

# SHADOW HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

## DEVELOPMENT OF LAND AT GORDON HOUSE, SOUTH SHIELDS

JULY  
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DRAFT

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## CONTENTS

A.	SUMMARY .....	5
B.	INTRODUCTION .....	7
C.	RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING CONTEXT .....	9
C.1	THE BIRDS DIRECTIVE .....	9
C.2	THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE .....	9
C.3	THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS.....	9
D.	METHODOLOGY.....	11
D.1	ZONE OF INFLUENCE.....	11
D.2	DESKTOP STUDY .....	11
D.3	FIELD SURVEY.....	11
D.3.1	HABITAT SURVEY METHODS.....	11
D.3.2	PERSONNEL .....	11
D.3.3	CONSTRAINTS.....	11
E.	RESULTS.....	12
E.1	DESKTOP STUDY .....	12
E.1.1	NATURA 2000 SITES .....	12
E.1.2	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE .....	14
E.2	FIELD SURVEY.....	14
E.2.1	HABITATS .....	14
E.2.2	ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT .....	15
F.	ASSESSMENT .....	16
F.1	POTENTIAL MECHANISMS OF EFFECT .....	16
F.1.1	DIRECT EFFECTS .....	16
F.1.2	INDIRECT EFFECTS.....	16
F.2	SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND SUBSEQUENT LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS 17	
F.3	FURTHER DISCUSSION.....	20
F.3.1	DIRECT IMPACTS.....	20
F.3.2	INDIRECT MECHANISMS.....	20
F.4	MITIGATION.....	21
F.4.1	PROPOSED MITIGATION .....	21
G.	CONCLUSIONS .....	24

## **TABLES**

TABLE 1: PERSONNEL.....	11
TABLE 2: NATURA 2000 SITES: SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS .....	12
TABLE 3: NATURA 2000 SITES: SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION .....	13
TABLE 4: QUALIFYING SPECIES - ECOLOGY.....	14
TABLE 5: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE DURHAM COAST SAC .....	17
TABLE 6: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE NORTHUMBRIA COAST SPA ....	18

## **FIGURES**

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION .....	8
FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF NATURA 2000 SITES IN RELATION TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE .....	12
FIGURE 3: HABITAT MAP .....	15
FIGURE 4: WEST PARK AND POTENTIAL MITIGATION LOCATIONS.....	22
FIGURE 5: SEAFRONT CAR PARK AND PROPOSED MITIGATION LOCATIONS.....	23

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## A. SUMMARY

E3 Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Gus Robinson Developments Ltd to produce a shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in relation to the proposed development of land at Gordon House, South Shields and the potential effects on Natura 2000<sup>1</sup> sites in the local area.

It is proposed to demolish the existing building on site and re-develop the site with approximately 18 residential units and associated infrastructure.

The aim of this shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (sHRA) is to assist the planning authority, as the competent authority, to determine whether the development may have a “likely significant effect”<sup>2</sup> on the Natura 2000 sites, which lie within the zone of influence<sup>3</sup> of the proposed development site.

The Natura 2000 sites to which this report pertains, are:

- Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site (approximately 2km to the north east at the closest point).
- Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (approximately 1.9km to the north east at the closest point)

If the Screening Opinion determines there is a likely significant effect on the qualifying features and/or conservation objectives of the sites, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) an Appropriate Assessment will be required for the development.

The proposed development site currently comprises Gordon House and adjacent hard standing (car parking) and amenity grassland with a small area of introduced scrub.

This screening opinion considers two elements of the proposals, firstly the potential direct effect of the development on the Natura 2000 sites and qualifying features through mechanisms or pathways such as habitat loss and constructional disturbance, and secondly the potential indirect effects of the development on these receptors. Potential indirect effects are considered to comprise primarily of recreational effects, particularly through increased numbers of people and their dogs walking within the protected sites.

Phase 1 habitat survey has identified that the site is dominated by built development and hard standing with very limited areas of amenity grassland and introduced shrub planting. As such it does not support any of the habitats for which the Durham Coast SAC is designated. The habitats present within the site are not suitable for use by the qualifying species of the Northumbria Coast SPA, namely purple sandpiper, turnstone, little tern and Arctic tern.

The development will not result in any loss of habitat from the Natura 2000 sites or loss of habitats considered to have a functional link with the identified protected sites. Furthermore

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1 A network of nature protection areas within the European Union comprising Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated respectively under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) respectively, designed to protect the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe.

2 “A likely effect is one that cannot be ruled out on the basis of objective information. The test is a ‘likelihood’ of effects rather than a ‘certainty’ of effects. So, ‘likely’, in this context, is not ‘probable’ or ‘more likely than not’, but rather whether there is a risk or possibility of an effect being significant. A significant effect is one that would undermine the site’s conservation objectives”. – DTA Publications.co.uk

3 The area within which a particular type, or any type, of change has the potential to affect a European site, this will differ depending on the site and the changes.

given the distance from the development to the Natura 2000 sites no direct impacts are envisaged.

Assessment has identified that there is a potential pathway for a likely significant effect on the Northumbria Coast SPA and/or the Durham Coast SAC, due to an increase in recreational use, and in particular dog walking.

The proposed development has the potential to result in an increase of 7 dogs<sup>4</sup> in the local area. Recent guidance produced by Hampshire County Council<sup>5</sup> on alternative natural greenspace indicates that dog owners travel up to an average distance of 400-500m to reach greenspace for regular daily dog-walking, where a suitable space is available. Assessment has identified that West Park, an 11ha area of public open space, lies approximately 300m to the south of the proposed development site and is a likely regular dog walking destination. Further public open space is also present approximately 500m to the north east.

