

9th June 2023

Delivered by email and post

Development Management Team
Havant Borough Council
Civic Offices
Havant
PO9 2AX

Dear Sir/Madam

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR INNER BUND, NORTHNEY FARM, HAYLING ISLAND

This application is submitted on behalf of our client, Dandara Limited, and proposes an inner bund of maximum height of 2.25m on land at Northney Farm, Hayling Island. The proposed description of development is as follows:

“Creation of an inner bund with a maximum height of 2.25m”

In addition to this covering letter, the application is supported by the following plans and documents:

- Application and CIL Forms
- Location Plan
- Topographical Survey
- Proposed Plan / Elevations / Sections
- Coastal Drainage and Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecological Habitat Regulations Assessment
- Wintering Bird Assessment

Planning permission is required for the inner bund as it includes sections that are more than 2m in height and up to a maximum of 2.25m, and the overall extent of the bund will exceed 465 sq. m. It therefore does not fall within the Part 2, Class A (Minor Operations) permitted development, nor can be considered as agricultural permitted development within Part 6 Class A (Agricultural and forestry). There are additional repair works to existing defences and new outer bund works that are no more than 1.25m in height. Therefore, neither of these elements require planning permission.

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Site Description

The site is located on the north-eastern part of Hayling Island as shown on the submitted location plan. It is currently low lying grazing land with areas closer to the eastern shore understood to be subject to periodic flooding on generally an annual basis. Field boundaries are in many areas lined by hedgerows and mature trees. Although located adjacent to the villages of Northney and North Hayling on Hayling Island, there is no public access to this area.

Background

The overarching objective of the inner bund is to protect the habitat identified at Northney Farm for wintering bird populations, principally Curlew and Brent Geese, both qualifying species of the adjacent Solent Maritime SPA. This will be achieved by repair and reconstruction of the existing defences and creation of an Inner sea bund defence to protect habitats from excessive coastal flooding in the future.

This habitat is proposed to be utilised and enhanced to provide suitable mitigation for wintering birds to off-set the impact of the residential development of the site at Campdown, Purbrook, which is subject to a separate detailed planning application also submitted by Dandara Ltd.

A separate screening opinion for the proposed bunds was submitted to Havant Borough Council on 14th December 2022. In formal response letter dated 5th April 2023, the Council confirmed that:

“Having considered the proposal as detailed in the screening request, Havant Borough Council is of the opinion that the application does not fall within Schedule 1 Development of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017.”

A separate Marine Management Organisation (MMO) license application has been made for the above works.

Relevant Planning Policies

The relevant development plan comprises the following:

- The Havant Borough Core Strategy (adopted March 2011)
- The Havant Local Plan (Allocations) (adopted July 2015)

The site is located outside the defined built up area, as set out within the adopted Local Plan (Allocations) July 2014. The vast majority of the site is subject to Policy DM23 **Uncertain Sites Brent Geese and/or Waders**, with a small area adjacent to the shoreline identified within the same Policy DM23 but as **Important Sites Brent Geese and/or Waders**.

The coastal areas around Chichester and Langstone Harbours, of which the site is adjacent, have been designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Brent Geese and wading bird species are dependent on a network of habitats for feeding and roosting that fall outside of the SPAs. The sites of value have been identified in the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (2010) and identified as sites of ‘important’ or ‘uncertain’ value, and Policy DM23 reflects this strategy.

Policy DM23 advises that:

Planning permission will be granted for developments that avoid important sites for Brent Geese and/or waders outside of the statutory designated areas, identified on the Policies Map.

Where this cannot be avoided, development proposals on or adjacent to an important Brent Goose and/or wader site outside of the statutory designated areas will need to demonstrate levels of impact, alone and in combination with other proposals subject to the tests of the Habitats Regulations. Where a negative impact upon a site cannot be avoided or satisfactorily mitigated, and the tests of the Habitats Regulations are met as necessary, replacement feeding/roosting habitat, on a no net loss basis, will be sought.

Where a negative impact upon an important site cannot be avoided or mitigated and replacement feeding/roosting habitat is not or cannot be provided on a no net loss basis, the proposal will be refused.

Planning permission will be granted for development on or adjacent to uncertain sites for Brent Geese and/or waders outside of the statutory designated areas, where appropriate surveys are undertaken and it is determined that the site has no importance.

Policy CS15 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk considers development in areas at risk of flooding now and in the future as identified on the latest Environment Agency flood risk maps and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment climate change maps. The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3 as defined on the Environment Agency online mapping and is therefore at medium and high risk of coastal flooding.

