

Mr Mark Ball

Cornwall Council – Planning
Department
New County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro
TR1 3AY

08 October 2025

Our Reference: 287701

Dear Mark,

**Falmouth Docks
Full Planning Application: PA25/01598
Cornwall National Landscape Consultee Response**

We write on behalf of our client, Falmouth Docks & Engineering Company (FDEC), in response to comments made by Cornwall National Landscape (CNL) on the planning application for the redevelopment and modernisation of the Falmouth Docks. The application (ref PA25/01598) seeks consent for:

“Demolition of on-site buildings, partial demolition of existing wharf structures, construction of new wharf structures and other related construction works, lay down area for floating wind power activities (FLOW), temporary construction area, and ancillary works associated with the redevelopment and modernisation of the existing Falmouth dock infrastructure.”

The CNL comments, dated 3rd September 2025, raise a number of concerns that primarily relate to the potential impact of the proposed development on the National Landscape, with an emphasis on the visual effects associated with the use of the upgraded docks, rather than the attributes of the physical infrastructure itself.

For the purpose of clarity, there are no buildings to be constructed as part of the redevelopment proposals. Conversely, there are a number of buildings to be demolished, which is contrary to what the CNL have stated and assumed to be the case within their consultation response. As such, the CNL comments must be considered in context of that clear misunderstanding.

Impact on the National Landscape

It is acknowledged that the development at Falmouth Docks is located within the setting of the South Coast Central (09) National Landscape Area.

CNL have raised concerns over the proposed development altering the established character of the harbour through the introduction of larger cruise vessels, and floating offshore wind (FLOW) devices that is expected to introduce a new visual scale that overwhelms the existing dock infrastructure, intrudes into key views across the Carrick Roads and erodes qualities of tranquillity and rural setting that underpin the National Landscape designation.

Chapter 18 of the Environmental Statement (ES) contains a Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) undertaken by Ramboll which assess these concerns. It is critical to acknowledge the existing landscape and visual baseline position and recognise that the Falmouth docks are an existing feature within the landscape and seascape and have been for many years.

Whilst noting Cornwall Council's statutory duty to further the purposes of the National Landscape, which are to enhance and conserve the natural beauty of Cornwall's protected landscapes, this duty must also be carefully balanced with the statutory purpose of the existing Falmouth docks, a feature that has formed part of the setting of the National Landscape for many decades. It is critically important to emphasise that the Falmouth Docks is an operating port, which is a Statutory Harbour Authority, meaning that the FDEC has an Open Port Duty under the Harbour Clauses Act 1847 to be open to all persons for the shipping and unshipping of goods, and the embarking and landing of passengers. This statutory duty does not impose any restrictions on the type, size or characteristics of the visiting shipping to the port.

The CNL concerns regarding the future use of the docks by larger vessels and the associated visual impact, and perceived change in the character of the docks must clearly be viewed in context of the existing baseline in so far as that the docks already host large vessels, such as Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary shipping, and cruise liners, many of which are of large scale, with the port obligated to do so by statute.

The proposed upgrade of the port infrastructure is specifically designed to meet the Statutory Duty (Falmouth Docks Act) to maintain safe navigation for vessels at Falmouth Docks. The Proposed development modernises the Western wharf which was historically used for berthing ships. In the past the Kings and Empire berths (now demolished) also berthed ships of various shapes and sizes, the density of shipping has been greater in previous years. We have attached a number of images, as per Annex 1 below, of some of the types of vessels that have used the facility over the years.

Fundamentally, any visual effect on the setting of the National Landscape must be balanced in respect to existing dock activities that can and do take place, which includes a range of large vessels, including navy vessels and cruise liners, in line with the Open Port Duty. Concerns expressed relating to visual effects of large shipping fail to recognise that this activity already exists, as do the visual effects.

Secondly, it is also important to emphasise that the principal landscape and visual effects of larger shipping that can and would visit the port and FLOW are **temporary and reversible**. The berthing of cruise ships is not a permanent fixture of the landscape but an intermittent activity that already occurs at Falmouth, with significant periods of time between sailings when such vessels are absent. Similarly, the presence of FLOW will be short-term and operationally limited: maintenance campaigns are expected to last approximately two weeks at a time, after which devices will be redeployed offshore. In this context, the magnitude of change to the National Landscape and seascape should be understood as transient rather than permanent.

The ES and SLVIA propose a range of mitigation measured to ensure impact on the landscape and seascape is minimised where possible.

Finally, the ES and related technical assessments fully address matters relating to marine sediment, that are raised as concerns by CNL, with these being subject to detailed consideration by the Marine Management Organisations (MMO), with technical input from relevant statutory advisors, as part of the marine licencing regime. Furthermore, it is not for the land use planning system to duplicate pollution prevention and control measures that are covered by other consenting authorities and regulations.

We trust that this assists with your consideration of the concerns raised as part of the statutory consultation period.

Yours Sincerely,



 **MRTPI**
Technical Director, Planning

Annex 1: Images of types of vessels that have used the dock facilities



















