tower into interpretation/viewing centre</td>
<td>New Forest District Council, and BWHWC, with input from RAF Ibsley Historical Group, English Nature, and English Heritage</td>
<td>New Forest District Council, with support from BWHWC, RAF Ibsley Historical Group, English Heritage</td>
<td>Investigate funding sources such as proposed Community Fund, HLF and Imperial War Museum*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementation**

| Key Action 24 | Invite additional stakeholders to join the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee | Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee | New Forest District Council | Target in particular those landowners and users currently not included in Consultative Committee, particularly representing fishing, farming, and educational interests |
| Key Action 25 | Review the arrangements for chairing the Consultative Committee | Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee | New Forest District Council, as proposed chair | Consider the role that the New Forest National Park Authority may play, perhaps as chair, once established |
| Key Action 26 | Formalise the Blashford Lakes Steering Group to oversee implementation of the Strategic Management Plan | Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee | New Forest District Council, as proposed chair | Consider the role that the New Forest National Park Authority may play, perhaps as chair, once established |

* Note: See Appendix 6 for guidance on when an Appropriate Assessment would be needed
APPENDIX I

CONSULTEES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephan Alvis</td>
<td>Hanson CONBLOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ansell</td>
<td>Local resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Les Aves</td>
<td>Ringwood &amp; District Anglers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Biles</td>
<td>RAF Ibsley Historical Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Dave Bird</td>
<td>British Herpetological Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Bosc</td>
<td>RMC Aggregates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona Bowles</td>
<td>Wessex Water (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Rosemary Box</td>
<td>RMC Aggregates (Southern) Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Briggs</td>
<td>National Land Management Team, Rural Development Service, DEFRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB Brockhurst</td>
<td>Open Space Society Ringwood, and Fordingbridge Footpath Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr R Brown</td>
<td>Landowner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. L Burtenshaw</td>
<td>Somerley Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Campbell</td>
<td>Spinnaker Sailing Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Clasby</td>
<td>Sources and Fisheries Supervisor, Wessex Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Colling</td>
<td>Southern Tourist Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Chris Corrigan</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sqn Ldr PC Crouch</td>
<td>Chairman of local Aircrew Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Davey</td>
<td>Minerals and Waste Planning, Hampshire County Council (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr John Davidson</td>
<td>Arts, Countryside and Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Davison</td>
<td>Countryside Officer (West), Hampshire County Council (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Day</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke de Vial</td>
<td>Wessex Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Devine</td>
<td>New Forest District Council Leisure Services (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T G Dixon</td>
<td>New Forest Bird Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Donnie</td>
<td>Local Resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr. Bill Dow</td>
<td>New Forest District Councillor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(also representative on Wessex Water Southern Customer Liaison Panel, and RAF Ibsley Historical Group Committee member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Dyson-Macllroy</td>
<td>Local resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Eastwood</td>
<td>Water Companies (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue Ekins</td>
<td>English Nature (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Edwards</td>
<td>Ecology, Hampshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Evans</td>
<td>New Forest Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr RLL Facer</td>
<td>Ramblers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Fisher</td>
<td>Hampshire Wildlife Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Flatt</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE Gardner</td>
<td>Clerk to the Council, Ellingham, Harbridge &amp; Ibsley Parish Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Tony Gent</td>
<td>Rare Species Conservation Officer, Herpetological Conservation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS George</td>
<td>Former member of 616 Squadron at RAF Ibsley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Green</td>
<td>Wessex Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Paul Green</td>
<td>Planning and Estates Manager, SITA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Halstead</td>
<td>The National Trust, Thames &amp; Solent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Harrington</td>
<td>Bournemouth and West Hants Water (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Elaine Harrison</td>
<td>Blashford Study Centre Warden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillor JD Heron</td>
<td>New Forest District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillor K Heron</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Hoare</td>
<td>Local resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Howard</td>
<td>Wessex Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddy Jago</td>
<td>New Forest Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Paul Jerome</td>
<td>Christchurch Angling Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan McKay</td>
<td>Regional Director (South East), Countryside Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Norman</td>
<td>New Forest District Council (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr David Norminton</td>
<td>Hanson Aggregates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Oliver</td>
<td>Council for National Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jess Pain</td>
<td>Hampshire &amp; Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs F Pannell</td>
<td>Harbridge Protection Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Pidgley</td>
<td>Landowner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Pigram</td>
<td>English Heritage, South East Region,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Angela Pittock</td>
<td>Town Clerk, Ringwood Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Norman Pratt</td>
<td>Hampshire Ornithological Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Patrick Prior</td>
<td>Ivy Lake Water Ski Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Read</td>
<td>Bournemouth &amp; West Hants Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Shaw</td>
<td>Tarmac Southern Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs C Shoopman</td>
<td>British Horse Society, Hampshire Bridleways Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Smith</td>
<td>Planning Department, Hampshire County Council (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Vera Smith</td>
<td>RAF Ibsley Historical Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tony Snell</td>
<td>Ibsley and District Residents Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Thornton</td>
<td>Environment Agency, South Wessex Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Julie Tinley</td>
<td>Friends of the Earth: New Forest Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr and Mrs Van Den Berg</td>
<td>Local residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillor J. Waddington</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Watkins</td>
<td>Spinnaker Sailing Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Patrick Webster</td>
<td>Ellingham, Harbridge &amp; Ibsley Parish Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Alan Weston</td>
<td>Environment Agency (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr B Wigley</td>
<td>Local resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr S Wright</td>
<td>New Forest (West) Sports Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>New Forest Water Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Headlands Adventure Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Members of the Blashford Lakes Steering Group
APPENDIX 2

