

Ecology response for F/24/96805 Located within Mercury Marina, north of The Gaff Rigger and adjacent to the pontoons,

ERECTION OF 2NO. CONTAINERS AND INSTALLATION OF DECKING

Summer Sharpe

19/2/24

This application is for a paddle board centre, not just the installation of containers and decking.

As noted by the Pollution Control Specialist, the site is located within an identified contaminative area however the proposal would not involve any disturbance of the ground. The Environment Agency notes that this site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3, so a flood risk assessment is required.

The letter from Jim Beavan at Savills (January 2023) notes that this application follows a planning contravention notice in April 2023 for a previous paddle board business with decking and a storage container removed at that time. The proposed decking and containers will provide storage space, and a covered reception area for customers.

What has not been addressed in this application is the ecological effects on the River Hamble from an increase in the number of paddleboarders using an ecologically sensitive area.

The letter states that *Paddleboarding is a popular water sport activity which saw a massive increase in participants during the Covid 19 pandemic due to its nature as an easily accessible water based activity.*

The site is located adjacent to Badnam Copse SINC, Mercury Marina Saltmarsh SINC, the Solent and Southampton Water and Solent and Dorset Coast SPA (Special Protection Area), Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar area and the Solent Maritime SAC (Special Area of Conservation) which are important for breeding seabirds in summer and feeding grounds for waterbirds in winter. The Bird Aware Solent website (www.birdaware.org/solent/) notes that people can cause bird disturbance without even realising, and this can affect their ability to feed, rest, and overall survival rates.

Brent Goose and Solent Wader sites E12B, E 11, and E10 are located to the north of this site, with site E13 to the south and sites F 73 and F75 are located on the opposite bank of the river. Additional sites are located further upstream and downstream.

To avoid the boat traffic on the River Hamble, paddle boarders utilise the edges. As they don't require deep water, they can access the smaller channels which would disturb birds and other wildlife.

In addition to an ecological impact assessment of the location of a paddle board centre in this area and a habitats regulations assessment, biodiversity enhancements are required as for all planning applications.

Lisa Malter

Ecologist