

Report for a Habitats Regulation Assessment for Seawall Maintenance in Langstone Harbour

Frontage to 8 & 9 Harbourside, Langstone.

An Environmental Evaluation

Introduction

The purpose of this Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) report is to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed seawall repair project in Langstone Harbour on the protected habitats and species within the area.

This assessment aims to ensure that the repair works comply with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Sites potentially impacted - Chichester & Langstone Harbour's Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Solent Maritime Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Wetland of International Importance under Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Site) Langstone Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest

Project Description

The proposed project involves the maintenance of a low seawall located along the northern shore of Langstone Harbour.

The existing structure is above Mean High Water Springs, as will be the replacement structure, but parts are shown on the Magic mapping as within the SSSI. (We have queried whether the SSSI boundary is displayed correctly but accept that an HRA is useful in any event.)

The seawall has sustained damage due to prolonged exposure to tidal forces and weather conditions. No significant repairs have been conducted for 35 years.

The repair works will include the following:

- Replacement of 43 metres of the low concrete seawall structure with a similar configuration
- Installation of additional protective measures to prevent future damage - steel piling beneath the structure, not visible.
- Placing additional clean subsoil fill material on the inland face of the existing earth embankment

Site Description

Langstone Harbour is a coastal inlet situated between the cities of Portsmouth and Havant. It features a diverse range of habitats, including mudflats, saltmarshes, and seagrass beds, which support a variety of bird species, marine life, and plant communities. The Harbour is recognized for its high biodiversity and is used by numerous bird species for feeding, roosting, and breeding.

The site is on the northern edge of the SSSI with the works above MHWS.

Shoreline Management Policy

This section of coastline is identified as HTL, hold-the-line, in the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (Section 5a18)

The works fall under the definition of maintenance.

Maintenance works are defined as the “upkeep, repair or reasonable improvement of works”. This means the maintenance need not be like for like, but the work must not be a “significant alteration” to what is already there.

Screening for Likely Significant Effects

The first stage of the HRA process is to determine whether the proposed seawall repair project is likely to have significant effects on the designated sites and their qualifying features. This involves identifying potential impacts and pathways through which these impacts could affect the protected habitats and species.

Potential Impacts

Potential impacts of a seawall repair project could include:

- Recreational Disturbance
- Nutrient neutrality
- Temporary disturbance to bird species during construction activities
- Changes to the hydrodynamics of the area, potentially affecting sediment distribution and water quality
- Direct loss of habitat due to construction works
- Pollution risks from construction materials and machinery
- Coastal squeeze arising from increased crest levels.
- Bio-security pathways. The Introduction of non-native species

Qualifying Features

The qualifying features of Langstone Harbour SPA and SSSI that could be affected by the project include:

- Bird species, such as the Brent Goose, Redshank, and Dunlin
- Intertidal habitats, including mudflats and saltmarshes
- Marine species and habitats within the Harbour
- Attached to the end of the report are the Natural England European Site Objectives for Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA

Assessment of Potential Impacts

This stage involves a detailed assessment of the likely significant effects identified during the screening process. The assessment will consider the magnitude, duration, and reversibility of the impacts, as well as the sensitivity and importance of the affected features.

Disturbance to Bird Species

Construction activities could result in temporary disturbance to bird species using the area for feeding and roosting. The impact will depend on factors such as the timing and duration of the works, the proximity to important bird habitats, and the availability of alternative sites. Mitigation measures, such as scheduling works outside the wintering and breeding seasons and considering noise-reduction strategies, can help minimize disturbance.

Accordingly, to avoid disturbance to wintering waders and wildfowl it is proposed that the works take place between April and September, (31 March to 30 September). Outside the wintering season the works are not expected to create significant disturbance as these species are not nesting in the immediate vicinity.

Three tern species are listed in the Qualifying Features of the SPA. Terns nest on the Binness Islands, approx. 1.0 mile away, within Langstone Harbour and also at North Hayling 0.75 miles away. These sites are sufficiently distant that they will not be affected by the works. Feeding will not be significantly impacted during the works.

The works will not create permanent impacts for the birds.

Hydrodynamic Changes

The repair works are a like-for-like replacement with a reduced footprint.

The works will not change the hydrodynamics of the area, affecting sediment transport and deposition patterns.

Substantial changes are taking place to the west at Southmoor. Natural processes, unmanaged retreat, is leading to inundation of land reclaimed over a century ago. This is expected to continue.

Direct Habitat Loss

The footprint of the replacement structure is reduced and approx. 70 square metres of foreshore habitat will be created. Scattered concrete rubble will be lifted from the foreshore, by hand and removed from site, and the existing habitat allowed to extend naturally.

The project will result in an increase of foreshore habitat.

Pollution Risks

Construction activities pose a risk of pollution from materials and machinery.

Best practices for pollution prevention should be followed, including proper storage and handling of materials, use of spill kits, and regular inspection and maintenance of equipment.

The accompanying Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) addresses these issues, include appropriate sourcing of any soil fill.

As outlined in the CEMP, a silt curtain will be maintained along the seaward edge of the concrete works to fully contain the working area.

Recreational disturbance

The proposal does not result in additional housing or an increase in population, therefore this is not applicable.

