

17 Human Beings

17.1 *Introduction and Methodology*

The significance of the effects was established through identification of sensitivity or value using Table 6.1, assessment of magnitude using Table 6.2 and assessment of significance using Table 6.3.

The proposed scheme is of considerable importance to customers living, visiting and working on the Isle of Wight, as it will ensure that the island maintains a secure water supply for both domestic and industrial purposes. The scheme is also essential in order to meet increasing demands on water resources and increased expectations for water quality and security of supply. Future growth in the population of the Isle of Wight and expansion of the existing commercial (including recreational and tourist related developments), agricultural and industrial developments on the island will necessitate a secure water supply to ensure that significant pressure is not placed on existing resources.

17.2 *Baseline Conditions*

17.2.1 *Settlements and Population*

The proposed new twin pipelines are designed to serve the Isle of Wight with a population of around 135,000 (2005).

The proposed working area on the island lies within the small town of Gurnard, which has a population of approximately 1700 people (www.britishsurvey.org/Isle_of_Wight/Gurnard). The proposed drill rig site lies opposite a number of residential properties; the closest of which lies approximately 25m from the site. The larger town of Cowes, which is a busy inland port and important recreational area lies approximately 2km to the east of the study area.

The New Forest is a predominantly rural area that lies within Hampshire and comprises the small settlement of Lepe within the study area. The proposed working area at Lepe lies in a rural area relatively remote from residential development. The closest property to the drill rig site lies at a minimum distance of 200m.

The larger settlements of Exbury (renowned for its scenic gardens), Langley and Calshot all lie approximately 3km from Lepe.

17.2.2

Agriculture

Agricultural land quality within the study area is discussed in section 11 'Land Use'.

17.2.3

Recreation

The West Solent dominates the study area, and provides a valued resource for water and land-based recreation. The Solent attracts a diverse range of recreational pursuits and the area is extensively used for sailing, jet skiing, water skiing, sail cruising, power boating, paragliding, angling, windsurfing and bait digging.

The Solent also supports a considerable number of wildfowl and waders and consequently both wildfowling and bird watching are popular pursuits within the study area.

There are numerous coastal beaches in and around the study area that provide opportunities for swimming (particularly at the two designated bathing waters at Lepe and Gurnard), wind surfing and casual surfing.

In addition to water based activities, other informal recreational pursuits that take place within the study area include walking, sightseeing, cycling and horse riding. Several Public Rights of Way, other routes with public access and cycle routes exist throughout the study area (see sections 17.2.5 and 17.2.6), representing a recreational resource and providing opportunities to gain a greater appreciation of the countryside.

The New Forest is a major recreational resource under pressure from residents, visitors and tourists. Lepe Country Park is an important recreational facility within the New Forest and further details are provided in section 17.2.4.

17.2.4

Tourism

Tourism is an important industry in the region, both within the study area, and in the wider area of the Isle of Wight and the New Forest. The tourist industry supports employment in many sectors of the economy including recreation, which attracts a wide variety of tourist related activities increasing pressure for development. These tourists make a huge contribution to the economic welfare of the region, spending money in shops, restaurants, hotels and cafes, and increasing the turnover of local businesses.

The Isle of Wight attracts approximately 2.3 million visitors annually (www.iwight.com/council/documents) and many of the island's attractions lie in the coastline.

Visits to the northern side of the island focus predominantly on Cowes, an international yachting centre and a thriving port with a natural harbour at the mouth of the Medina River. Throughout the year Cowes hosts a diverse range of events including Cowes week in August, which attracts numerous visitors for organised regattas and other sailing events, an international power boat race, Cowes carnival, art fairs and music festivals. The seafront promenade also attracts a considerable number of visitors watching offshore recreational activities. To the west of Cowes lies Gurnard, a small town which has a sandy and shingle beach used by both visitors and local residents.

Holiday accommodation in and around the study area on the Isle of Wight is mainly provided by caravan and camping sites, and guest houses but also includes serviced hotels.

The New Forest's unique environment is extremely popular with visitors who are attracted to the picturesque villages, market towns where shops and food outlets cater primarily for tourists, woodland areas and parks (such as Beaulieu and Paulton's Park). A study published in 1992 estimated that 7.15 million visitor days are spent in the area annually (www.nfdc.gov.uk/media). The tourism industry provides 26% of job opportunities in the area (www.nfdc.gov.uk/media) and the presence of the large tourist population has slowed the loss of some village shops.

At the southern end of the New Forest (and within the study area) lies Lepe Country Park, a park designated under the Countryside Act 1968 for recreation and leisure opportunities in a countryside environment. The park, which is established and managed by Hampshire County Council receives over 300,000 visitors per year (Hampshire County Council 2005) and is popular for picnics, bathing, bird watching, sea fishing and coastal walks.

There is a wide range of tourist accommodation within the New Forest and holiday parks, tourist caravans and camping sites offering a choice of facilities are well provided for although many sites are seasonal.

The proposed works have considerable potential for disruption to recreational and tourist attractions during the construction phase through noise and visual disturbance to disruption to amenity access.

