

Zone 1/16, Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6EB

Telephone
Website www.defra.gov.uk

Peter Marsden
Principal Coastal Engineer
Isle of Wight Council
2 Dudley Road
Ventnor
Isle of Wight
PO38 1EJ



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Our ref NSSS 61

30 March 2011

Dear Mr Marsden

ISLE OF WIGHT SMP

1. Thank you for supplying the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the completed Appendix 20 application for the Isle of Wight 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 Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site.
4. Given that the susceptibility of the area to flooding is increasing due to predicted rises in sea level and the deterioration of existing flood defences, 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 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

Email steve.lee-bapty@defra.gsi.gov.uk