NEW FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN FIRST ALTERATION
REVISED DEPOSIT (FEBRUARY 2003)
E11 Site specific policies in the countryside outside the New Forest

Avon Valley Lakes

E11.1 Sand and gravel workings in the area, principally to the east of the River Avon, north of Ringwood have resulted in the creation of a complex of lakes. The value of these lakes for recreation and nature conservation has been reflected in planning policies for the area since the 1970s. In the 1980s, following summer droughts in 1983 and 1984, the potential of the lakes for water storage was investigated by the then Wessex Water Authority. In 1987 work started on a scheme to use Ellingham, Ivy and Blashford Lakes for water storage. Planning permission for a second stage of the scheme, involving Rockford, Ibsley and North Somerley Lakes was granted in 1991. The summer drought of 1995 illustrated once again the importance of water reserves provided by the Blashford Lakes water storage facilities.

E11.2 In considering proposals for water storage use of the lakes the planning authority was mindful of potential conflicts which could arise between the use of the lakes for this purpose and:

(i) recognised features of nature conservation importance, e.g. the Avon Valley SSSI, Linbrook and Dockens Water;

(ii) the existing and potential recreation and nature conservation use of the lakes; and

(iii) the need to conserve and enhance the character and landscape of the area.

E11.3 In granting planning permission for their scheme Wessex Water were asked to produce a Management Strategy and Plan for the Blashford Lakes area. The Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee was also established to help formulate management policies for the area, involving not only the District Council and Wessex Water, but also the County Council, Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company plc, English Nature, Hampshire Wildlife Trust, landowners, gravel companies, the Sports Council and local sports clubs. The Blashford Lakes Management Strategy and Plan is currently being updated.

E11. Sand and gravel extraction and restoration work will continue in the Blashford area for some years. Ellingham, Rockford and Ibsley Lakes will not be available for water storage use until 2001. Hampshire County Council is responsible for determining planning application for mineral extraction and site restoration in accordance with the Hampshire Portsmouth and Southampton Minerals and Waste Local Plan; New Forest District Council is consulted on such
proposals. New Forest District Council determines planning applications for change of use of restored sites.

E11.5 In 1994, the Avon Valley (Bickton – Christchurch) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was extended to include most of the Avon Valley Lakes in the Blashford area. The lakes are now of international and national importance for migratory wildfowl and wading birds, attracting large numbers of wintering gadwall, coot, and mute swans. The lakes provide crucial roosting sites for the flocks of wildfowl that feed in the valley. They are within the area included in a listed Ramsar site and classified Special Protection Area (SPA)

E11.6 The designation of the lakes as part of the SSSI and SPA/Ramsar site can be seen as evidence of the successful balancing of nature conservation, recreation and water storage uses in the implementation of the Blashford Lakes scheme. The inclusion of the lakes in the SSSI and SPA/Ramsar site should not prejudice continued recreation or water storage uses in the area but may require revision to aspects of management.

Policy AV-1 Avon Valley Lakes: nature conservation
The northern part of Ibsley Water, Ivy Lake, Mockbeggar Lakes, Rockford Lake, and any new lakes created by mineral workings in the Avon Valley will be safeguarded for nature conservation. Development which would prejudice the special interest of the sites subject to statutory nature conservation designations will not be permitted.

E11.7 The Blashford Lakes Management Strategy and Plan has provided a detailed framework which ensures that water storage use, recreational uses and nature conservation interests can co-exist. Without the benefit of the Management Strategy and Plan some of the uses that have been successfully accommodated in the area could have a potentially damaging affect on the Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site. Work on updating the Management Plan will see to maintain this balance between nature conservation and other uses while ensuring the protection of features of special nature conservation interest.

E11.8 Policies DW-E31A and DW-E31B, Section C4A restrict development in nature conservation sites designated under national legislation and international directives. Within the area subject to the Blashford Lakes Management Strategy and Plan the level of recreational, water storage and other activities will be strictly controlled and monitored, and subject to an appropriate management agreement to the satisfaction of the Blashford Lakes Consultative Committee and the local planning authority. The updated Blashford Lakes Management Strategy and Plan will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to this local plan.

Policy AV-2 Avon Valley Lakes: water storage
With the exception of Mockbeggar Lake, the use of lakes created by sand and gravel workings in the Blashford-Ibsley area for water storage will be permitted provided that:
(a) proposals include appropriate provision for recreational use and nature conservation interest; and

(b) the development would not have significant adverse affects on the Avon Valley SSSI, the ecological value of nearby watercourses, the Avon Valley floodplain, and the environs of lakes; and

(c) any associated bank reprofilin g would be in keeping with the landscape character of the area, and important existing landscape features are retained; and

(d) private water supplies are safeguarded.

E11.9 An environment Statement may be required by the local planning authority to accompany a planning application for a water storage scheme.

E11.10 The generally open, flat character of the floor of the Avon Valley does not lend itself easily to proposals requiring significant bunding around lakes. Any proposal necessitating the raising of banks around lakes will need to pay particular attention to measures to minimise the impact on the local landscape.

Policy AV-3 Avon Valley Lakes: water storage plant

Essential buildings, associated plant and infrastructure ancillary to water storage use of the lakes will be permitted. Buildings should be provided in a centralised location.

E11.11 A water treatment works to serve the lakes is located to the north of Ivy Lake. It is considered that this would be the preferred location for any additional operational buildings required in the future if operationally feasible.

