ENVIRONMENT
& HEALTH

RAMBOLL RESPONSE TO INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (IFCA)

Project name	**Falmouth Docks Redevelopment**
Project no.	**RUK2023N00104**
Client	**A&P**
Memo no.	**05**
Version	**0.1**
Date	**21/10/2025**
Prepared by	[redacted]

Case reference MLA/2025/00157

Introduction

This note responds to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) request for further information in relation to comments received from the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA).

The Applicant has presented at numerous public events and undertaken site visits for local interested parties. Consultation has included key local stakeholders including Harbour User Group meetings of Falmouth Harbour Commissioners, the SAC Management Forum and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Marine and Coastal Partnership. Meetings have also been held with a number of local fishers. The Applicant has fully engaged with any person/company that has expressed interest in the development.

The Applicant remains engaged with all Harbour users under its statutory obligations and Port and Marine Safety Code and is fully committed to ensuring that appropriate consultation is undertaken with all port users during the demolition and construction stage, in line with their existing operational procedures, and implementation of the measures set out in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Demolition and construction works associated with the proposed development will be limited to the immediate areas around the existing dock infrastructure, within which there are no fishing grounds. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the construction stage, ensuring that fishing operations are not significantly affected.

The Applicant is happy to have a meeting on site with IFCA to further discuss the proposed development.

Fully summarised comments were provided by the MMO in Appendix 1 of their letter dated 03 October 2025. Table 1 provides a summary of IFCA's comments and our response to address these comments.

Response and Further Information

IFCA Comment	Response
10.1 - Upon review of the application form in the 'Project Background' section, the following statement requires clarification in terms of what is meant by 'foul' and how the applicant proposes its removal: 'Removing foul ground within former Kings and Empire Wharves regions'	Currently there are remains of the former King's and Empire wharfs to the west of the causeway, within the proposed dredge pocket. Foul, in this context means a 'no anchoring area' due to the risk of fouling your anchor due to the remains of these former wharfs. These former structures would be removed during the proposed dredge campaign to achieve the required berth pocket depth of -10.5 m CD.

	The dredge pockets would be formed using a backhoe dredger with a lidded bucket to minimise sediment mobilisation. Dredging would be limited to 1.75 hours before low water to 1.75 hours before high water, which further minimises fine sediment deposition. An Archaeological Watching Brief will be implemented during clearance and periods of the capital dredging phase where works are located within the areas of the former King's and Empire Wharfs (See Technical Appendix 11.3 Written Scheme of Investigation' for further details. Further method statements will be provided once a contractor has been appointed.
10.2 - Programme of Works - Given the potential for disruption for fisheries, both in relation to underwater noise disturbance to commercial species and the ability of fishermen to transit to their fishing grounds and land their catches, the differing timescales given above require clarification.	As set out in the ES, a detailed programme of works has not yet been produced and will be dependent on licences, funding and contractor methods and availability. The EIA has assessed a worst-case scenario in terms of construction stage effects. A detailed programme and construction method statements would be implemented via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which we anticipate woud be a condition of the marine licence. This would be based on measures set out in the Outline CEMP.
10.3 - Within the 'Consultation and advertising' the applicant states that "informal engagement with local fishers has been undertaken." However, there is no record or reference to this within the information and documentation submitted by the applicant. Please provide evidence of this communication with local fishers.	Site meetings have been undertaken including engagement with local fishers and fish sellers who have expressed an interest in the development. Discussions included the location of local fishing areas and the hydrodynamic system. This engagement has helped to inform the works design including the decision to restrict dredging to the incoming tidal cycle.
10.4 - Clarification is required in terms of how the (presumably) contaminated material will be handled from the point at which it is dredged and disposed of on land, in order to prevent the contaminants re-entering the marine environment. Furthermore, could clarification please be provided on how the material will be transferred between the lidded bucket from the dredger to the barge, in order to prevent sediment becoming suspended in the water column and potentially smothering commercially important fish and shellfish.	Detailed method statements will be provided by the contractor once appointed, and it is anticipated this will be a condition of the marine licence, as well as implementation of a CEMP. The method statement will include environmental, pollution prevention, and health and safety considerations. The CEMP would include measures to contain and control run off in order to prevent contaminants re-entering the marine environment. Measures would include appropriately contained and bunded storage areas. The programme of dredging will be dependent on the overall funding and contractor methods and availability. Dredging would be limited to 1.75 hours before low water to 1.75 hours before high water, which further minimises fine sediment deposition.
10.5 - There are concerns with the following statement: "it is assumed that fewer contaminants would be present within the seabed, due to	This statement relates to maintenance dredging once the capital dredge has been undertaken. Ground investigation results provided show that at depth, sediments are suitable for disposal at sea in terms of contamination levels.

