

Oliver, Lewis

From: Stobart, John <John.Stobart@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: 12 May 2021 18:50
To: Oliver, Lewis; Clemson, Rachael
Cc: Norton, Tristan; Kitching, Amy
Subject: RE: Havant Thicket Reservoir and pipeline - LPA References - East Hants - 51680/001 - Havant - APP/20/00990 and Pipeline APP/20/00991

Oliver

Thank you for consulting Natural England on your Authority's Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) for the aforementioned applications.

Natural England agrees with both the scope of the HRA and conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment. Provided the full suite of agreed mitigation measures are secured then Natural England is satisfied that the proposals will not have an adverse effect on the interest features for which the sites are notified.

Regarding the detail of the appropriate assessment we would note the following:

- The appropriate assessment sections for both the Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC and Solent Habitats sites refers to "Proposed, mitigation compensation and enhancement". This is misleading as although the scheme provides compensation for the loss of Ancient Woodland it is not required in relation to the Habitats sites, where impacts on bat foraging and roosting opportunities and water quality are fully mitigated, thereby avoiding the need for additional compensation measures.
- The primary purpose of the Capital Grants Scheme funded by Portsmouth Water is to provide long term compensation for the loss of Ancient Woodland. While the fund will also provide substantive benefits for local bat populations, most notably Bechstein's bat, it is not intended that the fund will deliver mitigation for the Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC. This point is relevant as the impacts to the supporting habitats for the SAC will happen at the commencement of construction of the scheme and not from 2029 when the grants scheme will come into effect. In our view irrespective of the grant scheme the timely delivery of the agreed onsite and offsite woodland restoration and habitat creation measures will ensure any impacts on local populations of Bechstein's and Western barbastelle bats that may use the Singleton & Cocking Tunnels SAC are fully mitigated.
- Natural England considers that the construction of the reservoir and its associated wetlands will also provide new functionally linked habitats that are likely to support wintering wildfowl populations that contribute to the special interests of the Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar.
- The operational phase of the reservoir is expected to provide a welcome reduction in nitrogen loads to the Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC.
- The reservoir will provide a significant visitor attraction which would be expected to help draw recreational use away from the more sensitive areas of the Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA / Ramsar and Solent Maritime SAC.

Should you require further information, or a more formal response then please do not hesitate to get back to me.

Regards

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