Policy AV-4 Avon Valley Lakes: recreational uses

Recreational uses will be permitted on the following Avon Valley Lakes:


Recreational uses which do not prejudice any water storage use and are compatible with nature conservation interests, will be permitted on:

Blashford Lake, Ellingham Lake, Ibsley Water, Linbrook Lake, Snails Lake.

Policy AV-5 Avon Valley Lakes: recreation facilities
Recreation facilities in the Blashford Lakes area required to serve water-based recreational uses, and facilities to enhance the interpretation and enjoyment of wildlife will be permitted.

E11.12 Proposals for recreational use of the Avon Valley should be in accordance with Policy CO-R1, Section E7.

E11.13 While the Local Planning Authority recognises the value to nature conservation of the area, it also appreciates the special opportunities that the Avon Valley lakes offer for the development of in-shore water-based recreation. The use of some of the lakes for water sports such as sailing, board sailing and fishing, pre-dates both the use of the lakes for water storage and the emergence of the area as a nationally (and potentially internationally) important habitat for birds.

E11.14 The impact of recreational uses on the amenities of nearby residential properties will need to be taken into account when considering proposals.

Policy AV-6 Avon Valley Lakes: country recreation area

The area of lakes immediately to the north of Ringwood, as shown on the proposals map, is designated as a country recreation area.

E11.15 This proposal is intended to improve informal recreation facilities for Ringwood and reduce pressures on the New Forest. The management of the area for quiet, countryside related uses in accordance with Policy CO-R4, Section E7, will be encouraged.
APPENDIX 3

MINERAL ACTIVITY AS AT JANUARY 2004
### Mineral Activity at Blashford Lakes as at January 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Extent of working</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Current activity</th>
<th>ROMP?</th>
<th>Current restoration proposals</th>
<th>Original restoration &amp; expiry date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blashford Quarry</td>
<td>West of A338</td>
<td>Tarmac</td>
<td>• Worked out extraction site, partly restored to agriculture.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tarmac have applied to vary approved restoration plans:</td>
<td>Agriculture, recreation, water storage – 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Processing plant is still processing material from Nea Farm Quarry, which is delivered by conveyor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1) on land north of Ellingham Drove from the proposed Somerley lakes (water storage) to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recycling inert construction and demolition waste.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• shallow water body (minor water storage related use) with reed bed to be managed for nature conservation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of ponds to wash silt from gravel.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• agriculture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Two applications yet to be issued: area to the south of Blashford plant site (00063340M); and area to north of Blashford plant site, including proposed North Somerley Lake/reed bed (00063341M).</td>
<td></td>
<td>• bridleway/cycleway along eastern boundary parallel to A338.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ready mix concrete plant.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2) on land south of plant site to water/nature conservation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mineral bagging plant.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both the above applications are waiting to be issued subject to completion of legal agreements for bridleways/cycleways and footpaths and nature conservation management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Offices, mess and associated maintenance facilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Silt ponds.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringwood Quarry, Snails Lane</td>
<td>This includes the following areas: Rockford Lake, Snails Lake, Linbrook Lake (west), Processing plant site</td>
<td>RMC Aggregates Southern</td>
<td>• Sand and gravel extraction (wet working) is currently taking place in the south west corner of Rockford Lake.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nature conservation and public footpaths in approved ROMP (17/6/02).</td>
<td>Water storage, recreation – 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Subsequently extraction will take place to the east of Snails Lake where the haul road currently is and at the processing plant site once the plant has been removed.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Detailed restoration plan to be submitted within six months of the permission.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Extraction will finish by Dec 2003 and restored by June 2004.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussions taking place with RMC on restoration of silt ponds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ready mix concrete plant.</td>
<td>ROMP (68940) granted without S.106, as this was to be attached to the application to extend the plant site (69031), until completion of mineral working under the ROMP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Name</td>
<td>Extent of working</td>
<td>Operator</td>
<td>Current activity</td>
<td>ROMP?</td>
<td>Current restoration proposals</td>
<td>Original restoration &amp; expiry date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ellingham and     | Ibsley Water      | Hanson Aggregates      | • Active sand and gravel extraction by wet working. The gravel spine has now been removed, and the western excavations flooded, extending the size of Ibsley Water.  
• Hanson wish to continue extraction until Dec 2004.  
• Extension to Conbloc Plant of 12 years (72196) issued with S.106 Agreement securing Charitable Trust to manage funds and restricting importation of mineral to within the study area for this plan.  
• Application to retain Ready Mix plant for same timescale as Conbloc Plant, to be located to the east of the complex granted subject to Section 106 agreement limiting importation area to same as Conbloc plant.  
• Flooded pit with western and southern sides recently terraced to | Advice is being sought by Hampshire County Council with regard to the end date on the IDO, which has implications for extension of time for plant site application.  
• Remainder of site Initial Review (Active Phase 2).  | • Restoration proposals for nature conservation and water storage.  
• Original resolution was to secure a legal agreement for long-term nature conservation management, ecological and hydrological monitoring, and footpaths, but application taken back to Committee in Feb 2003. This was because of concern about lack of progress on S.106 by Hanson, given that the mineral would be extracted by autumn, questioning the need for a Mineral Review, and that a set of conditions needed to be granted for development control purposes.  | Water storage, recreation – 2002 |
<p>| Ringwood Pits     |                   |                        |                                                                                 |                                                                      |                                                                                               |                                              |
| Ellingham Pit     |                   |                        |                                                                                 |                                                                      | • Flooded lake for water-ski use and enhanced for nature conservation                        | As above                                   |
|                   |                   |                        |                                                                                 |                                                                      | • ROMP As above                                                                                 |                                              |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Extent of working</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Current activity</th>
<th>ROMP?</th>
<th>Current restoration proposals</th>
<th>Original restoration &amp; expiry date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ibsley Quarry | North of Mockbeggar Lane | Tarmac/Sita | • Excavation complete, with restoration nearing completion.  
• Tarmac have currently applied for:  
- north west physical quarry extension to existing pit.  
- extension of time for restoration at existing quarry until early summer as was delayed due to nesting sand martins.  
- application to export material gained from stripping of soils if planning permission is granted for NW extension to Blashford quarry to be used in future agricultural restoration of Blashford. | N/A | • Original restoration plan was to fill the excavation with inert material and restore to agriculture. However not enough material was available within time limit.  
• Application to vary restoration to agriculture, shallow water body and reed bed, back up grazing land for the New Forest, agriculture and footpath extension to Avon Valley Path Permission (00066431) granted.  
• Permission to extend workings to the north of the site was granted in November 2003 -restoration to be to water for nature conservation with grazing of lake edges. | Agriculture – 2003 |
APPENDIX 4