Nutrient neutrality

The proposal does not result in additional housing or an increase in population and thereby nitrogen loading. Therefore, this is not applicable.

Biosecurity pathways

In addition to the measures above the contractor will be instructed to read and follow the advice provided by the Non-Native Species Secretariat, and in particular the best practice for controlling potential pathways. This advice is available online at www.nonnativespecies.org/pathways.

Coastal Squeeze

The existing crest levels of the walling are 3.88mOD. at the eastern end to 3.95mOD at the western end. The level proposed for the replacement structure is 4.00mOD, an average increase of 85mm.

This is a small increase, de minimis, and the project will create an additional 70 square metres of foreshore habitat in compensation.

The work is the repair of a frontage designated as hold the line in the local North Solent Shoreline Management Plan and falls under the heading of reasonable maintenance.

Coastal squeeze is considered within the Management Plan.

In addition, within this section of the Plan and since its publication, retreat has recently occurred at Southmoor, returning several additional hectares to the foreshore environment.

Mitigation Measures

To ensure that the seawall repair project does not adversely affect the integrity of Langstone Harbour protected sites, the following mitigation measures are implemented in the CEMP:

- Scheduling construction activities between 31 March to 30 September to avoid sensitive periods for bird species
- Compliance with the submitted CEMP, including -
- Maintain a silt curtain along the seaward edge of the concrete works to fully contain the working area.
- No plant or equipment will work on the foreshore below Mean High Water Springs.
- Adopt best practices for pollution prevention and bio-security outlined in the CEMP.

Conclusion

This HRA report has identified potential impacts of the seawall repair project on the protected habitats and species of Langstone Harbour. This report provides the information proportionate to the project.

With the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, it is concluded that the project is not likely to have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the designated sites.

The project can proceed following the outlined precautions ensuring the protection of the Harbour's ecological value.

European Site Conservation Objectives for Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area

Site Code: UK9011011



With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying *Supplementary Advice* document, which provides more detailed advice and information to enable the application and achievement of the Objectives set out above.

Qualifying Features:

A046a *Branta bernicla bernicla*; Dark-bellied brent goose (Non-breeding)

A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)

A050 *Anas penelope*; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)

A052 *Anas crecca*; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)

A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)

A056 *Anas clypeata*; Northern shoveler (Non-breeding)

A069 *Mergus serrator*; Red-breasted merganser (Non-breeding)

A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)

A141 *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey plover (Non-breeding)

A144 *Calidris alba*; Sanderling (Non-breeding)

A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)

A157 *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)

A160 *Numenius arquata*; Eurasian curlew (Non-breeding)

A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)

A169 *Arenaria interpres*; Ruddy turnstone (Non-breeding)

A191 *Sterna sandvicensis*; Sandwich tern (Breeding)

A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common tern (Breeding)

A195 *Sterna albifrons*; Little tern (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

This is a European Marine Site

This SPA is a part of the Solent Maritime European Marine Site (EMS). These Conservation Objectives should be used in conjunction with the Conservation Advice document for the EMS. Natural England's formal Conservation Advice for European Marine Sites can be found via [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Explanatory Notes: European Site Conservation Objectives

These Conservation Objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('the Habitats Regulations'). They must be considered when a competent authority is required to make a 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' including an Appropriate Assessment, under the relevant parts of this legislation.

These Conservation Objectives, and the accompanying Supplementary Advice (where this is available), will also provide a framework to inform the management of the European Site and the prevention of deterioration of habitats and significant disturbance of its qualifying features

These Conservation Objectives are set for each bird feature for a [Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#).

Where these objectives are being met, the site will be considered to exhibit a high degree of integrity and to be contributing to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

Publication date: 21 February 2019 (version 3). This document updates and replaces an earlier version dated 30 June 2014 to reflect the consolidation of the Habitats Regulations in 2017.

EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Special Protection Area

CHICHESTER AND LANGSTONE HARBOURS (HAMPSHIRE/WEST SUSSEX)

The site is internationally important because it regularly supports more than 10,000 wintering wildfowl (average 25,000) and also by regularly supporting more than 20,000 wintering waders (average 77,000).

The site also supports internationally important numbers of the following species: grey plover Pluvialis squatarola (3.9% of the west European population), sanderling Caldris alba (3.1%), dunlin Caldris alpina (2.6% and over 20,000 birds), redshank Tringa totanus (1.4%), brent goose Branta bernicla (12%), shelduck Tadorna tadorna (4%), and teal Anas crecca (1%).

The site qualifies under Article 4.2 by supporting internationally important numbers of the migratory bird species listed above and nationally important wintering numbers of the following migratory bird species: ringed plover Charadrius hiaticula, curlew Numerius arquata, bar-tailed godwit Limosa lapponica, turnstone Arenaria interpres, wigeon Anas penelope, pintail Anas acuta, shoveler Anas clypeata and the red-breasted merganser Mergus serrator.

The site also qualifies under Article 4.1 because it provides a breeding site for three species of terns Sterna.

This citation / map relates to a site entered in
the Register of European sites for Great Britain.
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Signed Byco
on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment