

20/04/2024

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Portsmouth seafront flats delayed over habitat concerns

Plans to construct seafront flats in Portsmouth have been postponed due to concerns regarding their impact on wintering birds.

The proposal, aiming to erect seven blocks comprising 134 new homes, has been withdrawn amid fears raised by Natural England of potential impacts on the adjacent Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA).

Natural England highlighted the likelihood of a significant effect on the site's wintering birds due to increased residential presence. They also provided guidance on a mitigation strategy to ensure compliance with relevant regulations.



Dark-bellied Brent Goose winters in important numbers in Chichester and Langstone Harbours (Chris Teague).

South-coast wintering birds

Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA is a nationally important site for winter populations of Dark-bellied Brent Goose, waders including Bar-tailed Godwit and Little Egret, as well as various wildfowl species.

In addition to concerns regarding bird habitats, the proposed development has faced criticism from users of the long-established naturist beach in Eastney, adjacent to the site. However, council documents assure that the beach's accessibility for naturists and others would not be impacted by the development.

Public objection to the project has centred around worries regarding wildlife disturbance, traffic congestion and overdevelopment of the area. The proposed homes would predominantly consist of flats, ranging from one to three bedrooms, along with seven houses and two duplexes.

If eventually approved, the council anticipates receiving approximately £2,790,664 from the applicant as part of the community infrastructure levy.

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