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF THE SECOND DRAFT APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT UNDER THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS &c.) REGULATIONS 1994
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS OF THE SECOND DRAFT APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT UNDER THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS &C.) REGULATIONS 1994

INTRODUCTION

1. The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (known as the Habitats Regulations) implement EC Directive 92/43/EEC, known as The Habitats Directive. These require under Regulation 48 a review of all new plans and projects and, under Regulation 50, a review of outstanding decisions, permissions, consents and other authorisations, either alone or in-combination that would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site. They also make it an offence deliberately to kill, capture, or disturb a European Protected Species, or to damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

2. In line with the Regulations, Hampshire County Council is currently carrying out a review under Regulation 50 of for those parts of the Blashford Lakes study area designated as a site European importance. The Regulations require an ‘Appropriate Assessment’ of any plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on the European site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. English Nature provides guidance on how Appropriate Assessments should be undertaken, and on interpreting the term ‘significant effect’. The aim is that all proposed plans or projects should not have a significant impact on the nature conservation interest that is the subject of the designation (only in cases where there is an over-riding public interest would proposals that would lead to significant impacts be allowed to proceed).

3. Whilst the Appropriate Assessment concentrates on permissions issued by Hampshire County Council, it also addressed consents or permission issued by other authorities, which are considered by English Nature as being likely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, if the potential effects arising are seen to be contributing to a potentially significant effect that emanates from a permission issued by Hampshire County Council.

4. All consents relating to the use of the Blashford Lakes for water supply purposes are being separately assessed by the Environment Agency, and so are not covered by the Hampshire County Council Appropriate Assessment.

5. The Appropriate Assessment is currently in Second Draft Consultation form, written in March 2003. English Nature does not consider the Blashford Lakes Strategic Management Plan to constitute a ‘plan or project’ under the Regulations and therefore proposals within this Strategic Management Plan are not being considered for review. Nonetheless, the Strategic Management Plan has to reflect and be consistent with the Regulations, so the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment has had a significant influence on the recommendations in this Strategic Management Plan.

---

10 Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 50 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, Second Draft for Consultation, March 2003, Hampshire County Council
Plan. Individual plans or projects that may arise from the Strategic Management Plan may need to be subject to Appropriate Assessment before they are implemented. However, projects coming forward as a result of the Strategic Management Plan that may result in a significant effect will require an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with legislation.

6. Dockens Water is designated as part of the River Avon cSAC. Salmon are likely to be present, and the bullhead was recorded in Dockens Water in 1999. The Appropriate Assessment therefore considers both these two species.

KEY FINDINGS

7. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment provides a detailed account of the review. The key findings arising from the review are as follows:

- With respect to internationally important numbers of migratory species, gadwall, and nationally important numbers of pochard and coot (under SPA Feature of Interest Article 4.2 and Ramsar Site Feature of interest Criterion 3c), Mockbeggar, Ellingham, Rockford, and Linbrook Lakes are considered to be in unfavourable condition. Snails Lake may be in unfavourable condition, and Blashford Lake is temporarily in unfavourable condition when disturbed in winter (e.g. during sailing). Ibsley Water, Ivy, Kingfisher, and North Somerley Lakes are considered to be in favourable condition. Whilst there is no indication that the Blashford Lakes study area as a whole is in unfavourable condition, gadwall are becoming more reliant on areas of open water that occur outside the SPA boundary (e.g. Kingfisher and North Somerley Lakes). In most cases there are clear indications that the SPA lakes are used less frequently due to human activity, and therefore the SPA is considered to be in unfavourable condition with respect to gadwall.

- Sufficient undisturbed open water remains at night within the study area for Bewick’s swan (SPA Feature on Interest Article 4.1).

- Dockens Water is considered to be in unfavourable condition for Atlantic salmon and bullhead (cSAC Features of Interest).

- The condition of the site for supporting a diverse assemblage of plants and animals, including rare, vulnerable or endangered species, is unknown (Ramsar Feature of Interest Criterion 2a).

- With respect to a site supporting a diverse range of wetland habitats, a notable assemblage of breeding wetland birds, and roosting and feeding areas for an important assemblage of wintering waterfowl (Ramsar Feature of Interest Criterion 1a), there is no indication that the whole complex is in unfavourable condition for the important assemblage of waterfowl, but six of the 21 species that make up the assemblage are heavily reliant on three or fewer lakes, one of which (Mockbeggar Lake) is currently in unfavourable condition. In addition, some lakes appear to be under-performing with respect to waterfowl numbers, and the site is considered to be in unfavourable condition for gadwall. This suggests that the habitats within the site may be in unfavourable condition for this interest feature, and surveys of breeding birds corroborate this.
8. The report assessed that the activities with the most potential for an adverse effect on the European features of interest are:

- Habitat deterioration arising from the presence of alien species, including aquatic plants (New Zealand pigmyweed, and water fern), marginal/terrestrial plants, notably Himalayan balsam, and fauna, particularly signal crayfish, which affect not only some of the lakes, but also Dockens Water.

