Zone 1/06, Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6EB

Telephone
Website www.defra.gov.uk

defra
Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

Andrew Colenutt
North Solent SMP Project Manager
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court
Lyndhurst
Hampshire
SO43 7PA

Our ref NSSS57

4 April 2011

Dear Mr Colenutt

NORTH SOLENT SMP

1. Thank you for supplying the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the completed Appendix 20 application for the North Solent SMP.

2. I recognise that your Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Habitats Regulations and appropriately assessed the impacts of the proposed SMP on the European sites that may have been affected.

3. I am satisfied that you have carried out a thorough evaluation of alternative solutions. I accept that there are no alternative solutions to the preferred options that would have a lesser effect on the integrity of the European sites.

4. Given that coastal flooding and erosion poses a risk to 51,000 residential and commercials properties, two major ports, industrial assets and key infrastructure, I consider that you have made a strong case to justify the potential damage on grounds of imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

5. I am satisfied that you have taken appropriate steps to secure suitable compensatory habitat within the Southern Regional Habitat Creation Programme to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network is protected.

6. Consequently, I can confirm that, in respect of regulation 62 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Defra has no objections to your Council's intention to approve this strategy.

7. I would be grateful if you could inform Craig Lee once the Strategy is approved so that he can forward the details to the European Commission.

8. I am copying this letter to Paul Murby in Defra, Jenny Buffrey in the EA and Chris McMullon in Natural England.

Yours sincerely

Steve Lee-Bapty
Head of Protected Areas
Acting on behalf of the Secretary of State

Direct Line 0117 372 8615
Email steve.lee-bapty@defra.gsi.gov.uk