

Eaststoke Corner Adizone Area – Biodiversity Statement

Introduction

Landscape and facility improvements are proposed at Eaststoke Corner, Hayling Island to create a new destination site and visitor attraction in a traffic-free pedestrian zone which is to include a purpose built multi-sports facility.

This biodiversity statement will support this proposal.

Ecological Conditions

The proposal site is part of the larger Beachlands East Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), noted for its semi-natural coastal habitats. It is also of importance as it supports a range of notable species including Sea Mayweed, English Stonecrop, Sand Sedge, Toothed Medick, Suffocated Clover, and Upright Chickweed. Records show that the botanical interest for the site is concentrated towards the western end, away from the location of the development proposals.

Adizone area

The part of the SINC where the Adizone area is proposed is a car park constructed of hardstanding made up of imported gravel and as such is of **negligible ecological value** (see Figure 1 (at the end of the report) and Photos 1 and 2) and will not support any of the notable species present within the SINC.



Photo 1 – Area for new Adizone



Photo 2 – Close-up of hardstanding

New access

The new access road will be located on an area of adjacent grassland, also part of the SINC. While the grassland within the SINC does support some notable species, as discussed, these are to be found further west. This particular grassed area appears to be typical hardwearing amenity grassland, and is clearly heavily used as both an informal car park area and general recreation (see Photo 3). Ordinarily this might be classed as having **negligible ecological value**, but in this instance, given that it is within a SINC and has the potential to support notable species given suitable management and if not used as a car park, it should be classed as having a **low ecological value**.



Photo 3 – Location of proposed new access

It is recommended that a precautionary construction method is adhered to for this part of the work. This should specify that there should be no disturbance, storage, undue vehicle movements etc on the adjacent grassland areas – storage areas, site compounds, welfare facilities etc should be located on the hardstanding in the car park. There should be no dumping of excavated spoil on the adjacent grassland – this should either be removed from the area immediately or temporarily stored on a membrane (e.g. geotextile) surface if needed for subsequent back-fill. Any re-planting of grass should

utilise turf cut (and suitably stored and watered) from the route of the new access rather than from imported seed or turf.

Play area

There is an existing bed of amenity scrub planting around the north east corner of the existing play area (see Figure 1). It is understood that this will be removed and replanted as part of these proposals. The characteristics and existing species of the existing planting here do not suggest that it is a notable part of the SINC. The scrub does however have some **low value** as potential nesting bird habitat.

However, as this is to be replanted, this impact will be temporary in nature and an improved planting scheme using native species and locally-sourced stock should serve to have a beneficial effect.



Photo 4 – Amenity scrub adjacent to existing play area

In this instance, it is recommended that the scrub is either removed outside the bird nesting season (i.e. remove it between the end of August and mid-March) or if this is not possible, the scrub should be checked before clearance to ensure there are no occupied birds nests.

General

Overall, although the areas of the proposed development are of negligible or low ecological value, the development of this site will result in the permanent loss of part of the SINC. This needs to be addressed. One benefit of this proposal is that it will formalise the existing car parking arrangements at the site, thus potentially reducing the impacts to the grassland areas from the more informal parking that can take place at present.

There is a scope for compensating for any loss of SINC area through careful management of the remaining areas of SINC, particularly to the west of the site to further conserve and enhance the botanical interest of the site. Proposed measures to encourage this include management of visitor access to prevent vehicle access to areas of grassland by using dragons teeth.



Figure 1 – Plan of area showing location of SINC and proposed developments (approximate locations)