- Habitat deterioration arising from the presence of high densities of coarse fish in some of the lakes.

- Disturbance arising from public access, with particular concerns at Blashford, Ellingham, Linbrook, Rockford and Snails Lakes.

- Disturbance arising from fishing, particularly those fished without control, being Blashford, Linbrook, Rockford and Snails Lakes.

- Disturbance from water skiing on Ivy Lake (which has since been relocated to Ellingham Lake).

- Disturbance from shooting, particularly on those lakes outside the SPA (e.g. North Somerley), and which therefore do not need English Nature consent.

9. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment describes in detail the actual and potential effects of the above on each lake. It also describes the effects of issues such as turbidity, de-watering, engineering works, inappropriate restoration, and alien species on habitat deterioration, and of factors likely to give rise to disturbance.

10. The Second Draft Appropriate Assessment includes an analysis of ‘displacement’ which presents a series of scenarios to indicate whether the lakes complex has the capacity to accommodate populations of gadwall, coot, pochard and of total waterfowl, if one or a combination of lakes that contribute to the SPA were to be disturbed, such that the waterfowl would take flight from the disturbed lake(s) and seek an undisturbed lake in the study area instead. This analysis indicates that the lakes complex has the capacity to accommodate these populations only if Blashford and no other lake is disturbed. If one or more lakes are disturbed at the same time, then this would have an adverse effect.

CONCLUSIONS

11. In conclusion, the Second Draft Appropriate Assessment states that:

- Without further controls and/or restrictions on the mineral operations, changes in the management of the lakes, and controls on leisure activities, it is likely that, in combination with all current and future plans and projects, there will be an adverse effect on the integrity of the site (with respect to SPA Article 4.2, Ramsar Site Criterion 2a, Ramsar site Criterion 3c).

- Without further modifications to existing plans or projects, and changes in current lake management operations, it is likely that an adverse effect will continue (with respect to cSAC Feature of Interest Atlantic salmon and bullhead), and that further assessment is required to determine the effects in
• Further research is required to understand if Bewick’s swan still uses the lakes and, if so, what conditions they require (with respect to SPA Article 4.1).

• Further research is required to understand if habitats supporting a diverse assemblage of plants and animals, including rare, vulnerable, or endangered species, are present, or if changes in the restoration and management of the lakes and the surrounding land could create suitable conditions.
APPENDIX 5

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
- DETERMINING LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS
THE DETERMINATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT UNDER THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS &c) REGULATIONS 1994

The following flowchart summarises the steps that need to be followed in order to determine whether a significant effects is likely on a site designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA). The source is Annex A of Habitats Regulations Guidance Note 3 (HRGN 3) issued by English Nature in May 1997. It is recommended that HRGN 3 be consulted for more detailed guidance.

Is plan or project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation?

Is qualifying feature likely to be directly affected?

Preliminary Consideration

Is qualifying feature likely to be indirectly affected?

Fuller Consideration

Presumption that a significant is likely

‘Likely significant effect’ (with full justification)

Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment not needed
APPENDIX 6

NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT
INTRODUCTION

1. A rapid walkover survey of the individual lakes and surrounding habitats was undertaken in June 2002 by an ecologist from Land Use Consultants, in order to assess the current nature conservation value of the Blashford Lakes study area. This was not intended to be a comprehensive review, and may have overlooked ecological features that were rare and/or inconspicuous at the time of the assessment, but provides a useful summary of the main habitat types.

2. The overall nature conservation value of the Blashford Lakes study area can be described on the basis of the main habitat types that are represented within the study area, and which, for the purposes of this study, can be broken down into the following:
   - Standing open water and associated lake edge (littoral) habitats.
   - Flowing water and associated riparian woodland/scrub.
   - Grasslands and bare ground.

Standing Open Water and Littoral Habitats

3. In general terms, the most biologically productive and ecologically valuable habitat within a gravel lake is the submerged shoreline habitat otherwise known as the littoral habitat zone. Typically, littoral habitats in natural lakes consist of gently shelving shallow water that, where sheltered from prevailing winds/wave wash, are colonised by extensive stands of emergent aquatic plants. Emergent aquatic plants are important areas for breeding wetland birds, and a variety of aquatic invertebrate species (e.g. dragonflies and damselflies (Odonata)) depend on aquatic vegetation for completion of their aquatic larval and winged adult life stages.

4. The Blashford gravel lakes are distinct in that they are artificial aquatic habitats that, in general, possess steep-sided shorelines that shelve steeply underwater and are unsuitable for the development of extensive stands of emergent aquatic plants.

5. Ivy Lake (Photos 5 and 6) and the main Mockbeggar Lake (Photo 7) and Silt Pond (Photo 8) are notable exceptions to this, and possess relatively large expanses of littoral aquatic vegetation around their wind-sheltered shores. In the case of Ivy Lake, the emergent aquatic vegetation is dominated by bulrush (Typha latifolia) and grades into an area of wet alder dominated woodland, and is perhaps one of the most ecologically distinct and valuable areas of littoral habitat within the Blashford Lakes study area.

6. Most of the lakes’ shorelines are characterised by occasional fragmentary clumps of commonplace emergent aquatic plant species, notably water mint (Mentha aquatica), gypsywort (Lycopus europaeus) and rush (Juncus sp.) (Photo 9), with fringed water lily (Nymphoides peltata) also occurring occasionally as a narrow shoreline fringe around
the sheltered shores of Snails Lake, Blashford Lake and the Wash Pit (Photo 10 & 11). Nationally rare ‘wetland’ plants that require a damp ground conditions have also been recorded previously by Hanson Aggregates around the shore of Ibsley Water. However, the current distribution of these species within the Blashford Lakes study area as a whole is not well known.

7. A number of factors, in addition to the lack of shallow water habitats, limit the development of fringing aquatic plants. These are likely to include the disturbing effects of wave wash caused by prevailing winds (Photo 12) and motor boats, shading from bankside trees, a low level of nutrients, management by anglers to create fishing swims (Photo 13), and the smothering effects of the alien invasive wetland species New Zealand pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*) (Photo 14).

8. New Zealand pigmyweed appears to have colonised the majority of the gravel lakes within the Blashford Lakes study area, and often forms extensive and dense single species vegetation carpets that frequently extend from the water 4-5m up the shore onto the exposed lake shoreline (Photo 15). The extent to which this species extends into each lake and forms submerged beds is not known and needs to be confirmed.

9. Water fern (*Azolla filiculoides*) is another alien aquatic plant that was recorded in low abundance on the main Mockbeggar silt pond (Photo 16), but currently appears not to be a significant ecological issue.

10. Many of the lakes are kept stocked with coarse fish species for recreational angling purposes, and the presence of some fish species may have implications for submerged aquatic plant growth. Of particular concern in this respect, by virtue of its destructive bottom feeding behavioural characteristics, is the presence of carp (Photo 17).

11. The presence of large numbers of coarse fish may also limit aquatic invertebrate diversity and abundance in lakes where submerged aquatic plant cover is low. This in turn may have indirect consequences for the proliferation of phytoplankton, and may contribute to the development of algal blooms at specific times of the year if zooplankton abundance is suppressed by the presence of fish predators. In the context of this study it is of note that blue-green algal blooms have been recorded in Blashford Lake.

12. The presence of non-native signal crayfish, a North American species introduced into the UK by fish farming practice in the 1970s, has been recorded in the Mockbeggar lakes complex by LUC. The distribution of this species and its ecological effects within the wider study area including Dockens Water and Lin Brook, is currently not clear.

13. Currently the primary nature conservation interest of the lakes is focussed on the migratory waterfowl populations that depend on the lakes during the winter months. The value of Blashford Lakes for waterfowl is discussed under ‘Appropriate Assessment’ below.
Flowing Water

14. Two tributaries of the River Avon, Dockens Water (Photo 1) and the Lin Brook (Photo 2) flow through the Blashford Lakes study area from higher land within the New Forest to the east. Both tributary streams exhibit a relatively high degree of geomorphological naturalness, i.e. good range of in-channel fluvial features (riffles, pools, sand and silt deposits etc.), and banks that, for the most part, have not been artificially strengthened. Both streams are likely to possess distinct aquatic invertebrate and fish assemblages, and are likely to prove to be important for salmonid fish recruitment. Bullheads have also been recorded within Dockens Water, and this species also probably occurs in the Lin Brook, which possesses similar habitat conditions.

15. Both waterbodies are tree-lined for most of their length, which limits the growth of in-channel aquatic plants by shading effects during the summer months. Fallen riparian trees and other woody debris provide a valuable habitat feature for specialist invertebrate species (Photo 3), and where woody material collects in the channel, form an important aquatic habitat feature, and geomorphological driver.

16. The tree and scrub-lined riparian corridors of both waterbodies appear, at the time of survey, to be valuable habitat for breeding songbirds, notably warbler species. The alien invasive plant Himalayan balsam (Impatiens glandulifera) occurs frequently along both streams where it grows most abundantly on the well-lit banksides and on exposed channel silt deposits. Himalayan balsam has also colonised the south-west bank of Ivy Lake from Dockens Water. This species is an undesirable non-native plant that will dominate riverbank vegetation at the expense of native flora, when prevailing light conditions allow.

17. An artificial otter holt has been constructed as a demonstration project on Dockens Water close to the Blashford Study Centre (Photo 4), but appears not to have been colonised by otters. Otters are known to occur within the catchment of the River Avon.

18. In summary, Dockens Water and Lin Brook are valuable nature conservation features that make a distinct contribution to the overall biodiversity value of Blashford Lakes, although they could be managed to improve their biodiversity value by undertaking small-scale and selective riparian tree management.

Grasslands and Bare Ground and Other Areas of Conservation interest

19. The plant species composition of the grassland communities that surround the lakes is varied and reflects local variations in soil chemistry, past restoration practice and current management. Flowering herb-rich grasslands that are attractive to recreational users (Photo 18) and winged insects (Photo 19) occur across the site and, in select locations, have been created or supplemented by artificial seeding with wildflower seed mixes, as at Mockbeggar Lake (Photo 20) and along the north shore of Ivy Lake (Photo 21).

20. The most species diverse and ecologically valuable grasslands, however, occur where nutrient conditions are limiting, often where topsoil is scarce or absent. An excellent example of this habitat occurs around the Water Treatment Works near Ivy Lake.
where lichen-rich acid grassland managed by grazing rabbits has developed (Photo 22). Similar less established pioneer grasslands also occur around the gravel-rich substrates at Ibsley Water where gravel extraction is still active.

