

Date: 11 September 2014
Our ref: 130204
Your ref:



Alison Fowler
River Hamble Harbour Authority

Cromwell House
15 Andover Road
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 7BT

By email only, no hard copy to follow

Dear Alison,

**Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA)
Solent and Southampton Water Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar
Convention (Ramsar site)**

**Proposal: Warsash Slipway Improvements
Location: Shore Road, Warsash, Southampton**

Thank you for your email dated 26 August 2014 consulting Natural England on the above application for a Harbour Works Consent. The following constitutes Natural England's formal statutory response.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)

We can confirm that the proposed works are located within the Solent Maritime SAC and adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar site. Natural England advises that providing the works are carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application which have been submitted, it can be excluded that the application will have a significant effect on any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

We have reached this conclusion as the works do not involve any piling and are located outside of the SPA / Ramsar sites, as such, there are unlikely to be any significant disturbance effects to over-wintering birds using the area. The downstream edge of the slipway extends five metres into the SAC but the works will not increase the footprint of the existing slipway and hard standing as the toe protection will be located on areas of existing gravel / hard standing. The hydrodynamic modelling undertaken for the project indicates that the works will only have a very minor impact on the tidal prism (1000 m³ of new fill material), which is considered to have a negligible effect on the estuary feature of the SAC.

Therefore it is our view that an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of this proposal on the site's conservation objectives should not be required. We recommend that the following conditions are attached to the Harbour Works Consent to ensure that the activity is undertaken in accordance with the details of the application which have been submitted and therefore compliant with the above legislation:

Condition 1

Given the bird sensitivities in the area, the proposed construction will need to be undertaken in a suitable way to minimise disturbance to over wintering birds, therefore it will be necessary to ensure best practice is in place for operating machinery to reduce unnecessary noise.

Reason: To minimise noise disturbance to overwintering birds (an interest feature of the SPA and Ramsar sites) that use the area between October and March inclusive.

Condition 2

Ensure that any coatings/treatments on the materials used are suitable for use in the marine environment and are used in accordance with best environmental practice. Environment Agency guidelines should be followed and all reasonable precautions are undertaken to ensure no pollutants enter the water body.

Reason: To avoid contamination of the marine environment.

Condition 3

All equipment and debris associated with the works should be removed from the foreshore upon completion of the works.

Reason: To minimise adverse environmental impacts on the designated sites.

Condition 4

All operations associated with the works should be carried out in such a way as to give rise to as little damage as reasonably practical to the SAC. This includes restricting vehicles movements within the SAC to a minimum. The applicant must restore the site to its former condition so far as is reasonably practicable, if any such damage to the SAC does occur.

Reason: To minimise adverse environmental impacts on the designated sites.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

We can confirm that the proposed works are located adjacent to the Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI. Natural England advises that the proposal, if undertaken in strict accordance with the details submitted, is not likely to damage the interest features for which the site has been notified. However we recommend that the conditions outlined above are attached to the Harbour Works Consent to ensure that the activity is undertaken as per the application and therefore compliant with the above legislation.

Other Relevant Matters

The installation of the wooden gravel boards on the downstream edge of the slipway will prevent vehicles running off onto the adjacent intertidal mud, which will provide a benefit to the BAP habitat at this location.

In summary, **Natural England has no objection to the proposed development** if it is carried out in accordance with the details submitted.

If you have any queries relating to the content of this letter please do not hesitate to contact me using the details provided below.

Yours Sincerely



Hilary Crane
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