capital dredge remediation therefore all sediment would be disposed of at the marine disposal site." Given that there are well documented impacts of contaminants and their impacts on fish and shellfish, and the consequences therefore on fishermen, please outline the basis for this assumption. It is also noted in relation to this that there is no proposed mitigation.	Maintenance dredging would be undertaken using the same mitigation as the capital dredge – with a lidded bucket and limited to 1.75 hours before low water to 1.75 hours before high water.
10.6 and 10.7 – queries relating to dredge volume and disposal volumes at Falmouth Bay (B) disposal site.	• The total approximate capital dredge volume is 643,000m3 • 184,000 m3 to 221,000 m3 is unsuitable for disposal at sea, and therefore would be disposed of on land • 357,000 m3 to 394,000 m3 is suitable for disposal at sea and is proposed for disposal at the Falmouth Bay (B) disposal site Tonnage has been used for the purposes of deriving lorry movements in the ES. In terms of the proposed volume of material to disposed of to sea, the above quoted volumes are correct and included in Chapter 5 of the ES.
10.8 - Cornwall IFCA has reviewed the information which the applicant has provided in relation to noise from piling and the mitigation measures proposed which purport to render the impacts on fish and shellfish as minor adverse not significant (see statements below in italic). However, there are concerns that this noise combined with extra construction related vessel traffic, leisure, cruise, etc., will have deleterious impacts on fish and shellfish, potentially over many years.	The underwater sound modelling approach is considered to represent a worst-case scenario and was identified by Cefas during their review of the application, to be overly precautionary (provided in an advisory request on 15th August 2025, which focussed on effects to cetaceans, but commented on the underwater sound methods as a whole). Cefas stated that the modelled approach aligns with the precautionary principle, and appear conservative based on the methods chosen, which could overestimate impacts. For example, a worst-case scenario was taken in respect of piling modelling locations, which does not account for some of these locations benefiting from greater shielding from existing and new infrastructure. A soft-start procedure would take place, whereby the initial sound source level is increased over 20 minutes to the maximum value. This has been included as an embedded mitigation, as part of the JNCC 2010 guidance for minimising the effects of impact piling.
10.9 - Can the applicant confirm that the relevant correspondence has been undertaken in order to formulate plans to ensure that Falfish can continue to operate and there will be no negative impacts to Falfish or the fishermen who sell their catch to them? However, the proposed development will require the relocation of Falfish (fish wholesaler within the site) within the Docks site, allowing Falfish operations	The applicant can confirm that consultation at all stages of the development design has taken place with Falfish. Formal notification has also been provided to Falfish who are a consultee to the Cornwall Council planning process.