The most likely destination for visitors is the South Shields sea front where car parking and associated recreational infrastructure is present, approximately 2.8km from the development site by road. The section of beach adjacent to the sea front and most likely to be accessed is not part of the SPA or SAC although it is accepted that people will at times take longer walks southward along the coast, which would include entering the SAC and potentially the SPA, although this section of the SPA is primarily steep cliffs and rocky shore and therefore less likely to be accessed.

Given the above, there is considered to be a low risk of proposals having an adverse effect on the SPA or SAC through a slight increase in recreational activity, without appropriate mitigation.

The following mitigation measures are proposed:

- Provision of a house pack to new residents providing information on Natura 2000 sites in the local area. This pack should detail the potential impacts on the Natura 2000 sites and identify suitable alternative green infrastructure in the local area.
- Local walking routes that take residents away from the coast and provide circular amenity routes will be highlighted to the new residents, particularly those utilising West Park approximately 400m to the south.
- Dog waste bins to be provided on the route to and within West Park to encourage dog walkers.
- An interpretation panel to be erected at the South Shields seafront parking area, the most likely point of the coast for additional visitors, to highlight the importance of the designated sites.

Overall, with the mitigation recommended, and taking into account the distance to the Natura 2000 sites, no likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites are anticipated.

*If you are assessing this report for a local planning authority and have any difficulties interpreting plans and figures from a scanned version of the report, E3 Ecology Ltd would be happy to email a PDF copy to you. Please contact us on 01434 230982.*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.pfma.org.uk/pet-population-2017>

<sup>5</sup> Hampshire County Council (2013). Planning for Dog Ownership in New Developments: Reducing Conflict – Adding Value. Hampshire County Council.

## B. INTRODUCTION

E3 Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Gus Robinson Developments Ltd to produce a “shadow” Habitats Regulations Assessment (sHRA) in relation to the proposed development of land Gordon House, South Shields and the potential effects on Natura 2000<sup>6</sup> sites in the local area.

The Habitats Directive<sup>7</sup> applies a precautionary principle to developments that may affect Natura 2000 sites. Proposals can only be permitted once it has been ascertained that there will be no likely significant effects on the integrity of the sites in question, *unless* there are no alternatives and the development is of over-riding public interest.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) seeks to assess proposals in order to determine whether they are likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. HRA comprises a four-stage process: Screening, Appropriate Assessment, identifying alternative solutions and identifying compensation measures where imperative reasons of overriding public interest are proven.

The first screening stage sets out to identify development proposals, which can be screened out of the need for further assessment i.e. they are determined as not likely to have a significant effect on the relevant Natura 2000 sites.

In order to produce this shadow HRA Report in relation to the proposed development the following steps were taken:

1. Identify a reasonable zone of influence around the development area and identify any Natura 2000 sites are within this area;
2. Assess whether there is any possible mechanism by which the proposed development can affect any Natura 2000 sites, focusing on those sites within the identified buffer or zone of influence;
3. Assess the qualifying features and conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites within this zone;
4. Determine whether the possible mechanisms identified in Point 2 are likely to have a significant impact on the qualifying features and conservation objectives assessed in Point 3; and
5. Determine whether the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 sites identified in Point 1 in combination with other plans or projects.

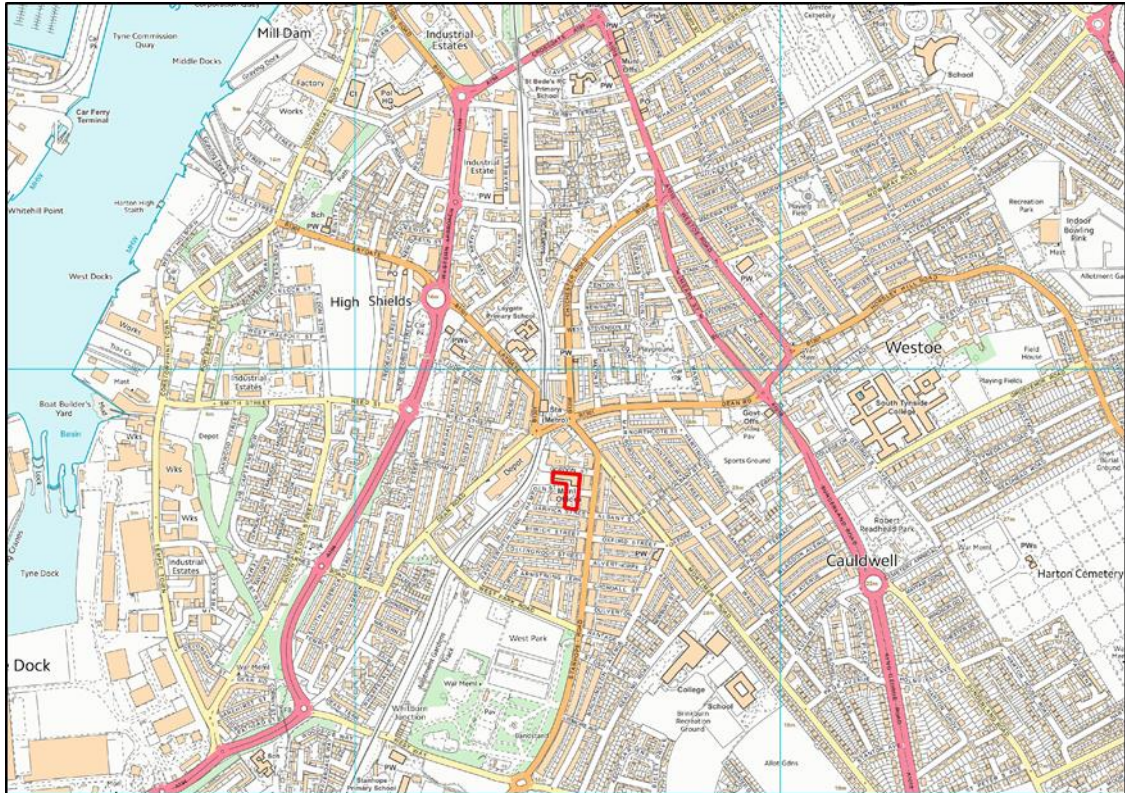
This shadow HRA report will assist the planning authority, as the Competent Authority, to determine whether the development may have a likely significant effect on the interest features of any Natura 2000 sites (Stage 1 of the HRA process). If a likely significant effect is anticipated then under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) an Appropriate Assessment will be required in relation to the proposed development (Stage 2 of the HRA process).