17.2.5

Public Rights of Way

Several Public Rights of Way pass through or around the study area including: -

- (a) New Forest (Figure 11.1)
- a public footpath running in an east to west direction from Stone Point to the mouth of the Exbury River in the west of the study area (Hampshire side);
 - a bridleway runs in an east/westerly direction between East Hill Farm and Lepe road to the north of the study area;
 - a public footpath running in a north to south direction from East Hill Farm to the north of the study area to Lepe car park in the south (Hampshire side);
 - a public bridleway, which runs from Green Lane at Blackfield to Langley in an east/westerly direction immediately north of the proposed works at Mopley Booster Pumping Station; and
 - several public footpaths traverse the area surrounding Mopley Booster Pumping Station including a footpath that runs between Fields Heath and Mopley Pond, to the north of the station and another footpath runs between Lepe Road and Mopley Road to the south of the station.
- (b) Isle of Wight (Figure 11.2)
- public footpaths CS35 and CS36 at Gurnard which run between GR 4711 9538 (mouth of Gurnard Luck Stream) to GR 4731 9549 (Gurnard Beach, north of Marsh Road) have been closed by the Isle of Wight Council due to the seawall slipping into the sea and subsequently being unsafe for public use; and
 - the Isle of Wight Coastal Path runs along the coastline to the north of the working areas at Gurnard. The twin pipelines will be drilled beneath this 65mile long footpath, which circumnavigates the island.

17.2.6

Cycle Routes

The following cycle routes are present within the study area: -

- (a) New Forest (Figure 11.1)
 - Lepe off-road cycle route/trail, which uses the C119 Lepe Road within the study area
- (b) Isle of Wight (Figure 11.2)
 - Rew Street, Marsh Road and Solent View Road forms part of the Isle of Wight round island cycle route

Both of the cycle routes are promoted by the local authorities for recreational cycling.

17.3

17.3.1

Impact Assessment and Mitigation

Construction Impacts: New Forest

- I.1. Activities undertaken at the drill rig sites may have a **minor to moderate adverse impact** upon recreational users' enjoyment of Lepe Country Park and Lepe cycle trail in terms of temporary noise, and minor elevated dust during prolonged periods of dry weather.
- M.1. Signs will be displayed in Lepe Country Park and at the entrance to the drill rig site on Lepe Road to inform the public of the nature, timing and duration of particular construction activities. Following mitigation, there will be **no significant/minor adverse impact**.
- I.2. It is estimated that approximately 10 personnel will be required on-site at Lepe during the construction of the scheme and therefore the small increase in labour will have a minor/negligible beneficial impact on the local facilities, as it is expected that they will stay locally in bed and breakfast accommodation during the construction period and may eat in local restaurants including The Helmsmann. This impact is considered to be **negligible to minor beneficial** in nature.
- I.3. No Public Footpaths will be adversely impacted upon by the proposed scheme although there is the possibility that the use of the permitted bridleway that runs across the entrance to Mopley Booster Station could be disrupted in order to allow vehicular access to the site. As this disruption will be temporary and for a short duration during vehicle movements only, the impact is considered to range from **negligible to minor adverse** in nature.

- M.3. It is anticipated that the bridleway at Mopley will be kept open throughout the works. If, however, there is a requirement to divert or close the bridleway in order to allow for vehicular access to the site, adequate signing/notices will be erected. If the bridleway remains open the residual impact is likely to be **negligible**.
- I.4. The potential impacts of the proposed scheme on agricultural land are discussed in section 11 'Land Use'. The proposed scheme will however also have a **minor adverse impact** on farmers during the proposed scheme, resulting in a loss of revenue during the construction works.

17.3.2

Construction Impacts: Isle of Wight

- I.5. Activities at the drill rig site at Gurnard may have a **minor adverse impact** on the use of the beach, the Isle of Wight coastal footpath and the Isle of Wight round island cycle route by recreational users, in terms of a temporary increase in the noise climate.
- M.5. A sign will be displayed at the entrance to the drill rig site on Rew Street to inform the public of the nature, timing and duration of particular construction activities.
- I.6. It is estimated that approximately 10 personnel will be required on-site during the construction of the scheme and therefore the small increase in labour will have a minor/negligible beneficial impact on the local facilities, as it is expected that they will stay locally in bed and breakfast accommodation during the construction work.
- I.7. The proposed pipelines will be drilled beneath the Isle of Wight Coastal Path and therefore will have **no significant impact** on this recreational resource.
- I.8. The proposed scheme will however also have a **minor adverse impact** on farmers during the proposed scheme, resulting in a loss of revenue during the construction works.

17.3.3

Construction Impacts: Marine

- I.9. The proposed works will have **no significant impacts** on major recreational events in the Solent such as Cowes Week, as the pipeline will be laid between October and December. However, there may be

some disturbance to recreational craft using the Solent during the construction works. These impacts are considered to be **minor adverse** in nature.

- M.9. To minimise the disturbance to recreational craft, periods during which vessel movements are programmed to take place will be notified to the public by site notices and a Notice to Mariners will be published. Following implementation of mitigation measures, **no significant impacts** on recreational marine users are envisaged.

17.3.4

Operational Impacts and Mitigation

- I.10 The proposed scheme will have a **major beneficial impact** for customers living, working and visiting the Isle of Wight by providing a secure water supply and balancing the island's needs during periods of high demand. The scheme will also assist in coping with increased demands of water from recreational activities and as a result of the flourishing tourism industry on the island.