to be retained at the site and enabling fish landings to continue."	
10.10 - Cornwall IFCA would refute the statement that there are no important nursery grounds within the estuary. Cornwall IFCA is the Grantee of the Fal Fishery Order 2016 and manages the licenced Fishery using the Regulations that were made under the 2016 Order, the Fal Oyster Fishery is thought to be the only currently active wild capture native oyster (Ostrea edulis) fishery in England. The Fal Oyster Survey Summary report 2024 details areas within the Fal, where juvenile oysters are located (nursery areas).	This statement relates specifically to fish species, rather than shellfish species and specifically as part of the Fal Oyster Fishery. ES Chapter 9 notes that there are 'fish utilising areas of the Fal as nursery habitats there is no indication that there are any nursery grounds of importance'. We have reviewed the findings of The Fal Oyster Survey Summary Report 2024 and note the Fal Estuary being an important production area for commercial shellfish species. ES chapter 9 Table 9.6 provides a summary of sensitive receptors and notes *'There are shellfish areas within the study area, of high local importance for fisheries, including mussels, native oyster, Pacific oyster, variegated (Queen) scallop, lobsters, and crabs'*. ES chapter 9 also notes that native oysters are protected as Species of Principle Importance as part of the NERC Act 2006 and that they are widely distributed within the estuary and subject to commercial fishing activity.
10.11 – Cornwall IFCA note the inclusion of their Monthly Fal Fishery Catch Statistics, however, the most up to date 2023-2024 statistics should be used. Available on the Cornwall IFCA website: 2023-2024-Fal-Oyster-PermitReport.pdf.ContaminatedSediment Mobilisation and Deposition. Cornwall IFCA note the below and would reiterate the concerns raised above with the potential ramifications for the fishing industry in the area, particularly in light of the fact that "there still lies the potential for mobilisation and re-deposition of contaminated sediments"… "The sediment plume may overlap areas of crabs and lobsters, such as slightly north of the mouth of the Fal estuary, close to Pendennis Point. Despite this, SSC concentrations at these locations will be low and would not represent a significant change from ambient." Given this statement, and the vulnerability of the inshore fleet and their more limited range, any increase in shellfish, but particularly crab and lobster mortality could	The Monthly Fal Fishery Catch Statistics were included in ES Chapter 9, using the 2022-2023 season statistics. We have reviewed the 2023-2024 statistics and these align with the baseline understanding of the study area reported in the ES. The 2022-2023 data recorded a total harvested weight of shellfish in the Fal Estuary of 67,823 kg. In 2023-2024 a total weight of 51,565 kg was recorded, although it is noted that more native oyster were caught in 2023-2024, compared to the previous year (2022-2023: 20,071 kg; 2023-2024: 31,389 kg). Figure 6.19 shows an extract from ES chapter 6, illustrating the predicted mean increase in SSC as a result of dredging in the north (which results in the largest plume area of the 3 proposed dredge areas). The figure shows that the mean concentration increases of 1 mg/l or more are confined to the site area defined by the red line other than a small patch extending 100 m west of the western limit of the red line edge of the development area.

materially damage the catches for this group of fishermen. This will require further assessment.

Chapter 9 of the ES – section 9.9.59 "Fish and shellfish communities within the study area considered to have low importance due to their ecological value on a local scale." Cornwall IFCA would highlight the importance of the local fish and shellfish communities to local fishermen, who depend on them for their income, therefore the assessment within 9.9.60 requires further evaluation.

Chapter 9 of the ES – section 9.9.78 "Shellfish species are found throughout the estuary and are commercially important. This means that as a group they are considered to be of medium value. Despite this, they are not considered to be sensitive to underwater noise and so their sensitivity overall, is considered to be low." Upon review of the literature, Cornwall IFCA would refute the conclusion that shellfish are not considered to be sensitive to underwater noise, it is acknowledged to be an under investigated area.

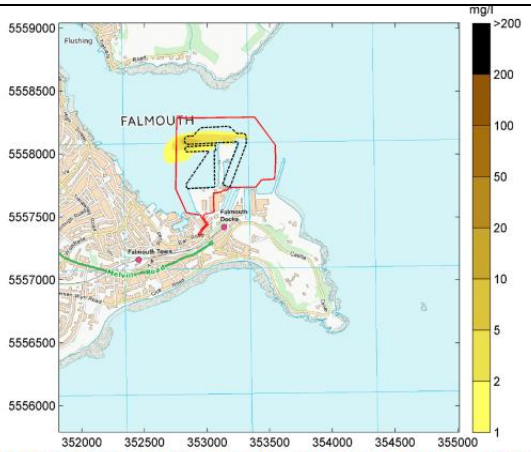


Figure 6-19 : Mean predicted increase in suspended sediment concentration, dredging in the north area (Queens Wharf)

Technical Appendix 6.3 provides detailed results of the SSC modelling, including results at specific locations. An extract of the results is provided below and shows how the dredging method, including dredging on an adjusted flood tide, significantly reduces SSC.

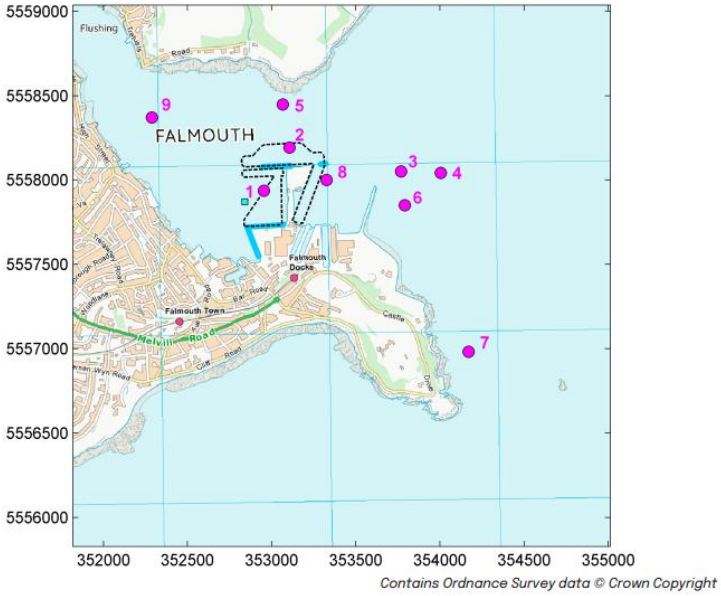


Figure 6.13: Locations of time series used in the following sections

Table 6.10: Summary of predicted increase in suspended sediment concentration, dredging to the north of the site