The site is located off the B1298, Stanhope Road, Chichester, South Shields at an approximate central grid reference of NZ364657. The site location is illustrated below in Figure 1.

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<sup>6</sup>A network of nature protection areas within the European Union comprising Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated respectively under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) respectively, designed to protect the most seriously threatened habitats and species across Europe.

<sup>7</sup> EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)



**FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION**  
**(REPRODUCED FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY UNDER LICENCE)**

The development proposal comprises demolition of the existing building and infrastructure and rebuilding with 18 residential units and associated gardens.



## **C. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING CONTEXT**

### **C.1 THE BIRDS DIRECTIVE**

The Birds Directive (1979) as amended in 2009 (Directive 2009/147/EC) allows for the designation of Special Protection Areas to aid the survival of particularly threatened species and all migratory bird species.

The Article of the Directive relevant to this report is Article 4 which, in summary, requires:

- The identification and classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I of the Directive, as well as for all regularly occurring migratory species, paying particular attention to the protection of wetlands of international importance.
- In respect of the protection areas, Member States shall take appropriate steps to avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats or any disturbance affecting the birds in so far as these would be significant, having regard to the objective of this Article.

Together with Special Areas of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive, SPAs form a network of European protected areas known as Natura 2000.

### **C.2 THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE**

The Habitats Directive (1992) (Directive 92/43/EEC) is European legislation which governs the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the management of Natura 2000 sites.

The Articles of the Directive relevant to this report are Articles 3 and 6 which, in summary, require:

- A coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation shall be set up under the title Nature 2000, composed of sites hosting the habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, enabling the habitats and species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
- Member States shall take appropriate steps to avoid, in the Special Areas of Conservation, the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbance of the species for which the areas have been designated in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the Directive.
- Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 (see below), the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'
- Paragraph 4: If in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Nature 2000 is protected

### **C.3 THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS**

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) transpose the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into English and Welsh law.

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The aspect of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) which is of particular relevance to this report is Regulation 61 which states:

1. A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which —

- a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

2. A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation, must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable them to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

3. In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, the authority must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which they propose that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

## D. METHODOLOGY

### D.1 ZONE OF INFLUENCE

The assessment area for direct effects is considered to comprise the area within the development boundary termed ‘the site’ and a 400m buffer<sup>8</sup>, around it where there may be effects, for example from changes in hydrology or direct disturbance during construction and use of the site.

For indirect effects, principally relating to additional recreational pressure through increased visitor numbers at the coast, a 6km buffer from the site has been identified as the zone of influence. This 6km buffer, identified through visitor surveys undertaken, has been used throughout the region by Durham County Council for their Habitat Regulations Assessment of their draft Local Plan on the Northumbria Coast SPA and Durham Coast SAC<sup>9</sup>.

### D.2 DESKTOP STUDY

The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website<sup>10</sup> was searched for all Natura 2000 sites that lie within a 6km buffer from the site, which has been identified as the zone of influence.

The site and surroundings were assessed from aerial photography and 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey plans.

### D.3 FIELD SURVEY

#### D.3.1 HABITAT SURVEY METHODS

The initial field survey of the proposed site was conducted using the methodology of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee’s Phase 1 Habitat Survey, as outlined in their habitat-mapping manual<sup>11</sup>. Each parcel of land was assessed by a trained surveyor and classified as one of approximately ninety habitat types. These were then mapped and the habitat information supplemented by dominant and indicator species codes and target notes where appropriate. Where areas within the study area do not fall into the Phase 1 Habitat Survey classification, alternative methods of classification have been used.

#### D.3.2 PERSONNEL

The table below details the personnel who undertook the survey work and reporting.

Name	Position	Professional Qualifications
Mark Wilson	Field Ecologist	BSc MSc
Becky White	Senior Ecologist	MA MSc

Further details of experience and qualifications are available at [www.e3ecology.co.uk](http://www.e3ecology.co.uk).

#### D.3.3 CONSTRAINTS

The initial habitat survey was undertaken at a suboptimal time of year for the detection and identification of certain plant species. However, subsequent site visits have been completed during the spring and early summer allowing confirmation of the value of the habitats present.

<sup>8</sup> The 400m distance has been used by other competent authorities with regards to direct effects on Natura 2000 sites.

<sup>9</sup> Durham County Council (2013) The County Durham Plan Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Habitat Regulations Assessment Report.

