

Dear David,

APP/15/00480 Erection of 1No. 4 bed dwelling and detached garage. Fair Acre, Church Lane, Hayling Island, PO11 0SB 15.0906

Thank you for consulting me on this application.

The application is not accompanied by any ecological information and I have therefore undertaken a non-exhaustive desk-based assessment using the application documents, recent GIS mapping and online sources. The proposals entail works to an existing small enclosed field containing grassland with associated trees and shrubs. Whilst the site itself is not likely to be of particular ecological value it may support legally-protected species such as common reptiles and nesting birds.

In addition, the site forms part of Site H59E in the Solent Waders & Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS) and is therefore deemed to be of value to overwintering bird species associated with the nearby Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA). The site is classified as 'Important' for waders (peak count of 130 curlew) and 'Uncertain' for brent geese (although a peak count of 370 geese has been made on site). Such uncertain sites are captured by Policy DM23 of the emerging Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) (December 2013) which sets out clearly what HBC expects from applicants in terms of the approach to SWBGS sites in general:

'Where data on sites of 'important' or 'uncertain' value is limited or out of date, site surveys should be undertaken to determine their level of importance. The authority recommends that the survey methodology set out in the Solent Waders and Brent Geese Strategy (2010) is followed. Appropriate methodologies should be approved by a professional ecologist and prepared in consultation with Natural England. In all cases, three consecutive years of recent survey data should ideally be carried out across the overwintering seasons and a record of any sightings on or adjacent to the application site will be required. Existing records for Brent Geese and wading bird species in Langstone Harbour are held by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre, and records for Chichester Harbour are held by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy.'

Therefore, it is for the applicant to provide sufficient detail to determine whether the proposals would result in impacts to SWBGS sites and, consequently, to features for which the SPA is designated. It may be that as the application site is a 'separate' field from the main arable land there is a much decreased likelihood of birds such as geese being present.

At present, I consider that there is insufficient information provided to determine that ecological issues are not a potential constraint and therefore would request that clarification is sought. I would recommend that the applicant commissions a Phase 1 ecological survey of the site which should include an assessment of the potential for the site to support protected species (to be provided by a qualified ecologist (see Natural England guidance on finding a suitably-qualified ecologist <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/spatialplanning/standingadvice/faq.aspx#q1>

3). The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (www.cieem.net) holds a database of suitably-qualified ecologists. Unless the ecologist 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.

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

Kind regards,

Tristan

Tristan Norton

**Senior Ecologist
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