Point	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Maximum increase in SSC (mg/l)	4.7	13.7	3.5	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	12.6	0.1
Average increase in SSC (mg/l)	0.4	0.8	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	0.2	<0.1
95% of increase in SSC (mg/l)	1.6	5.3	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	0.1	<0.1	1.5	<0.1

ES Chapter 9 states that shellfish species found within the estuary are considered to be of medium value, due to being commercially important on a local level. The statement within ES Chapter 9, which identified fish and shellfish as being of low value, was noting that important shellfish grounds were located outside of the zone of influence for these impact pathways, as the plume would not be extending into the main channel

	of the Fal Estuary, where for example, native oysters are known to be present. It was stated that the 'sediment plume may overlap areas of crabs and lobsters, such as slightly north of the mouth of the Fal estuary, close to Pendennis Point'. However, the SSC concentrations at these locations will be low and would not represent a significant change from ambient (i.e. negligible increase in SSC, which is <0.1 mg/l on average). ES Chapter 9 states that shellfish species have a low sensitvity to underwater noise (rather than that they are not sensitive to underwater noise). It is acknowledged that further research is required into the potential effect to this receptor group. However, shellfish are generally more sensitive to the particle motion rather than sound pressure (Popper and Hawkins, 2019). Many invertebrate species do have tactile hairs or mechano-sensory systems that are thought to respond to the particle displacement components of an impinging sound field and not to the pressure component (Popper et al., 2001; Lovell et al., 2005; Spiga, et al., 2012). These species are believed to be physiologically resilient to sound as they lack gas filled spaces within their bodies (Popper et al., 2001). To date, no lethal effects of underwater sound have been described for edible crab, European lobster or Nephrops, although physiological and behavioural responses have been recorded in experimental conditions. For example, Behavioural changes have been observed in the giant scallop (Placopecten magellanicus) in response to piling noise, which can travel through the seabed up to 50 metres. Research by Jezequel et al. (2022) found that this disturbance led to a marked increase in valve closures, with scallops showing no signs of acclimating to repeated piling events. This could potentially disrupt feeding, particularly during nighttime construction. However, these effects were only seen at very close range to the piling source, and scallops quickly resumed normal behaviour once the noise stopped. Shellfish are considered to have a low sensitivity to sound, compared to other species, such as herring which have a high sensitivity to underwarer sound. Potential effects, such as TTS is expected to be occur over shorter distances and to be captured as part of the detailed assessment provided, concluding that effects from underwater nosie and vibration are not significant. References: Jezequel, Y., Cones, S., Jensen, F.H., Brewer, H., Collins, J., and Mooney, T.A. (2022) Pile driving repeatedly impacts the giant scallop (Placopecten magellanicus). Scientific Reports, 12:13580. Lovell, J., Findlay, M., Moate, R. and Yan, H., 2005. The hearing abilities of the prawn (Palaemon serratus). Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology, 140(1), 89-100.

	Popper A.N. and Hawkins, A.D., 2019. "An overview of fish bioacoustics and the impacts of anthropogenic sounds on fishes", Journal of Fish Biology, 94, pp. 692–713. Popper, A., Salmon, M. and Horch, K., 2001. Acoustic detection and communication by decapod crustaceans. Journal of Comparative Physiology, 187, 83-89. Spiga, I., Cheesman, S., Hawkins, A., Perez-Dominguez, R., Roberts, L., Hughes, D., Bentley, M., 2012. Understanding the Scale and Impacts of Anthropogenic Noise upon Fish and Invertebrates in the Marine Environment. SoundWaves Consortium Technical Review, ME5205.
10.12 - Cornwall IFCA notes the spatial scope of the study area as stated within the ES Chapter 10 section10.3.7 & 10.3.8, however it is unclear how the applicant obtained the finer scale fisheries and shellfisheries data applicable to the study area described below, this requires clarification by the applicant. Presently, the smallest spatial unit are ICES rectangles from the MMO and belted statistical areas from Cornwall IFCA (see Monthly Shellfish Permit Statistics Analysis Summary Statistics 2023). Chapter 10 of the ES section 10.3.11 "The study area (Figure 10.2) incorporates the Fal Estuary, starting at the upstream tidal limit at Tresillian and extending out into Falmouth Bay." Cornwall IFCA note the datasets and associated sources as detailed in the list given within 10.4.1 and would highlight that due to the different time periods given, different data recorded and different data recording methodologies, that this would prevent direct comparisons being made. Any conclusions formulated by direct comparisons between these datasets would likely be erroneous. Cornwall IFCA would query the criteria set out in table 10-2. As the applicant doesn't appear to have undertaken any direct consultation with local fishermen, therefore how can the operational range, versatility of gear types and number of fishing grounds be quantified and determined by the	ES Chapter 10 notes that the ICES rectangles provide useful context in the wider area. However, it notes that 'more applicable to the site is the local fishing area and its location within the Fal Estuary, near the mouth of the Penryn River. This area is subject to a different type of fishing effort than that of the offshore waters of the rest of the ICES rectangles'. Baseline information has considered a local scale, noting information regarding the Fal Oyster Fishery, the location of shellfish Classification Zones, local byelaws, and Falmouth Harbour Commissioners Code of Practice information. It is noted that the data sources provided in section 10.4.1 have different methodologies and timings. The baseline avoids direct comparison between these datasets, but provides them collectively, to better understand the overarching commercial fisheries operations within the Study Area. Meetings have been held with local Fishers and other interested parties. In terms of the outcome of the assessment, demolition and construction works associated with the proposed development will be limited to the immediate areas around the existing dock infrastructure, within which there are no fishing grounds. In addition, the Applicant can confirm that the safe navigation of fishing vessels through the docks water will not be impeded by the demolition and construction works, or the operation of the proposed development. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the construction stage. Communications will formally occur through Notification to Mariners via FDEC's Harbour Master.

applicant and used to determine receptor sensitivity.	
10.13 - Cornwall IFCA requires the applicant to clarify what is meant by the terms: offshore, nearshore and coastal and the use of these terms in relation to size classes of vessels (see point 10.8.1), as it is currently unclear.	These terms have been used to describe the locations of fishing activity in general terms. The baseline section uses multiple information sources to give an overall view on the commercial fishing activity in the study area. Information sources are provided in the methodology section.
10.14 - In relation to the ES Chapter 10 sections 10.8.7, 10.8.8 & 10.8.9, Cornwall IFCA wish to highlight that fishermen state in which ICES rectangle the majority of their catch was caught, this means that a smaller proportion may have been caught in a different ICES rectangle. Also, the absence of landings to the site in 2017 requires further investigation by the applicant, this appears erroneous. Cornwall IFCA note the statement within 10.8.10 and would clarify that landings to buyers have to match the weights given as declared to the MMO. It should also be noted that local vessels may choose to sell to Falfish or directly to customers or to a larger fish market, or a mix of all or some of the aforementioned. Cornwall IFCA note that within section the ES chapter 10 section 10.8.11 and Figure 10.7, that only MMO landings data from the year 2023 has been used as the basis for the conclusions drawn regarding value (£) and seasonality of landings. Cornwall IFCA queries why a larger dataset hasn't been used. Regarding ES Chapter 10 section 10.9, Cornwall IFCA would highlight that it is a legal requirement for fishing vessels of >15m in length to have and transmit AIS, therefore the predominant fleet in the area of <10m in vessel length will be underrepresented as they do not need to have and transmit AIS. Also, Cornwall IFCA would query the	It is noted that fisherman state in which ICES rectangle the majority of their catch was caught. The statement provided in section 10.8.7 was noting that the data provided for each port is not distinguished by ICES rectangle and so an assumption has been made. It is acknowledged in the ES chapter that the absence of landings in 2017 is erroneous - *Figure 10.6 indicates there were no landings to the site in 2017. Based on a review of A&Ps data, there was normal landing activity on site in 2017 and this is a gap in the database.* The statements relating to section 10.8.10 have been noted with regard to selling to Falfish or to others. It is acknowledged in ES Chapter 10 '*Due to the nature of the technology and mandatory recording requirements, AIS-B under-reports the actual density of shipping by small commercial craft, fishing vessels and recreational vessels. Nonetheless, the data provide a useful indication of the patterns of vessel movement in the vicinity of the proposed development.'* In addition, the Applicant can confirm that the safe navigation of fishing vessels through the docks water will not be impeded by the demolition and construction works. A Navigation Risk Assessment has been undertaken, with recommendations for potential future controls, and concludes – *'Falmouth Docks and Engineering Company and the project team will be able to effectively manage the marine risks associated, ensuring activities are both tolerable and 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable'.* Regarding locations of velvet swimming crabs etc, this information was provided by fishers during pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant.