<sup>10</sup> [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)

<sup>11</sup> Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey, A Technique For Environmental Audit, JNCC, 2010

## E. RESULTS

### E.1 DESKTOP STUDY

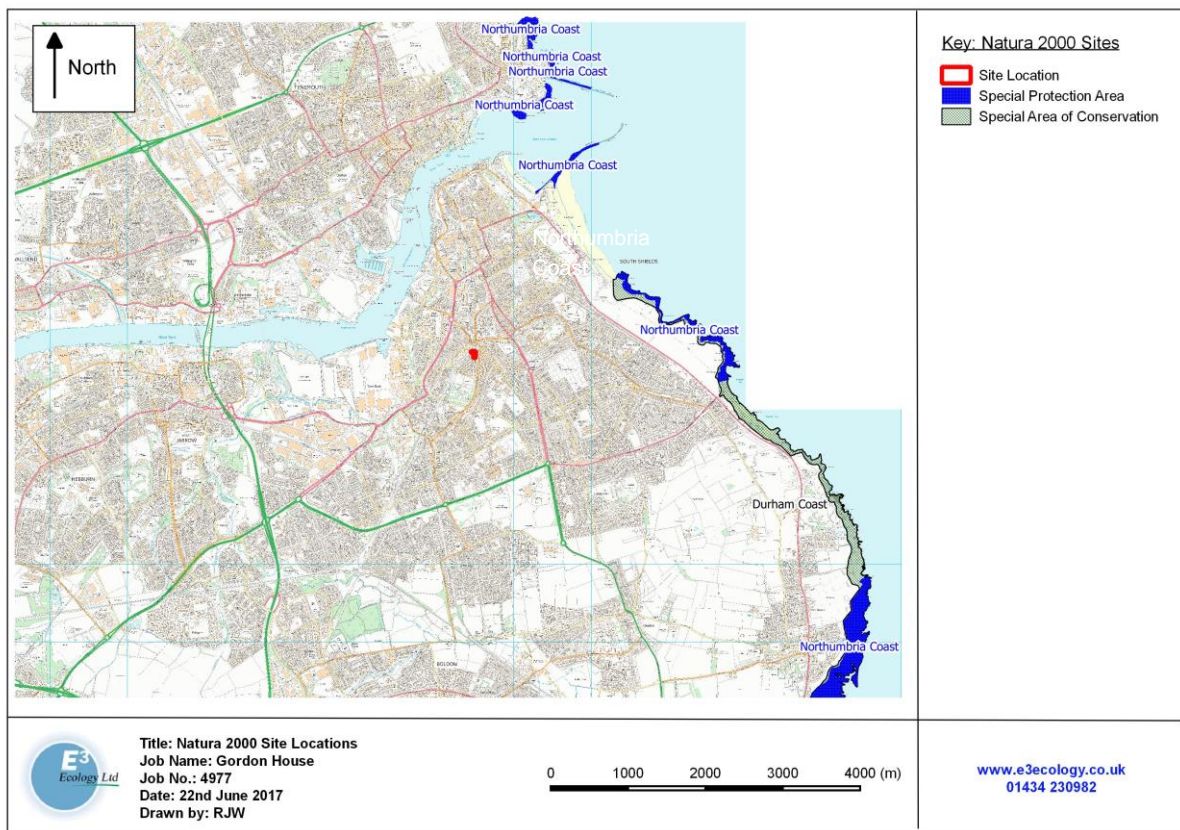
#### E.1.1 NATURA 2000 SITES

Consultation with the MAGIC website<sup>12</sup> indicated that the following Natura 2000 sites lie within a 6km buffer of the proposed development site:

- Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar site (~2km distant).
- Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (~1.9km distant)

The site also lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest risk zone for the Durham Coast SSSI, a constituent part of the Durham Coast SAC and the Northumbria Coast SPA, and it is noted that residential developments greater than 10 units have the potential to have an adverse impact on the site.

The locations of the Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation identified above in relation to the proposed development site are illustrated within the following figure.



**FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF NATURA 2000 SITES IN RELATION TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE**

The tables below detail the qualifying species and conservation objectives for each Natura 2000 site.

TABLE 2: NATURA 2000 SITES: SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS			
Background	Qualifying Species	Conservation Objectives	Current Status

<sup>12</sup> www.magic.gov.uk

**TABLE 2: NATURA 2000 SITES: SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS**

Background	Qualifying Species	Conservation Objectives	Current Status
<b>Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area</b>			
<p>This area of coastline was designated in 2004 and comprises sections of coastline between north Northumberland and the south of County Durham.</p> <p>The SPA comprises areas of rocky shore supporting a food resource for wading birds which are cited on the designation.</p>	<p>There are three species listed on the citation for the protected area, these are purple sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>); ruddy turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) and little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>). The site is designated for the non-breeding use of the site by the first two species listed and for breeding use by the latter species.</p> <p>In addition, Arctic tern* is proposed to be added to the list of qualifying species as the colony at the Long Nanny comprises 2.92% of the GB population.</p> <p><small>*Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for the classification of this features as part of this Special Protection Area (SPA).</small></p>	<p>The avoidance of the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features, and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</li> <li>• The populations of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> </ul>	<p>There are a number of SSSI units within the SPA which are components of the larger designated site.</p> <p>The most recent assessment of these components found that around 63% was classed as in favourable condition, with the remaining 37% being unfavourable recovering.</p>

