

Appendix 1

Recreational Disturbance of Bird Populations at Pagham Harbour: Revised Joint scheme of Mitigation with Arun District Council.

Chichester District Council – May 2017

Introduction

Pagham Harbour is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for its internationally important bird populations. Increases in human population associated with new housing development would, without mitigation measures, cause a negative impact on the bird population of the SPA. Permitting new housing development by Chichester and Arun District councils would not comply with the Habitat Regulations without a strategic scheme of mitigation measures being in place. The scheme will be funded by developers and has to be capable of sustaining itself financially 'in perpetuity', which means for 80 years in practice. A similar scheme (known as Bird Aware Solent) has been in place for Chichester Harbour for some time.

Joint Scheme of Mitigation.

Discussions between the two Districts, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), who are the site managers, and Natural England (NE) have led to the formulation of the following package of mitigation measures.

- Provision of 1.5FTE Visitor Experience officer (VEO) post at RSPB Pagham. The role of the VEO will be to educate and inform visitors and the surrounding community about recreational disturbance, its impacts on birds and wildlife-friendly ways to behave when visiting the coast and Pagham in particular. The role would also include enforcement of the existing bye-laws if required
- Provision of general 'Dog Initiatives' – a broad range of measures (jointly with Bird Aware Solent) to encourage responsible dog ownership at the coast and visits to alternative dog – friendly sites. This will be based on similar schemes that have been run for the Graylingwell and Roussillion redevelopment and the Dorset Heaths Dog Project
- Independent monitoring surveys (every two or three years) to check on the effectiveness of the scheme and the mitigation measures and adjust the scheme delivery if required.

The VEO posts are based on the RSPB's full cost recovery model for externally funded posts. This cover all employment cost, accommodation overheads and supporting resources (transport, materials, public events, training). The scheme makes allowance for these costs to increase by 2% a year for the full 80 years of the scheme.

£2,000 p.a. for Dog Initiatives and £1,000 p.a. for monitoring are included within the initial costs with a view to these being delivered through a Service Level Agreement with the SRMP, who are procuring these services on a larger scale to cover the whole of the Solent SPAs. In addition a contingency of £1,000 is included in case of additional service needs or costs in any of the three delivery areas.

Coverage of the Scheme.

Policy 51 of the Chichester Local Plan 2014-2029 sets out the zone of influence within which additional development is likely to have an impact on the harbour unless it is mitigated. Based on visitor surveys this is 3.5km from the SPA boundary. The split in the road networks between the Sidlesham side of the harbour and the Pagham side results in different visitor patterns on the Arun side and their zone of influence is 5km (i.e. including all of Bognor Regis)

All net new dwellings within these zones of influence require mitigation measures in order to meet the Habitats Regulations 2010. The scheme costs are calculated on the Local Plan figures for both Districts. Those in Arun have been increased, since the scheme was originally approved, and are now 4,555 within the zone of influence over the whole plan period (an increase of 3,700 due to several major developments now planned for around Bognor Regis). The figure for Chichester District remains at 425 dwellings within the 3.5km zone over the whole of the 2014-2029 period of the adopted plan. A Local Plan review is underway in Chichester District and the number of dwellings within the 3.5 km zone of influence may increase as a result, at which point the scheme may need to be revised again. The scheme's expenditure has been increased to 1.5FTE posts to mitigate for the increased numbers in Arun, and the increased contributions from the additional dwellings covers this expenditure.

The joint scheme outlined above is considered by Natural England to be sufficient to meet the requirements of the Regulations. Applicants for planning permission can implement their own schemes of mitigation, but without delivery within the harbour (i.e. through RSPB), these are unlikely to meet the regulatory tests, and they have to be funded for 80 years (in-perpetuity) which would impose a considerable burden on developers. A local authority run scheme is therefore a mean of facilitating development in our respective areas.