Other relevant guidance

The North Solent Management Plan (SMP) was approved in 2010 and is a high level, non-statutory, policy document that sets out a framework for the management of over 386km of coastline and coastal defences. It identifies coastline areas within the North Solent area where one of four management policies will apply, as listed below:

- Hold The Line (HTL) – Maintain or upgrade the level of protection provided by existing coastal defences
- Advance The Line (ATL) - Build new defences seaward of the existing defence line
- Managed Realignment (MR) - Allow the shoreline to move backwards, with management to control or limit movement
- No Active Intervention (NAI) - A decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences

The section of coastline relevant to the application site falls within the HTL designation for all three 'epochs' identified (the next 100 years).

The Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy Guidance on Mitigation and Off-setting Requirements (SWBGW) was updated in 2020. The Guidance is provided by a partnership group made up of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Natural England, RSPB, Hampshire County Council and Coastal Partners.

The 2020 Strategy focuses on understanding bird movements from the SPA areas to inland sites, and between inland sites. Three years of movement surveys were carried out, the results have been analysed and used to update the current use mapping. This proposed bund works are located within field parcels 59C1-4, 59B and 59D as identified within the Strategy.

Material Considerations

The proposals are very minor in their nature but are proposed within a sensitive location. The key considerations considered relevant to the determination of this application are:

- the effect on the protected wading birds habitat; and
- the effect on coastal flooding

There are some important interrelationships between the above considerations. These are considered in detail within the supporting ecological report and flood risk assessment accompanying this application.

The effect on the protected wading birds habitat

A total of 12 surveys of Curlews and Brent Geese were undertaken between October 2020 and March 2021 to form a baseline understanding of the site and to identify areas where suitable mitigation could potentially be delivered. This was based on a series of criteria informed by the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy Guidance on Mitigation and Off-setting Requirements.

The surveys recorded significant numbers of both Curlew and Brent Geese.

A peak count of 200 curlew was recorded on 16/11/20, with four further counts between 95-135 birds, all corresponding to high-tide roosts at spring tides. These roosting birds were concentrated in a small area within field parcel H59C-3 adjacent to the sea wall. According to the previous survey information this was *“probably due to the open aspect and short sward at this location, and the proximity to preferred feeding areas; roosting birds were generally only present within a four-hour period either side of the spring high tide”*.

A peak count of 1245 Brent Geese was recorded on 10/02/21, with counts above 1000 on or adjacent to the site on every occasion from mid-November to late-February. Field parcels identified supporting over 500 Geese (including the peak of 1245) included H59B-1, and H59D (east only).

During survey works, it was noted there is significant seawater inundation across the coastal grazing marsh sections of the site, including field parcel H59C-3 which was identified as the most important area for curlew.

Subsequently, further work was undertaken by WSP (2021) to investigate the condition of flood defences and undertake modelling to understand the risk to the identified key areas for birds (H59A and H59C-3). The modelling work undertaken by WSP covered the period 2021-2101. The sea defences along H59C were last inspected by the Environment Agency in March 2020, with the condition reported as ‘very poor’, and a coastal breach was reported in February 2021.

More recent inspections by WSP on behalf of the landowner in May and July 2021 also found the wall to be in very poor condition with areas of collapsed block wall, severe erosion of earth banks and washout of material. This is notwithstanding that the existing defences fall under North Solent Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) policy to Hold the Line, with no public funding available.

According to WSP, if the existing defences are not reinstated, parcels H59C-1 to H59C-3 are expected to flood annually from the present day, with the frequency increasing with sea level rise (based on exceedance of the crest height). There is also the potential for further degradation of the defences contributing to increased flooding.

In short, Northney Farm is used by high numbers of both Curlew and Brent Geese and is a highly significant part of the network. Although relatively undisturbed, in the absence of intervention, the site is at significant risk of becoming unsuitable due to flooding and sea level rise.

Therefore, the Strategy proposes to secure a suitable habitat for these wintering birds at Northney Farm (comprising parcels H59A, H59B-1 and H59C-3 identified as the key areas during 2020/21 surveys) in-perpetuity (defined as 80 years).

The Strategy will comprise the following key objectives:

- Design and implement long-term sea defences to safeguard the reserve;
- Secure long-term access management to maintain low levels of disturbance;
- Secure long-term management to maintain habitat suitability;
- Provide long-term benefits to public awareness and education;
- Provide long-term monitoring.

The supporting documents submitted as part of this application demonstrate that the proposal will not have any adverse impact on flooding or from an ecological perspective.

The inner bunds that form part of this application seek to secure the necessary enhanced sea defences as part of this strategy. The other elements do not need planning permission but will be secured through a suitable legal obligation such as a S106, linked to the detailed application for the development of the site east of College Road, Campdown.

SUMMARY

The relevant application fee of £2,092.00 has been paid via Planning Portal under reference PP-12187423. We trust the above information is clear, however if you do have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Simon Packer
Director

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