**TABLE 3: NATURA 2000 SITES: SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION**

Background	Qualifying Habitats/ Species	Conservation Objectives	Current Status
<b>Durham Special Area of Conservation</b>			
<p>The Durham Coast SAC was designated in April 2002 and stretches, in distinct units, from South Shields to the south of County Durham. These units are designated for the maritime vegetation that they support on magnesian limestone which creates rare and species-rich communities.</p>	<p>The qualifying features of the site are stated as being vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts.</p> <p>The Natura 2000 standard data form for the site states that: vegetated sea cliffs range from vertical cliffs in the north with scattered vegetated ledges, to the magnesian limestone grassland slopes of the south. Parts of the site are managed as a National Nature Reserve, and plans provide for the non-interventionist management of the vegetated cliffs. The majority of the site is in public ownership and an agreed management plan is being developed</p>	<p>To avoid the deterioration of the qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species and the significant disturbance of those qualifying species, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status of each of the qualifying features.</p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species rely;</li> <li>• The populations of the</li> </ul>	<p>The Durham Coast SAC was designated in April 2002 and stretches, in distinct units, from South Shields to the south of County Durham. These units are designated for the maritime vegetation that they support on magnesian limestone which creates rare and species-rich communities.</p>

Background	Qualifying Species	Habitats/	Conservation Objectives	Current Status
	to protect nature conservation interests.		qualifying species; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The distribution of the qualifying species within the site.</li> </ul>	

Table 4 provides information on the ecology of each of the qualifying species associated with the Northumbria Coast SPA.

Natura 2000 Site	Species	Ecology
<b>Northumbria Coast SPA</b>	Purple Sandpiper	The purple sandpiper is a medium-sized wading bird that is larger, stockier and darker than a dunlin. This species is mainly a winter visitor to almost any rocky coast in the UK. Most are found in Orkney, Shetland and along the east coast of Scotland and northern England – the species is scarce south of Yorkshire, other than in Devon and Cornwall. Wintering numbers in the UK are approximately 13,000 birds (October-March) <sup>13</sup> .
	Ruddy Turnstone	Smaller than a redshank, turnstones have a mottled appearance with brown or chestnut and black upperparts and brown and white or black and white head pattern, whilst their underparts are white and legs orange. Wintering numbers in the UK are approximately 51,000 birds (October-March) <sup>13</sup> .
	Little Tern	Little tern is the smallest species of tern breeding in the UK, nesting exclusively on beaches, spits or inshore islets. Colonies are found around much of the coastline, but the main concentration is in south and east England.
	Arctic Tern	Slightly smaller than a common tern, the adult Arctic tern has a dark red bill and legs, and long tail streamers. In Britain and Ireland, the Arctic Tern is almost exclusively a coastal breeder, usually nesting on the immediate shoreline and virtually never more than 10 km from the coast. Nearly 90% of the Arctic Terns breeding in Britain and Ireland are found in Scotland, Orkney and Shetland and throughout the Outer and Inner Hebrides. There are also some colonies on the east and north coasts. In England, they are found mainly in the north-east and the northwest, with very small numbers in north Norfolk and along the south coast.

### E.1.2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

The proposed development site lies within a built up part of South Shields. The surrounding area predominantly comprises residential housing with a linear area of trees and shrubs associated with the Metro line ~50m to the west and parkland associated with West Park ~350m to the south. Amenity grassland areas and parkland are also present to the east associated with Wawn Street ~270m to the north east, rugby fields ~310m to the east and Harton Cemetery ~620m to the east.

## E.2 **FIELD SURVEY**

### E.2.1 HABITATS

Habitats on site predominantly comprise the building of Gordon House with hard standing and amenity grassland associated with a car parking area to the south. Small areas of introduced shrubs are found to the south of the car parking area and to the north of Gordon House.

The habitats present within the survey area are illustrated within Figure 3. Full details of the habitats on site are provided within the separate ecological impact assessment report.

<sup>13</sup> <http://rspb.org.uk>



**Figure 3: Habitat Map**  
**(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map under licence)**

### E.2.2 ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

A small number of garden bird species may use areas of introduced shrub for nesting however this habitat, being limited in size and also exposed is considered to be of low value to them. An adult male dunnock was recorded perching on top of introduced shrubs to the south of the site, behaviour indicative of establishing a breeding territory. Such species have potential to nest within the shrubbery present on site. Herring gull were recorded over flying the site. The roof of Gordon House, being pitched in nature, is not considered suitable for this species to nest. No evidence was recorded of birds nesting within the fabric of Gordon House.

Due to the habitats present, the site is considered to be of negligible suitability for the qualifying species of the Northumbria Coast SPA, namely turnstone, purple sandpiper and little tern, and is therefore not considered to have a functional link to the SPA.

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## **F. ASSESSMENT**

### **F.1 POTENTIAL MECHANISMS OF EFFECT**

#### **F.1.1 DIRECT EFFECTS**

Direct effects on Natura 2000 sites are only likely to result from direct habitat loss within the designated sites or loss of habitats suitable for use by qualifying species and which have a functional link to the designated sites. There may also be effects through disturbance during construction or changes in hydrology and air quality as a result of construction work to land within the designated sites or to land which has a functional link to the designated site.

#### **F.1.2 INDIRECT EFFECTS**

It is considered that there are only limited "pathways" that could contribute to indirect effects on the Natura 2000 sites; principally, this is disturbance associated with increased recreational activity, primarily dog walking, due to the increase in residents associated with any completed residential development.



