

Design and Access Statement for Northney Coastal Path. 17-7-17

The coastal path runs along the north shore of Hayling Island, westwards from the Langstone Hotel to the unofficial car park approximately half way towards the Langstone Bridge. The path sits on top of the existing bank and is well worn, of varying height, and almost impossible to walk safely along it.(see photo graph on the front cover) It always has been narrow, and is bordered by the sea on the north side, and on the south side bordering the road there is a drainage ditch and small bank. It has long been felt that it was unsafe and unsuitable in its present format, as a pedestrian access to the village and the hotel. This is detailed more in our accompanying statement from the village.

The design has evolved over a number of years following consultations with all the relevant bodies, which we held with the Solent Coastal Partnership team, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Using information supplied by the Solent Coastal Partnership, we have drafted up an initial section through the proposed bank and path. Starting from the existing road side, it is intended to install a 450mm diameter drain, with outlets linked at one end to the existing weir drains and at the other to existing outlet flaps. A bank will be formed over this whole width, with a top level surface approximately 1200mm wide finished with gravel material in keeping with other paths on the perimeter of the Chichester Harbour. This would be wide enough to allow safe access for wheel chairs and buggies as well as pedestrians. The levels are to be raised and maintained to link with the existing higher bank levels by the hotel and the 'parking area'. The bank on the seaward side is to be landscaped in keeping with the existing grass bank, using thrift and other native species where possible, and the road side to be grassed as existing to enable maintenance through mowing, as it is at present. This section information has been updated and fine tuned by HBC, and the detailed cross section Drg No 11/008A shows the proposal.

The construction will be carried out in the most sustainable way possible, using local materials, and with due care of the adjoining mudflats, to keep disturbance to the minimum. The work is to be carried out from the road side of the site, and to a detailed specification of HBC and HCC in order that it can be adopted and maintained by them on completion. See also drawings 17/11/001 to 009. submitted with this application.

By increasing the height of the bank and path, it will improve access to the village throughout the year, for all the people. It will protect the road from extra high tides, which affect this corner, at present. We understand that it will also become a major link in the proposed coastal path around Hayling as envisaged by Natural England.

Ecological Assessment for proposed Northney Coastal Path, Hayling Island.

The site is bounded on the north by Chichester Harbour, which is subject to several special scientific designations. The location also means that the site access will be affected by tides and the seasons, so timing has to be planned to minimize the impact, and the work procedure, in the main, from the road side only. This will protect the adjoining mudflats and ecology. The road may have to be partially closed with traffic lights as work proceeds to enable work to be carried out safely. The finish of gravel, has been selected as one that has been used successfully elsewhere in the harbour, and is therefore the most environmentally friendly option.

The proposed footpath follows the northern boundary of Hayling Island, and the southern edge of Chichester Harbour as it stretches west wards and joins with Langstone Harbour. Chichester and Langstone Harbours have the following designations: SSSI, SPA, RAMSAR, SAC .

The SSSI designation: There are large volumes of saline water due to the long coastline in the harbour, with extensive intertidal mudflats, of international importance. The winter waders benefit from this and the species who return in the autumn, ie the curlew and green shank. So avoidance of any construction work at these times is important. It is proposed to carry out the work between May and September, and we would accept this as one of the planning conditions.

SPA special protected area. The whole of the harbour supports many thousands of wintering wild fowl and waders. It is sheltered to a certain extent, for overwintering birds and has high grade farmland in the hinterland around Chichester Harbour. Although in places there are some recreational pressures, in this stretch of coast line, there is only water at the higher tides, and the launching and sailing of boats is only possible further round the coast. Sea Level rise is an important issue, we are hoping by the raising of the existing bank to improve the situation , this will have the minimum impact on the ecology.

RAMSAR and SAC Solent Maritime special area of conservation: It is of European importance. The perimeter of Chichester Harbour is largely low lying area, only a metre or two above sea level throughout. The upper levels of the intertidal mudflats, in this area are covered only by the spring tides.

It supports plant and animal communities including plover, black tailed godwit, red shank, Brent geese , shell duck and dunlin. The Little egret once a comparative stranger has grown in numbers over recent years. Consequently there are many bird watchers in the parking area. Tourism generally has increased with walkers to and from the Northney Tea rooms, and hotel, who used to use the path along the bank, hence it has worn down over the years. This sadly allows the sea to over top more

frequently, not just because of the higher tides. Now it is more dangerous for pedestrians as they use the edge of the narrow road. In order to improve access, and protect the mudflats etc, we feel that it is important to upgrade this bank to a proper pedestrian access for all abilities. We understand that it likely to form part of the perimeter coastal path, which Natural England are endeavouring to link up around Hayling Island.

The construction time of this project will be dictated by the overwintering birds, and tides on a daily basis. The spring tides are at their highest between the autumn and spring equinox, also a time to be avoided from the overwintering birds. Allowing for late departures, it would seem that the optimum time would be late May/ early June 2018. this would allow the bank to be constructed and settle down before any autumn gales, and enable summer visitors to enjoy the new safe access later next year.

Flood Risk Assessment for proposed Northney Coastal Path

The existing bank and narrow footpath is well worn and in many places at or below the level of some of the predicted high spring tides. When the pressure is low and wind and wave action higher, then overtopping of the existing bank as it stands is inevitable. At present we have flood warning signs which can be opened up at the appropriate times to warn both vehicles and pedestrians. In the short term this helps, but we have felt in the long term if the pathway is to be made safe then, it should also be raised as much as is feasible above the potential high tides to reduce the expected number of flooding incidences.

Some of the existing levels on the bank are well below 3m Ordnance Datum giving us a likelihood of overtopping, whilst the road varies between 2.6 to 2.7m on average. On exceptional high tides the the whole of Northney can be cut off for some time, from both vehicular and pedestrian access. A recent 6.1 metre tidal surge, (giving an approx height of 3.4 OD), did in fact cut off the hotel, Marina and the whole of Northney for several hours. Any elevation in the bank will assist in keeping this road open, although it may require driving through shallow water. The sea also filters round, via other ditches to fill the other low road levels, further south on the road. In order to maintain the improved levels, the perimeter of the parking area, will also have a kerb edging to protect this area.

With this information in mind we have looked at reducing the risk from flooding to this section of the Island, by raising the existing bank. However to reduce the risk further , and raise the bank to a suitable level to eliminate flooding, into the future , would implying a much larger bank. This would affect the shore line, impacting on the bird and wild life, which the Environment Agency and Natural England are protecting. So a level that will increase the safety of pedestrians and vehicles, but still not impact the special protected sites, has been selected and approved in principal.