



the River Restoration Centre

Working to restore and enhance our rivers

Technical Advice

River Hart & Itchel Brook, Hampshire

A catchment-wide assessment with option prioritisation

KEY INFO

Date: July 2021

Client: South East Water

Type: Catchment assessment



The River Hart and Itchel Brook are tributaries to the River Loddon, situated in Hampshire southern England, approximately 17.5km east of Basingstoke. South East Water has an abstraction site at Itchel Mill Springs near the source of Itchel Brook. As part of its Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) 2020-2025, South East Water is undertaking adaptive management and abstraction reduction to improve the ecological health of the rivers.

RRC carried out a catchment assessment and identified main catchment impacts to be lack of natural in-channel forms, poor longitudinal connectivity, poor floodplain connectivity, lack of natural bank forms and profiles, and fine sediment accumulation. The River Hart and Itchel Brook catchments contain significant hydromorphological pressures, including but not limited to; abstraction, channel resectioning (over-deepening, over-widening), bank resectioning, realignment and impassable barriers. These pressures are negatively impacting upon the hydromorphological condition and habitat quality in the catchment. RHS outputs show that 7/8 reaches have poor river habitat quality and 6/8 reaches have poor riparian quality.



Options to address the pressures causing these impacts have been proposed across the catchment. RRC has suggested some preliminary priorities which will reduce catchment-scale impacts, for example; remeandering reaches of the River Hart, bypassing the weir and using large wood structure within the Itchel Brook.

More information and understanding is required in some areas of the catchment before final decisions are made. This includes a couple of inaccessible reaches requiring RHS surveys, and an assessment of potential barriers along the River Hart before a project on the weir progresses.