## F.2 SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND SUBSEQUENT LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

<b>TABLE 5: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE DURHAM COAST SAC</b>						
<b>Mechanism of Effect</b>	<b>Description of Activity</b>	<b>Impact/Effect</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effect (without mitigation)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effect (with mitigation)</b>	<b>Further action required</b>
<b>Construction Phase (Direct)</b>						
Direct Habitat Loss	No loss of Natura 2000 habitat					No
Storage of potential pollutants/spillages	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site and the nature of the proposals (small residential) no effects are envisaged					No
Degradation in Air Quality	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects are envisaged					No
Degradation in Water Quality	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site and that no invasive species were recorded within the site no effects are envisaged					No
Spread of Invasive Species	No loss of Natura 2000 habitat					No
<b>Operational Phase (Indirect)</b>						
Increased recreational pressure associated with an increase in activity at the coast, in particular dog walking.	Potential increase in disturbance of habitats on site and introduction of additional nutrients to habitats through dog fouling.	Potential increase in disturbance and changes to ground flora as a result of nutrient enrichment.	<b>Potential for impact</b>	<p>Homeowner packs to be provided, highlighting the importance of the designated sites and how to minimise effects. This will include information on local walking routes and potential alternative destinations.</p> <p>Local walking routes that take residents away from the coast and provide circular amenity routes will be highlighted to the new residents, particularly those utilising West Park approximately 400m to the south.</p> <p>Dog waste bins to be provided on the route to and within West Park to encourage dog walkers</p> <p>An interpretation panel to be erected at the seafront parking area, the most likely point of the coast for additional visitors to highlight the importance of the designated sites.</p>	No	<b>No</b>

<b>TABLE 6: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE NORTHUMBRIA COAST SPA</b>						
<b>Mechanism of Effect</b>	<b>Description of Activity</b>	<b>Impact/Effect</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effect (without mitigation)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effect (with mitigation)</b>	<b>Further action required</b>
<b>Construction Phase (Direct)</b>						
Direct Habitat Loss	No loss of Natura 2000 habitat					No
Loss of Functional Land	No loss of land utilised by wintering Qualifying Species with the site being unsuitable for the SPA qualifying species					No
Noise associated with construction	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects associated with increased noise disturbance are envisaged					No
Increased light levels	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects associated with increased light disturbance are envisaged					No
Storage of potential pollutants/spillages	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects are envisaged					No
Degradation in Air Quality	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site and the nature of the proposals (residential) no effects are envisaged					No
Degradation in Water Quality	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects are envisaged					No
Spread of Invasive Species	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site and the nature of the habitats within the SPA no effects are envisaged					No
<b>Operational Phase (Indirect)</b>						
Increased noise/light disturbance associated with the new development	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects are envisaged					No
Cat ownership	Due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site no effects are envisaged					No
Increased recreational pressure associated with an increase in activity at the coast, in particular dog walking.	Potential increase in disturbance to qualifying species.	Potential displacement from foraging areas as a result of increased disturbance of qualifying species.	<b>Potential for impact</b>	Homeowner packs to be provided, highlighting the importance of the designated sites and how to minimise effects. This will include information on local walking routes and potential alternative destinations.  Local walking routes that take residents away from the coast and provide circular amenity routes will be highlighted to the new residents, particularly those	No	<b>No</b>

**TABLE 6: SCREENING ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE NORTHUMBRIA COAST SPA**

Mechanism of Effect	Description of Activity	Impact/Effect	Likely Significant Effect (without mitigation)	Mitigation	Likely Significant Effect (with mitigation)	Further action required
				utilising West Park approximately 400m to the south.  Dog waste bins to be provided on the route to and within West Park to encourage dog walkers  An interpretation panel to be erected at the seafront parking area, the most likely point of the coast for additional visitors to highlight the importance of the designated sites.		

## F.3 FURTHER DISCUSSION

### F.3.1 DIRECT IMPACTS

Phase 1 habitat survey has identified that the site is dominated by built development and hard standing with very limited areas of amenity grassland and introduced shrub planting.

As such it does not support any of the habitats for which the Durham Coast SAC is designated. The site is also considered unsuitable to support any of the qualifying species of the Northumbria Coast SPA and Ramsar. Purple sandpiper and turnstone largely rely on rocky shore habitats, whilst little tern and arctic tern breed exclusively on sandy/shingle beaches or onshore inlets.

As can be seen from tables 4 and 5, due to the distance, approximately 2km, and the size of development (18 units), it is considered that the development will not result in any direct impacts.

### F.3.2 INDIRECT MECHANISMS

Development proposals comprise the construction of 18 residential units, resulting in a potential increase in the local population, and therefore an assumed increase in numbers of domestic dogs and cats. Using the average household size of West Park, South Tyneside of two people<sup>14</sup>, a potential increase of 36 people is expected as a result of the development, although it is considered likely that not all will be from outside the area such that the actual increase in population size is likely to be less.

The 2017 Pet Population Report<sup>15</sup> indicates that in the north east of England 31% of households own dogs, with an average of 1.2 dogs per household. For the new development, this would equate to ~6 households with dogs, totalling an additional 7 dogs. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number and as above it is unlikely that all additional dogs are from outwith the existing area.

Due to the distance from the SPA, ~2km away, and the nature of the land use between, no impacts with regards to cat predation are envisaged as their likely range is considerably less than this.

Recent guidance on providing for dog ownership within new developments produced by Hampshire County Council<sup>16</sup> suggests that dog owner's walk up to an average distance of 400-500m from their homes to reach greenspace for dog-walking, where a suitable space is available. Dog walking is typically carried out twice a day, year round, with an average walk length of 2.7km. West Park, an 11ha area of public open space, lies approximately 300m to the south of the proposed development site and is a likely regular dog walking destination. Further public open space is also present approximately 500m to the north east. This area will be highlighted to the new residents.