21. Bare ground is a habitat type that occurs across the site in relatively low abundance, and which is most notable for the distinct terrestrial invertebrate fauna it supports. Historic surveys of un-shaded bare and sandy ground around the Mockbeggar Lakes have confirmed that vegetation-sparse substrates support a wide range of invertebrate species, many of which possess high individual nature conservation value and are nationally rare. An excellent example of such a habitat was recorded by the current survey north of Ellingham Lake (Photo 23 and 24).

22. The presence of the alien invasive plant Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was recorded in relatively small isolated clumps around the lakes. Sites where knotweed was recorded included the north-west shore of Poulner (Northfield) Lake (Photo 25), the Wash Pit (Photo 26), around the access track and parking areas at Meadow Lake, and along the south west corner of Snails Lake.

23. Other areas of conservation interest include areas of woodland/scrub, for example to the north of Ivy Lake, and to the south east of Mockbeggar Lakes north of Ellingham Drove, as well as the old common of Shaves Green to the east of Goblin’s Lake, and the Public Open Space north of the Wash Pit.

**MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

24. Management of the lakes for nature conservation is an unhelpful phrase without further clarification as to the meaning of the term 'nature conservation'. In addition a distinction needs to be made between nature conservation management relating to the importance of the lakes for overwintering waterfowl, recognised by national and international designations, the impact of alien species, and other more general nature conservation management at the lakes. The issues and recommendations relating to each are described below.

*Nature Conservation Management for Overwintering Waterfowl*

25. One of the most important nature conservation features of the Blashford Lakes study area is the role the lakes play in providing undisturbed habitat for waterfowl to roost and feed during the winter months. At the designated lakes, landowners have a legal responsibility to ensure that this feature is maintained and not compromised by other activities undertaken within the study area. The maintenance of appropriate conditions at the lakes to maintain the site's value for wintering waterfowl is therefore an important aim for nature conservation management.

26. Such management should be focused on those lakes which are included in the nature conservation designations, and those which are already important for waterfowl (e.g. Kingfisher Lake), or which have the potential for being important for waterfowl (e.g. the undesignated parts of Ibsley Water and Rockford Lake).

27. The most important form of nature conservation management for overwintering waterfowl is to ensure that sufficient areas of undisturbed open water habitat are...
available to the birds during the winter months. The use of the various lakes by wintering waterfowl has been the subject of annual monitoring for many years, and monthly 'duck counts' over successive winters reveal differential use of the lakes by waterfowl, with patterns of distribution varying between individual lakes over a single winter period and between years. The reasons for this are complex and not well understood, but for a lake to be attractive to waterfowl it should provide an adequate source of food (submerged aquatic plants (macrophytes) and associated aquatic invertebrates) and be undisturbed by unpredictable activity that affects the water surface. In addition, large lakes that enable waterfowl to roost at sufficient distances away from the bank and potential predators (e.g. foxes and domestic dogs) appear to be used by roosting waterfowl in preference to the smaller more enclosed lakes.

28. The degree to which roosting waterfowl will tolerate disturbance from the shoreline depends upon the size of the lake and the availability of 'safe areas' 100-200m away from the lakeshore, and the type of disturbance. Observations of wintering waterfowl on Ibsley Water have confirmed that waterfowl are highly tolerant of vehicles and machinery operating on the bankside. However, birds will take up station in safe areas when disturbed by less predictable activity namely groups of people walking around the lake edge. In extreme circumstances, waterfowl will take flight from a lake if, for example, they are disturbed by a dog entering the water or the lake is being used by any kind of manned craft (sailing dinghy, canoe, windsurf etc.).

29. The degree to which waterfowl are disturbed by angling is less well understood. For the most part, shore based coarse fishing during the winter is a relatively quiet and predictable recreational activity which waterfowl are likely to tolerate as, in general, anglers will remain at fixed points often concealed from view within shelters. The action of casting bait into the water and reeling in hooked fish, however, can disturb the water surface and theoretically disturb waterfowl – a monitoring study of this potential effect is recommended.

30. To help inform nature conservation management of the lakes for overwintering waterfowl, an assessment of the range and type of activities undertaken within and around the lakes during the winter is required. This enables a basic assessment of the total area of undisturbed water available to wintering waterfowl to be made. By relating this information to historic count data, a basic assessment of the maximum waterfowl carrying capacity of the Blashford Lakes study area can be made. This type of assessment forms the basis of the Appropriate Assessment work undertaken by Hampshire County Council, and assessment of historic duck count data, and consultation, has enabled the importance of individual lakes for primary nature conservation to be made by this study.

31. To enable development of nature conservation management actions for individual lakes, additional information on the other biological factors that influence the attractiveness of a lake to wintering waterfowl, notably the availability of food, is required. For example, it has been postulated that specific lakes within the study area have had declines in their use by wintering waterfowl as a direct result of declines in aquatic plant biomass resulting from increased water turbidity and
lowered light levels. Aerial photographic analysis indicates that wet-working gravel extraction (e.g. Rockford Lake), gravel washing (e.g. Mockbeggar Lakes) and the presence of large numbers of bottom feeding coarse fish (notably carp) (e.g. Meadow Lake) can increase water turbidity. However, no reliable data on submerged aquatic plant abundance and distribution exists to confirm this assumption, and in particular, the distribution and potential smothering effects of the invasive alien aquatic plant, *Crassula*, is not known, which could also be restricting the availability of other submerged aquatic plant species to wintering waterfowl.

