

[REDACTED]

Sent: 21 March 2015 10:52
To: Rachael Hebden
Cc: Planning and Development Shared Mailbox; Havant Auto-Reply

Dear Rachael,

**APP/13/00211 New agricultural access off the south side of the B2177 Portsdown Hill Road.
Farmland Accessed via Bedhampton Hill, Havant 13.0258**

Thank you for consulting me on this application. In summary, I consider that some clarification is required in order to fully assess the potential for ecological impacts.

The proposals entail the provision of a new access gateway to agricultural fields lying immediately south of the B1277 Portsdown Hill Road. This will entail the use of a series of drop kerbs allowing vehicular access into the fields where there is none currently.

The site of the proposed access currently comprises an area of grassy field margin habitat which (from personal observation) is often used for fly-tipping. A detailed botanical survey was undertaken at the site in 2008 by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and it was identified that the field margins contain a good diversity of arable weed species, including one Nationally Important -Near Threatened species, dwarf spurge. The presence of a good diversity of arable weed species (in addition to the presence of a notable bird species) has led to the site being designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) known as 'Fields off Havant Road'.

In addition, the agricultural fields to the south are included within the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy (SWBGS) as Site HO3 'Fields off Havant Road' and partly on this basis the site has also been designated as a SINC. This is in relation to the presence of brent geese during survey works undertaken in the late 1990s during which up to 850 geese were observed feeding on winter wheat within the fields. Recent (2012/2013) bird survey works undertaken by Hampshire County Council staff have noted the presence of moderate numbers of feeding lapwing within this field and I note that the cropping regime has undoubtedly changed since the original surveys were carried out.

Overall, given the very limited scale of the proposed works, and the fact that the fields are working agricultural land, I do not consider that the proposals will result in any impact to notable bird species and therefore no additional works are necessary.

Given the presence of a diverse arable field margin flora, which includes at least one notable species, I consider that additional detail is required in order to fully assess any likely impacts in accordance with Policy CS11 of the Havant Borough Council Core Strategy 2011. In particular, the application does not state whether any vegetation removal will be required (e.g. will a concrete/tarmac pan be necessary within the field itself?) or whether farm vehicles will simply drive over the new dropped kerb and existing footpath and straight onto the existing grass margin. Clearly if there is to be any vegetation removal within the arable field margins itself this has the potential to impact directly upon the features for which the SINC is designated. Routine use of farm vehicles would not result in a similar level of habitat loss.

I fully appreciate that this may appear to be a minor issue but the LPA must have full and proper regard to the nature conservation interests of the site.

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

Kind regards,

Tristan

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Senior Ecologist

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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.