

[REDACTED]

For David Leves

Cc: Thompson, Simon (NE)

Subject: 12.1111 - APP/12/00772 - Land South of Ranelagh Road, Havant - further ecology comments - HRA issues and reptiles

Dear David

APP/12/00772 - Land South of Ranelagh Road, Havant - Erection of 81 dwellings consisting of 10No. 1 bed flats, 12No. 2 bed flats, 6No. 2 bed houses and 53No. 3 bed houses, construction of access from Ranelagh Road, provision of landscaping, open space and associated works.

I have now received and reviewed the applicant's additional submission – Habitats Regulations Assessment Visitor Survey report (Hampshire Ecological Services Ltd, March 2013).

Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA)

The application is for 79 dwellings and associated infrastructure. It was considered that due to its proximity to the coast and sensitive internationally-protected sites of nature conservation importance, the development would have a likely significant effect on these sites due to increases in recreational activity at coastal sites and consequent increasing disturbance of the qualifying overwintering bird populations. Although this development would not have a likely significant effect *alone*, it is considered, in the light of extensive work carried out by the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, which has been formally peer-reviewed and the findings endorsed by Natural England, that there would be a likely significant effect when this development is considered *in combination* with other plans or projects affecting the coastal conservation sites.

The visitor survey work was therefore carried out to establish the likely level of impact arising from the development and to demonstrate that recently-proposed amendments to the application – the additional circular permissive footpath linking in to existing rights of way networks – together with the proposed Meyrick Road open space (MROS) would serve to counteract those impacts to the extent that a likely significant effect would be avoided.

Two types of survey were undertaken – surveys of existing visitors to nearby sections of coast and the existing path network adjacent to the application site, and a door-step survey of existing residents of the area immediately surrounding the proposed development site to establish likely levels of recreational activity from new residents of the area.

I would consider that the surveys were very well designed and carried out in a professional manner, giving robust and useful results. The survey results provided a lot of data; most telling is that only 55% of existing residents visit the coast, and that 17% of existing residents would visit the coast less often if there was a new open space associated with the immediate area (i.e. MROS and new path). Thus, it can be considered that approximately half of the households at the application site would visit the coast in the absence of the MROS and footpath, but this would be reduced through the provision of the open space. Additionally, the people living in the wider residential area – which include a much larger number of existing residents than the proposed development – would be diverted to a certain extent from their existing coastal visitor patterns. Thus, overall, it can be considered that the provision of the MROS and footpath would be sufficient to ensure there is no net increase in visitor use of sensitive coastal areas, through the diversion of existing coastal users and its use by new residents. It should also be recognised that it is harder to change people's habits; this is recognised by Natural England in similar situations, and it is generally set out that alternative open space associated with new development for these purposes (counteracting recreational pressure) are laid out and available to new residents from first occupation. Thus it is reasonable to consider that the use of the MROS by new residents would be somewhat higher than that of existing residents.

I would therefore consider that provided the MROS and new permissive path as indicated in the submitted plan is laid out and available for use at first occupation, then the planning authority can be confident that the development would have no likely significant effect on the nearby coastal Special Protection Areas.

Provision of the MROS and the new footpath, and their long term management, should be secured through appropriate means. Setting out and ongoing management of the MROS will need to pay due regard to the dual need of this site to also continue to support the reptiles to be translocated to it (see further comments below).

Bats

I would also continue to recommend that you add the conditions suggested in my response of 30th November 2012 (attached for reference) regarding bats.

Reptiles

As discussed in my response of 30th November 2012, the MROS is also to be used as the receptor site for the reptiles to be translocated from the main development site. Given that the MROS is now an important component of the scheme with respect to public recreation as well as biodiversity (for the reptiles) I would suggest that further details of how the MROS will be laid out should be provided for approval prior to commencement, so that the planning authority can be confident that the design and ongoing management of this remains suitable for this dual purpose. A possible condition (superseding my suggestion of 30th November 2012) might be:

- Prior to commencement, details of the design of the Meyrick Road open space with respect to reptile habitat enhancements, their integration with visitor access, and long-term management plan to address the two purposes of the open space shall be submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. Development shall subsequently proceed in accordance with any such approved details and the reptile capture and translocation scheme set out in the Hampshire Ecological Services July 2012 Reptile Survey and Mitigation Strategy Report. Thereafter, the Meyrick Road open space shall be managed in accordance with the approved management plan. **Reason:** to avoid harm to, and to conserve and enhance habitats for reptiles in accordance with Policy CS11 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy)

Please do contact me if you need any further information.

Please note that this advice is given in accordance with the Service Level Agreement that has been signed between Hampshire County Council and your Council. These comments are expressed as a professional view provided to Havant Borough Council and should not, therefore, be interpreted as those of Hampshire County Council.

Thanks and regards

Adam

Adam Egglesfield

Senior Ecologist – Biodiversity and Development Management

Strategic Environmental Delivery Group

Economy, Transport and Environment Department

Hampshire County Council

Elizabeth II Court West, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UD

Direct line: 01962 832334 Mobile: 07718 146584 HSPN: 200 2334

adam.egglesfield@hants.gov.uk www.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity