APP/17/00817 | Proposed improved and raised path along a section of Northney Road from the Langstone Hotel westwards approximately 215m. Ditch to be piped with new bank over topped by level path to give safe access for pedestrians with kerbed edge to the car park area and areas of fill between new embankment and existing ground level. (Resubmission of APP/16/00678.) | Northney Coastal Footpath, East of Havant Road, Hayling Island 17.2360

Thank you for consulting me on this application. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The application is now accompanied by an Ecological Assessment (EcoSupport, November 2017) and a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (EcoSupport, November 2017). These two reports are useful and provide a level of detail in respect to the existing habitats and the proposed works and their impact.

The vegetation communities within and adjacent to the proposed works have been mapped, and the vegetation within the existing ditch (to be culverted) comprises a narrow strip of saltmarsh (containing several characteristic species, including golden samphire at the western end) bordered north and south by neutral grassland. The proposed works will result in the permanent loss of the ditch saltmarsh vegetation and adjacent grassland strips. The saltmarsh vegetation is consistent with the SAC qualifying feature 'Atlantic salt meadows'. From my review of GIS layers supplied by Natural England, the proposed works fall *within* the boundary of the Solent Maritime SAC: the submitted ecological information suggests that they are only in proximity to the SAC.

The ecological report and HRA screening do not quantify the extent of SAC qualifying habitat to be lost permanently. The loss of habitat is not included within the 'potential impacts' table within the HRA screening. The permanent loss of SAC qualifying habitat needs to be addressed – there is essentially no mitigation proposed for habitat loss.

I note from Natural England's previous response that they raised concerns about the prevention of natural vegetation migration due to the proposed raised footpath bund. Has this been addressed within the impact assessment?

In respect to additional impacts such as pollution control and noise and disturbance I am content that the submitted measures are proportionate.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

Senior Ecologist