**Recommendations**

32. In terms of informing future nature conservation management of the lakes for wintering waterfowl, it is recommended that a baseline aquatic plant-monitoring programme is developed (that can be related to existing duck count data) to confirm the distribution and abundance of submerged aquatic plant growth in individual lakes. In order for such a programme to be useful, it should be undertaken annually until a reasonably clear picture of aquatic plant growth dynamics in individual lakes across the study area is attained. In practice, it should be a boat-based study that records, in addition to aquatic plant information, physical parameters that can be quickly and easily measured e.g. lake-substrate character, water depth, water clarity, and Chlorophyll a. Data should be collected for a minimum of three years, and multivariate statistical analysis used to identify trends and patterns in biological, physical and waterfowl count data. Other relevant data on lake management e.g. the known presence of fish, water drawdown regimes, lake size and aspect etc. should also be incorporated to inform the analysis. The decision to undertake further more detailed and complex research and monitoring should be undertaken after this initial assessment.

**Alien Species**

33. As described above, New Zealand pigmyweed (also known as Australian swamp stonecrop) (*Crassula helmsii*) has been recorded in virtually all of the gravel lakes within the study area, where it forms extensive and dense carpets of vegetation that frequently extend from the water 4-5m up the shore onto the exposed lake shoreline. This species poses potentially the single biggest threat to the overall ecological integrity of the site, as it has the potential to smother other aquatic and wetland plant species which have individual nature conservation value, or provide an important constituent of the diet of wintering waterfowl.

34. At present the most effective way of controlling *Crassula*, is to use a combination of diquat and glyphosphate herbicides to kill submerged and emergent growth forms. Both chemicals are non-selective, and could result in the death of non-target plant species, which, given the scale of the overall *Crassula* problem within the Blashford Lakes study area, could have significant knock-on implications for other wildlife and the European nature conservation interest of the area if aquatic plants that wintering waterfowl depend upon are also killed.

35. The North American signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) occurs in the Mockbeggar Lakes. The history of its introduction is not well understood, nor is its current distribution in neighbouring lakes. In large numbers, signal crayfish can cause
significant damage to the integrity of submerged river and lake banks, and also will competitively exclude the native white-clawed crayfish \((Austropotamobius pallipes)\) from sites where they co-occur. In this context, it is of note that crayfish surveys undertaken in all of the gravel lakes of the Cotswold Water Park, by LUC, confirmed the presence of isolated populations of native crayfish in individual lakes.

**Recommendations**

36. The control and eradication of *Crassula* within Blashford lakes should be taken forward as a high priority study that recognises that effective control of the plant needs to be addressed at a strategic as well as an individual lake level. The study should confirm the extent of the problem, by assessing the distribution and abundance of the submerged growth form on an individual lake basis, and develop a control strategy, that minimises knock-on impacts on wintering waterfowl.

37. The study should also investigate the control and eradication of the other alien plant species that occur within the study area, namely Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*); Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and water fern (*Azolla filiculoides*), although at present these species do not pose the same level of threat to the ecology of Blashford Lakes, as *Crassula*, as they are much less widespread, and appear to occur in discrete and isolated locations.

38. It is recommended that the presence of native and non-native species of crayfish across the study area, including Dockens Water and Lin Brook, should be confirmed by specific survey.

**General Nature Conservation Management**

39. General nature conservation management refers to all other aspects of nature conservation, namely the conservation of the distinctive plant and animal species that are dependent upon the key habitat types present within the Blashford Lakes study area. This includes:

- Flowing water and associated riparian woodland/scrub.
- Standing open water and associated lake edge (littoral) habitats.
- Grasslands and bare ground.

40. General nature conservation management within Blashford Lakes should focus on maintaining and, wherever practicable, enhancing specific habitat conditions for the benefit of the target plant and animal species. This should apply to all the lakes in the study area, but specifically be focused on those lakes where nature conservation has been identified as being of the highest priority.

41. To inform nature conservation management actions on an individual lake basis, up to date and information on the abundance and distribution of target plant and animal species/groups across the entire study area is needed.
**Recommendations**

42. For the most part, only patchy information on the distribution and abundance of specific taxa exists. It is therefore recommended that a simple habitat mapping exercise across the entire Blashford Lakes study area be undertaken to help inform individual lake management actions. The extent, range and location of key physical and biological habitat features across the study area should be established before specific nature conservation management objectives on a lake-by-lake basis can be developed, and management actions taken forward and monitored. A list of key habitat features that should be mapped is set out below:

- Gravel and sand dominated bare substrates around each lake.
- Beds of submerged, emergent and floating macrophytes.
- Vertical lake edge cliff features suitable for kingfisher nesting.
- Lake and river edge trees and associated water in shade.

43. The aim of general nature conservation management should be to promote the conservation of biodiversity across the Blashford Lakes study area as a whole. This should be achieved by ensuring that an appropriate range and quantity of physical habitat features are present within the study area at any one time in recognition of the fact that different physical habitat features will support distinct assemblages of animals and plants thus maximising biodiversity. In the absence of baseline data on the distribution of these features, the following guiding principles apply to nature conservation management within the study area:

(i) the lakes are, in general, steep-sided and lack wind and wave-washed shallow water (littoral) habitat and consequently possess restricted emergent littoral vegetation. Future nature conservation management should aim to increase the extent of this habitat type across the study area.

(ii) sand and gravel rich bare ground habitat, and nutrient poor soils are entomologically and botanically valuable habitat features that nature conservation management should aim to retain (particularly after gravel extraction operations finish) and expand in distribution across the study area.