Langstone 56 Path Improvements

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

Hampshire County Council

Introduction

A Screening Opinion is sought as the proposed works lie within the boundary of the Chichester Harbour National Landscape/ AONB

The purpose of this screening request is to provide information on the Scheme and its potential environmental effects. This EIA Screening Request sets out the screening process for the proposed works. In accordance with Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, this report includes the following information to support the EIA screening request:

- A plan sufficient to identify the land (Appendix 1, figure 1);
- A description of the nature and purpose of the development);
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- A description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment ; and
- Further information on any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

Contact Details

Rights of way Team,

Countryside Services,Hampshire County Council
Winchester, SO23 8UD
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The Scheme

In line with a joint statement issued by Havant Borough Council, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Coastal Partners, Hampshire County Council, the Environment Agency, and Natural England, Hampshire County Council has been commissioned to install a bridge over a section of failed sea wall. The bridge is intended to maintain coastal access for the next 25 years while allowing natural erosional processes to continue along this stretch of coastline. It forms part of the King Charles III England Coast Path and is jointly funded by Chichester Harbour Conservancy and Natural England

Langstone, Mill Pond to Wade Lane, Havant — Coastal Partners

Environmental Designations

Solent Maritime SAC and Solent and Southampton Water SPA

Solent Maritime SAC

Qualifying Habitats

Estuaries

Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*)

Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time

Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

Coastal lagoons

Annual vegetation of drift lines

Perennial vegetation of stony banks

Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand

"Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (""white dunes"")"

Chichester & Langstone Harbours SPA

Qualifying species

Breeding;

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Non-breeding;

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Dunlin *Calidris alpine alpine*

Grey Plover Pluvialis

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

Teal *Anas crecca*

Turnstone *Areanaria interpres*

Wigeon *Mareca penelope*

Waterbird assemblage, non-breeding

When classified in 1987, the Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA supported a large waterbird assemblage of 108,811 birds (five year peak mean 1982/83-86/87). Waterbird numbers have declined in the long term with the average now at 72,666 (five year peak mean 2009/10-2013/14).

The waterbird assemblage is comprised of the classified overwintering waders and ducks, as well as other native species present on the site. It includes bar-tailed godwit, curlew, dark-bellied Brent geese, dunlin, grey plover, pintail, red-breasted merganser, redshank, ringed plover, sanderling, shelduck, shoveler, teal, turnstone and wigeon

The work site abuts the SPA/SAC area and accordingly an HRA assessment has been carried out by the County Council's Countryside Services' Conservation Officer. The HRA concluded that the works were unlikely to result in a permanent loss or reduction in the extent of any habitats.

The full HRA document is attached in the Appendix 1 – Figure 1.

National landscape

The works are within the **Chichester Harbour National Landscape.** The primary purpose of the National Landscape designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty. In pursuing the primary purpose, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities.

Two of the special features of the National Landscape are:

1. A natural harbour

The unique blend of land and sea with expanses of open water and winding sheltered inlets. Beneath the surface is a diversity of marine wildlife. The oysters, crabs, fish, seals and the seagrass meadows, are all part of the precious underwater ecosystem.

2. The intertidal zone

Where the land meets the sea, the intertidal zone is exposed by the falling tide. Habitats include reedbeds, saltmarshes and mudflats, all vital to wildlife, forming a natural sea defence and capturing carbon. The shingle banks and sand dunes above mean high water complement the intertidal habitats.

Natural England published its review of the condition of the intertidal, subtidal and bird features of Chichester Harbour in 2021. One of the key findings from this review was that the Harbour was in unfavourable declining condition due to 'coastal squeeze' and inappropriate coastal management resulting in the loss of almost half of its saltmarsh since the designation of the SSSI and a continuing loss of 2ha per year. This loss is occurring because saltmarsh has limited capacity to 'roll back' in response to rising sea levels (brought about by climate change) due to fixed coastal defences. In order to reverse the decline of Saltmarsh and mudflat habitats, Chichester Harbour needs to be able to transition naturally with sea level rise. The proposed scheme allows for the natural erosional processes to occur.

The Proposed Scheme

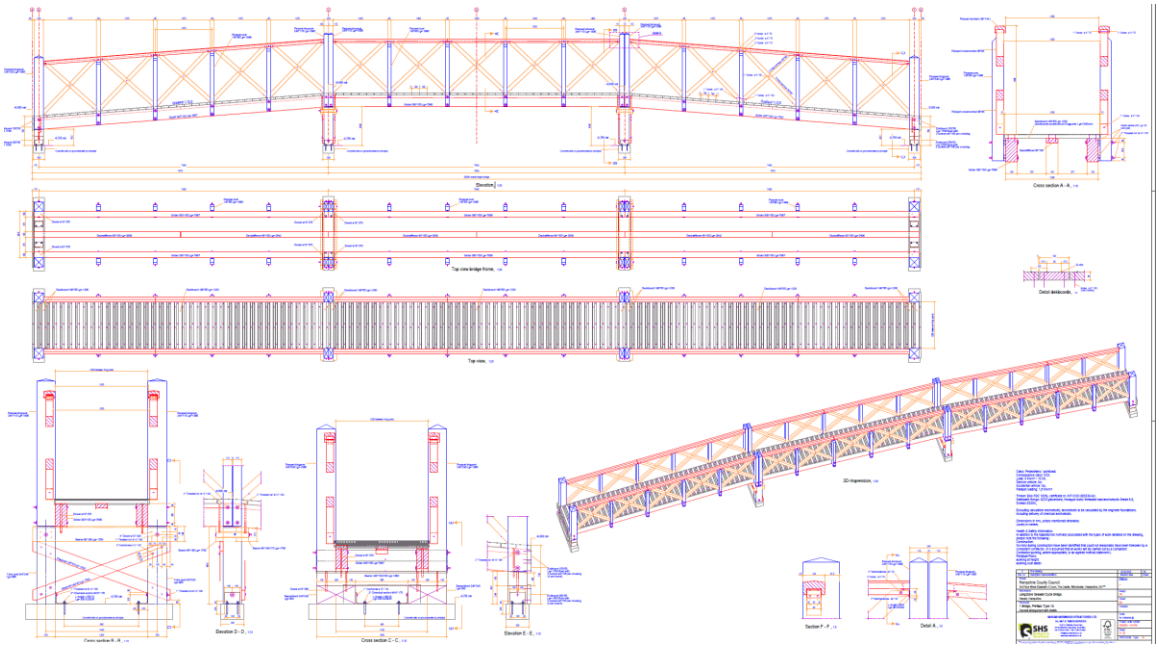
The scheme proposes the installation of a 23-metre wooden bridge to span the section of failed sea wall along Footpath 56, east of Langstone High Street (W3W https://w3w.co/direct.tones.sticks).

Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC) have funded the bridge and commissioned Hampshire County Council (HCC) to manage the construction project.

In their design brief, CHC specified that:

- *"The footbridge is of wooden construction that aesthetically contributes to this iconic site."*
- *"The footbridge should have a gentle arch (commensurate with wheelchair access) to enhance aesthetics."*

These aesthetic requirements have been integrated into the bridge design. The visual character of the new structure also reflects the design of another CHC-installed bridge located further along the coast at Thornham Point, Thorney Island.



See Appendix 1 – figure 3 for full drawing

In addition to maintaining public access and enjoyment of the coastal route, the bridge has been designed to enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape. Its installation will involve removing a short section of tarmac path and replacing it with a timber structure that is more in keeping with the surrounding rural environment. This approach reflects the character of the setting, including the two existing timber bridges along the path. The structure's design has been refined to include features that complement and contribute positively to the qualities of the National Landscape.

Planning

Based on discussions with Hampshire County Council planning officers, a separate planning application is not required and proposals fall within permitted development as a Regulation 3 planning application (subject to confirmations).

Screening Assessment

The Scheme is not Schedule 1 development. It possibly falls within Schedule 2 as the works are within environmentally sensitive area; Chichester Harbour National Landscape. Therefore, an EIA Screening Request is appropriate. The review indicates no likely significant effects overall, with temporary construction effects managed by best practice.

Appendix 1

Figure 1- Location plan of the scheme

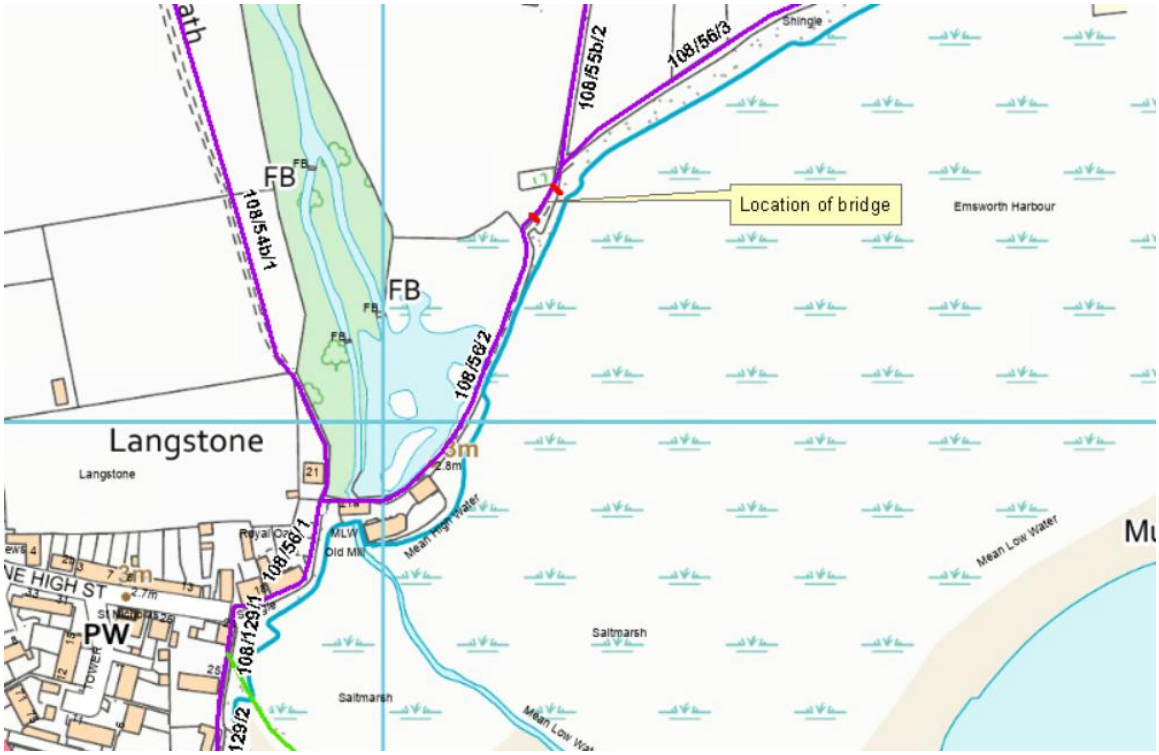


Figure 2 – HRA document

Figure 3 - bridge design PDF

PDF

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[2] Drawing Langston