

Date: 26 August 2022  
Our ref: 404911  
Your ref: APP/21/01310



Steve Weaver  
Havant Borough Council

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Customer Services  
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Dear Steve Weaver,

**Planning consultation:** UPDATED VISITOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY further to retrospective COU to wedding and events venue with retention of permanent ancillary buildings and structures; erection of removable structures; and use of land as campsite in association with events.

**Location:** Tournerbury Woods, Tournerbury Lane, Hayling Island.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 25 August 2022 which was received by Natural England on the same date. We understand that the Visitor Management Strategy (VMS) submitted in support of this application has been amended. The updated VMS (Appendix 2 to HMPC Ltd letter to HBC dated 17 August 2022) aims to accommodate the recommendations of Natural England's consultation response letter dated 25 July 22 (reference 385087).

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

#### **SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE**

##### **NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED**

We consider that without appropriate mitigation the application would:

- have an adverse effect on the integrity of Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site and Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- damage or destroy the interest features for which Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) has been notified.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required:

- an appropriate financial contribution to Havant Borough Council's mitigation scheme to fully offset the nutrient burden associated with this development.

- measures to address impacts including disturbance to overwintering SPA birds and the Heronry (within the SSSI), and to manage potential impacts from wedding activities including camping.

We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

#### Updated Visitor Management Strategy (VMS)

**The comments below provide Natural England's updated advice in relation to the VMS. We refer to our response dated 25 July 2022 (ref 385087) and 15 August (ref 401980) for other matters.**

We note that the location for camping in area C has been more clearly delineated on the map on page 4. However, areas B and D appear to have moved. This may be an unintended consequence of the map being updated, but we advise that your authority confirms and/or clarifies the location of all areas as they relate to their proposed uses.

It would also appear that wording relating to rights of way and 'proposed management controls' (sections 2.4 – 2.6 of the previous VMS) have been removed from this version of the VMS. We advise that you consider whether these provisions are now covered elsewhere and if they can be appropriately secured.

The VMS has incorporated our suggestions for camping controls including:

- Keeping a record of tent pitch locations and rotating pitch locations over the summer.
- Camping taking place on no more than 12 nights per year and restricted to 10 pitches per night.
- Campfires not permitted
- Site management to include no removal of deadwood (except for limited health and safety reasons), no vegetation management, site inspection and litter pick once pitches are vacated

Being mindful that the proposed use of the site as a wedding venue extends beyond camping in area C, we recommend that the proposed site management applies to the whole of the application site, to protect the SSSI.

In addition to the above measures, a Code of Conduct for Overnight Camping has been submitted (Visitor Management Strategy: Appendix 1) which will be issued to all overnight guests on arrival. This is welcomed and we advise this is secured with any condition.

Whilst it continues to be our preference that camping is located outside of the woodland, we acknowledge that camping activity will be limited in nature. We recommend that the Council clearly defines and maps all activity areas permitted to enable accurate monitoring and enforcement. We suggest any permission attaches an appropriately worded condition or obligation requiring an annual monitoring report be submitted, this should include all activities occurring on the site, together with measures to relocate and appropriately mitigate for the activities should any damage to the SSSI occur, in consultation with Natural England and Havant Borough Council.

Provided the measures described above and as set out in the Visitor Management Strategy are secured and implemented in full, we are satisfied that the applicant has adequately mitigated any likely significant impacts to the SSSI and to the adjacent European designated site.

Please note that if your Authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter and aforementioned letter sent to your Head of Planning, you are required under Section 28I (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your Authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

Yours sincerely,



**Louise Crothall**

Manager

Thames Solent Area Team

Natural England