The South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham Coastal Visitor Winter Survey<sup>17</sup> found that 30% of those interviewed walk their dog at the coast as there is nowhere suitable / no green space close to home – of those people over half (54%) would use green space some or most of the

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<sup>14</sup><http://www.ukcensusdata.com/cleaddon-and-east-boldon-e00043768/usual-resident-population-s101ew#sthash.gNa0aftp.dpbs>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.pfma.org.uk/pet-population-2017>

<sup>16</sup> Jenkinson, S (2013) Planning for Dog Ownership in New Developments: Reducing Conflict – Adding Value. Hampshire County Council.

<sup>17</sup> Bluegrass (2016) South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham Coastal Visitor Winter Survey 2016

time if available close to home. The survey found that those visiting the coast at South Tyneside are less likely to drive and more likely to walk to the coast compared to the wider, combined Local Authority region. Furthermore dog walkers at the coast are more likely to be coming from within a half mile radius.

The survey does however highlight that people will travel up to 31 miles to visit the coast but that South Tyneside has a significantly higher proportion of visitors travelling ½ mile or less.

This therefore means that both the Northumbria Coast SPA and Durham Coast SAC are well within this range for people to travel in order to walk their dogs.

If travelling by car the most likely destination for visitors is considered to be the South Shields sea front where car parking and associated recreational infrastructure is present, approximately 2.8km from the development site by road. The section of beach adjacent to the sea front and most likely to be accessed is not part of the SPA or SAC although it is accepted that people will at times take longer walks southward along the coast, which would include entering the SAC and potentially the SPA, although this section of the SPA is primarily steep cliffs and rocky shore and therefore less likely to be accessed.

Given the above, there is considered to be a low risk of proposals having an adverse effect on the SPA or SAC through a slight increase in recreational activity, without appropriate mitigation.

## **F.4 MITIGATION**

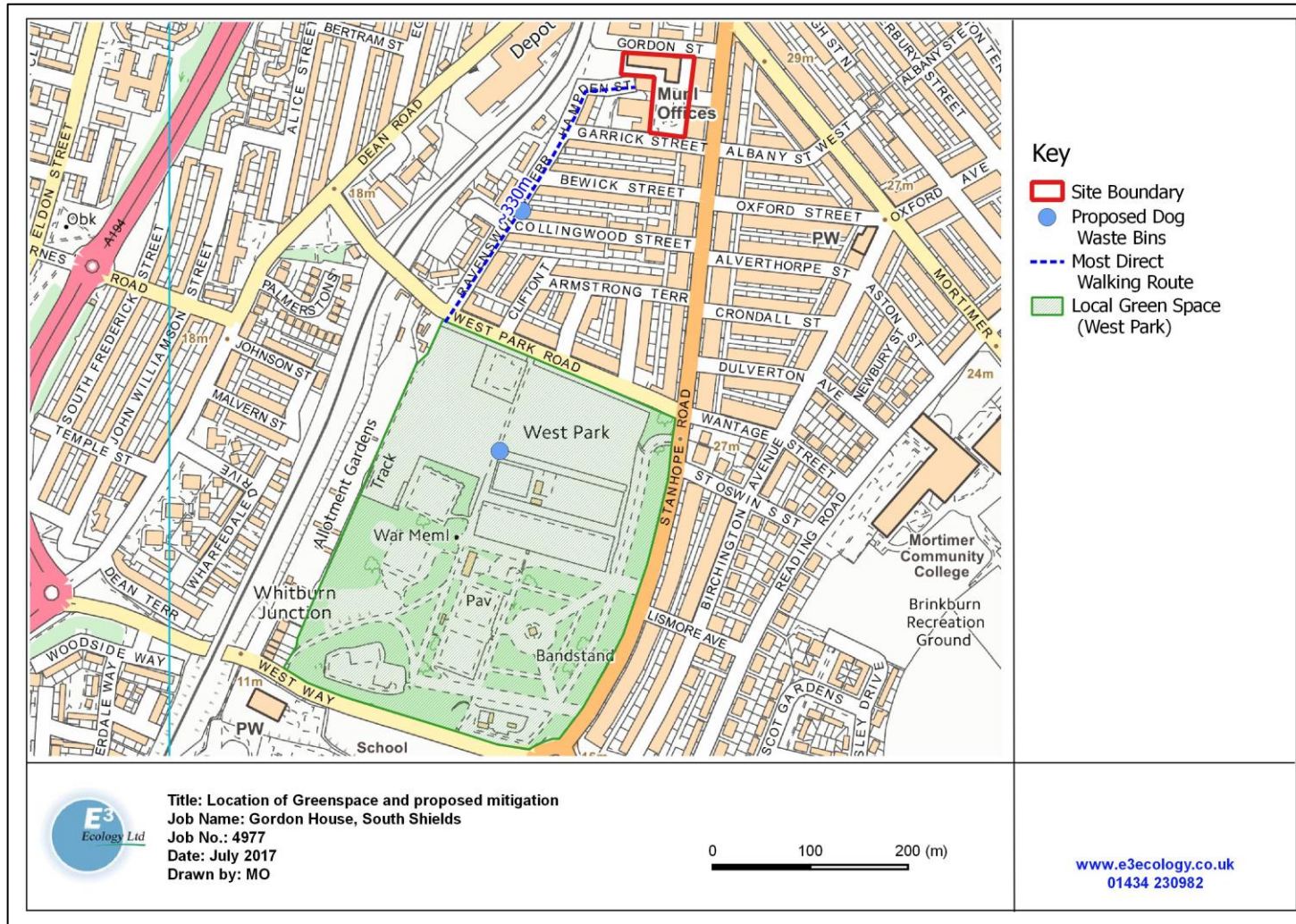
### **F.4.1 PROPOSED MITIGATION**

To address the potential adverse effect of a potential slight increase in recreational pressure at the coast, with the MAGIC website<sup>18</sup> highlighting that the site lies within a designated Impact Risk Zone for the coastal SSSIs, with potential impacts arising from residential development comprising greater than 10units, the following suite of mitigation is recommended:

