

## Ecological Assessment incorporating Access Statement

As regards the Access Statement please note the following:

**The ramp, which meets the disability standard requirements, is on the southern side of the platform has direct access to the car park (currently used by Hayling Seaside Railway staff ) which is on SSSI land, which is a mixture of grassland and gravel beach, and is also adjacent to a public footpath and right of way along the seafront. Once the new Depot has been completed at Eastoke Corner, the existing car park area will no longer be used by the Railway and the area can be totally devoted becoming sea shore grasslands. This is a positive plus for the SSSI status, bearing in mind that the adjacent Beachlands car park area is virtually all gravel despite its perhaps inappropriate status as SSSI land.**

Ecological Assessment.

We have had prior detail discussions with Natural England and they are supportive of the proposals. They have had sight of the of the plans outlined in the attached sketch plan and confirmed they acceptance of the proposals. The details have previously been passed to the Council's Planning Department Matt Taylor on 30 March 2015, the lead advisor for the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Coastal Team of Natural England (tell 0300 060 4846) provided the following statement in an email to us:

**The proposal for SSSI land as presented appears to be adequate but without knowing the site in detail or knowing what advice was given to you by Josie, I can't be certain that Josie as the SSSI adviser will have a different comment when she receives the official planning consultation through the planning process. I can however confirm without prejudice to the consideration of any statutory consultation response or decision which may be made by Natural England that the net gain in SSSI is in line with what Natural England will require from this planning proposal.**

**Given that the new proposals provide a net benefit to the SSSI area, which Natural England confirm and accept, I fail to see what purpose an Ecological Assessment would achieve, apart from unnecessary expense on the Railway just to confirm what is already obvious that the area's natural sate and habitat will improve as a direct result of the application. This will simply add further burden to the administrative costs of the relocation exercise aimed at helping ensure the railway survives.**

Extracted from email sent 19.6.15