

APP/16/00678 | Coastal pathway improvements along Northney Road (west of Langstone Hotel) and section of wall by tidal outlet flap. | Northney Coastal Footpath East of Havant Road, Hayling Island 16.1439

Thank you for consulting me on this application. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you. In summary, the submitted ecological information is not adequate and there is potential for this proposal to result in impacts to nationally- and internationally-designated habitats and species. Additional information is required.

The proposal is for a new footpath situated on the foreshore and there is no doubt that some form of 'new' access in this location would be of benefit to visitors. However, the submitted information does not take into account the level of detail required for planning where impacts to internationally-important sites are proposed.

As a first step I would recommend that the applicant commissions a Phase 1 ecological survey of the site: this should include an assessment of the potential for the site to support protected habitats and species (to be provided by a qualified ecologist (see Natural England [guidance](#) on finding a suitably-qualified ecologist). The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (www.cieem.net) holds a database of suitably-qualified ecologists.

A Phase 1 ecological survey will determine whether there is any evidence of protected habitats and/or species or whether the site offers habitat suitable for supporting protected species, and whether the proposed works are likely to result in impacts to those habitats or species. Unless the consultant is able to conclude that there is no reasonable likelihood of protected species being present (due to negligible potential) or, that if present they are not to be impacted by the works, it is likely that further ecological survey work (Phase 2 survey) will be required prior to determination of the application. The results of any further surveys should be used to provide an assessment of the likely ecological impacts of the proposed works and to inform any mitigation measures. For this scheme I would suggest that a detailed botanical survey of the proposed works area is a minimum requirement. This will enable the identification of sensitive vegetation communities such as saltmarsh and, in particular, the presence of any notable/rare species. Any impact assessment must be based on such information. I would strongly recommend consultation with the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) who will hold records of habitats and species for the area.

The works will be situated within the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Chichester & Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site and Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area is therefore of high ecological sensitivity. In addition, the land immediately landward of the proposed works area offers supporting habitat for significant numbers of bird species associated with the adjacent SPA/Ramsar. Any application will need to demonstrate how the proposed works will not result in any 'likely significant effect' on the features for which these sites are designated or on their published conservation objectives. This should take the form of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening statement. This should identify the

potential impacts associated with the works and provide details of how any potential impacts can be avoided (e.g. by amending works or timings) or mitigated.

NPPF, Circular 06/2005 and Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species, require that planning decisions are based on full, up-to-date ecological information and it is essential that all necessary survey, assessment and mitigation information is available to the LPA prior to determination, particularly in the case of protected species, which are a material planning consideration. This will enable the LPA to determine the application on the basis of full knowledge about the ecological impacts of the proposal and to ensure that any impacts can and will be mitigated, and are acceptable.

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

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
Ecology Team**