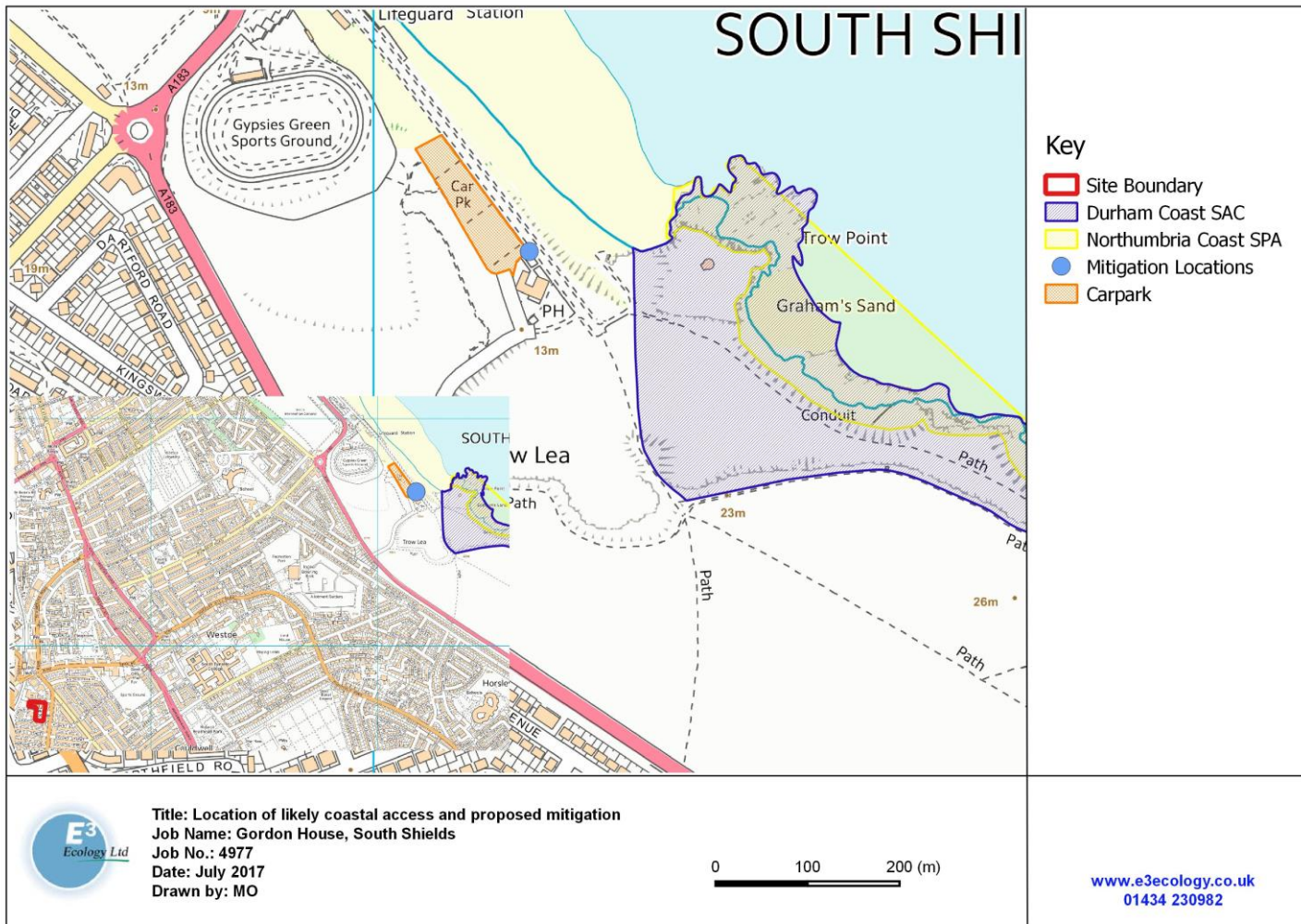
- Provision of a house pack to new residents providing information on Natura 2000 sites in the local area. This pack should detail the potential impacts on the Natura 2000 sites and identify suitable alternative green infrastructure in the local area.
- Local walking routes that take residents away from the coast and provide circular amenity routes will be highlighted to the new residents, particularly those utilising West Park approximately 400m to the south.
- Dog waste bins to be provided on the route to and within West Park to encourage dog walkers
- An interpretation panel to be erected at the seafront parking area, the most likely point of the coast for additional visitors to highlight the importance of the designated sites.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/>



**Figure 4: West Park and Potential Mitigation Locations**  
 (Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map under licence)



**Figure 5: Seafront Car Park and Proposed Mitigation Locations  
(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map under licence)**

## **G. CONCLUSIONS**

No direct habitat loss from any of the Natura 2000 sites, or loss of habitat suitable to support qualifying features will occur and given the distance, no effects associated with the construction of the site are envisaged.

There is considered to be a low risk of proposals having a significant effect on the Northumbria Coast SPA and/or Durham Coast SAC through a slight increase in visitor numbers as a result of the development, however with the targeted mitigation no likely significant effects are predicted.

It is therefore concluded that with the proposed mitigation no likely significant effects on the qualifying features and conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites are anticipated.