



Assessment of Project Need

Project : Piles Moorings on the Hamble River

9476/Ass/jhb

Revised 15 November 2012

Description :-

Warsash Pool

This application relates to a proposal developed jointly by the Crown Estate and the Harbour Office, to partially clear an area of fore-and-aft moorings and replace them with two lengths of continuous pile and pontoon moorings on the Warsash side of the River Hamble as shown in the attached plans FA EG-9476.00/2000-P2, 2001 and 2003. The details contained on the noted drawings have been amended from the initial scheme following various consultations with stakeholders. The principal variations are the removal from the proposed scheme of the single Northerly pontoon run and the retention of up to eight (8) fore-and-aft moorings within the area. This will aid visibility for the passenger ferry and retain most of the benefits of an open area for small dinghies.

The area extending upstream from Stone Pier Yard as far as the first pile of the 'D' run of mooring piles (D9) on the eastern side of the River is known as Warsash Pool. It includes the Warsash Ferry Hard. The area lies outside the main channel of the River and is currently the site of over 40 fore-and-aft buoyed moorings which are fixed by a mix of ground chains and individual sinkers. Depths in the area range from 3 metres at Chart Datum, to drying heights of 2.3 metres. Thus, at High Water Neaps, there is typically at least 1.5 metres of water throughout the area. At Low Water Springs, much of the area dries, but there is a useful area between the 0 metres contour and the main channel, where depths range from 1 to over 3 metres at Chart Datum. Several of the vessels currently moored in Warsash Pool area dry out at Low Water Springs.

Many River users have indicated that this area is ideal for racing small dinghies and for youth training during the High Water period (typically HW -1 hour until HW + 2 hours). However, the boats and associated mooring tackle make this difficult, so this proposal involves clearing most of the area of its existing moorings, and replacing them with two lengths of continuous pile and pontoon moorings in the deeper water. The project has a number of potential benefits for River users:

- A safe area for racing small dinghies and for training young people.
- Secure pontoon moorings for existing mooring holders.
- No increase in the total number of moorings in the area.
- Enhanced safety resulting from removal of buoys and associated pick-up lines which cause a hazard to vessels which stray out of the main channel, and to sailing dinghies.
- Enhanced views, with more open stretches of water.

The proposed scheme involves driving twelve (12) new piles, using the vibro method. These will be connected with pontoon structures to form two separate mooring pontoons with gaps between them to facilitate access to the moorings and passage by small craft. If approved, the works will be carried out during the winter months (in line with accepted practice) to minimise the environmental impact of the piling works. The redundant moorings will be removed before piling work commences.

The proposed scheme will require the approval of the various statutory regulators: the Marine Management Organisation, Fareham Borough Council, The River Hamble Harbour Authority and the Environment Agency.

The concept and layout has been developed to comply with the River Hamble Harbour Authority's Strategic Vision which was approved by the Harbour Board in January 2012. This Vision (para 4.1.1) highlights the Board's recognition of 'the importance of safety for sailing dinghies and other small craft in the harbour 'and states that 'the Board will seek to ensure the preservation of safe areas for these activities.' The Board also wishes to 'encourage the safe use of the harbour by children'. The Board Vision is 'to conserve the natural beauty, character and History of the Harbour balanced with the needs of the many people who use it' (para 3.1). The proposed scheme also complies with the statement that 'The Board aspires to manage the space available for all categories of Harbour users, and to give due consideration to zoning activities where practicable. Optimal use of space may involve the clearing of moorings from specific areas, but the Board accepts that moorings elsewhere will almost certainly need to be reconfigured or expanded to accommodate displaced boats' (para 4.5.2).

The area covered by this proposal lies within a Moorings Restricted Area as set out in Fareham Borough Council's planning Policies C7 & C8, the relevant sections of which are as follows:

Policy C7: New Moorings

New moorings will be permitted provided that:

(A) they are not located in the Mooring Restriction Areas:

(iii) between Warsash Ferry and Hamble Village;

(B) the River Hamble Harbour Authority's limit on the total number of moorings is not exceeded; and

(C) there is no adverse impact on nature conservation and other environmental interests.

Policy C8: Existing Moorings within Mooring Restriction Areas

The replacement or relocation of existing moorings within the Mooring Restriction Areas will not be permitted unless:

(A) there are no alternative locations outside the Moorings Restriction Areas:

(B) it will result in improvements to navigation and the appearance of the River Hamble; and

(C) there is no adverse impact on nature conservation and other environmental interests.

This proposal does not seek to increase the number of previously approved moorings in the area because the proposed layout will have space for exactly the same number of moorings. Thus, the Harbour Authority's current limit will not be breached. There are no viable alternative locations on the River which could accommodate this many moorings and the proposed scheme will result in improvements to navigation and the appearance of the River.

The proposed mooring area lies within the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and adjacent to the Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, and the Lee-on-Solent to Itchen Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The moorings to be removed lie within the SPA, Ramsar site and SSSI. The proposal does not involve any increase in mooring numbers, will create additional open space *where moorings will be removed from within the SPA*, and will reduce the number of mooring chains laying along the river bed. It is not anticipated that this proposal will have any adverse impact on the features for which the conservation sites were designated.

Methodology

The works are to be carried out from a crane barge with all deliveries to come in by sea. The works are expected to take approximately eight to ten days. (The barge will be of similar size to that used over the past few years during the replacement of the trot piles along the river).

The proposed area lies outside the main river channel and will thus have very little impact on navigation within the River during the course of the works.

The barge movements will all be subject to approvals from the Harbour Authority and suitably lit at night. Working hours will be restricted to normal limitations. The use of Vibro techniques will ensure that noise will be kept to a minimum during the piling operation.

Prepared by

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