comparison made between the 2019 data, (based on seven-day periods of AISA and AIS-B data from the first seven days of each month, commencing in January, at two-month intervals), with data from 2023, (comprising data from between 14 August 2023 and 28 August 2023, and 24 October 2023 and 07 November 2023). Within Chapter 10 section 10.9.8 the applicant states that, "Velvet swimming crabs are targeted throughout the estuary, whilst edible crabs as well as lobsters are caught closer to the estuary mouth between Falmouth Harbour and St Mawes Harbour and into the coast." Cornwall IFCA would request that the applicant clarifies the source of this information, as the landings data obtained from the MMO into port will not give the spatial information described. Cornwall IFCA would query the conclusions drawn and justification made within Table 10-9, as direct consultation with fishermen (as Cornwall IFCA understand it), has not taken place, therefore their individual spatial adaptability is unknown, as is the relative value to each individual fisherman as their source of income.	
10.15 - Chapter 10 Section - 10.10.3 "Any displacement of fishermen/fishing effort would take place during the marine component of the works, which are anticipated to start in Q4 2025 and continue until Q1 2029 (42 months)." Chapter 10 Section - 10.10.4 "The exact phasing of construction activities and the locations of supporting construction vessels throughout this process would be confirmed once the chosen contractor is appointed. Temporary safety zones around marine construction areas would be implemented…" Chapter 10 Section - 10.10.5 "With the volume of extant	The Applicant can confirm that the safe navigation of fishing vessels through the docks water will not be impeded by the demolition and construction works. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the construction stage. Communications will formally occur through Notification to Mariners via FDEC's Harbour Master. A Navigation Risk Assessment has been undertaken, with recommendations for potential future controls, and concludes – *'Falmouth Docks and Engineering Company and the project team will be able to effectively manage the marine risks associated, ensuring activities are both tolerable and 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable'.*

shipping activity in the waters around the site, large vessels (those >10 m) would avoid the site during demolition and construction for their fishing activity and would instead be targeting more offshore waters due to lack of room to manoeuvre." Given the fact that until the contractor is appointed and the timetable known with better certainty, 42 months or any longer is a long time for fishermen/ fishing effort to be displaced, with the associated financial implications for fishermen potentially felt both during and after construction. Has the applicant put systems in place to address this potential issue? Given the nature of the works, has a safety zone size been determined, with the potential for this to cause further fisheries displacement, does the applicant have the relevant plan in place to mitigate this? Cornwall IFCA notes the wording within point 10.10.5, and would ask the applicant to clarify this, as to whether the avoidance by the size class of vessel will be down to the judgement of the vessel skipper or a mandatory requirement set by the applicant?	
10.16 - In relation to the ES Chapter 10 section 10.10.7, Cornwall IFCA would highlight the undefined term 'offshore', which requires clarification in terms of spatial extent (e.g. in terms of nm from MHWS). Also, given the predominance of <10m fishing vessels which principally operate within the Cornwall IFCA district (as described in the first paragraph of the covering letter of this response), the assessment of impact is refuted due to lack of spatial evidence.	These terms have been used to describe the locations of fishing activity in general terms. The baseline section uses multiple information sources to give an overall view on the commercial fishing activity in the study area. Information sources are provided in the methodology section.
10.17 - In regard to the ES Chapter 10 sections 10.10.8 & 10.10.26, Cornwall IFCA would highlight that the May 2023 Marine Ecology survey of the site was a small snapshot in time of a	Observations from the survey were used to supplement understanding of the baseline established from existing data sources and local knowledge of the area and operations occuring within the FDEC SHA.

period of just three days (26 to 28 May 2023), where the objective of the survey "was to characterise the communities, sediments and habitats within the vicinity of the proposed development, as well as conducting a brief inspection of the existing wharf structures. Infauna communities were assessed through a grabbing survey and epifaunal communities were assessed through a DDV and still imagery survey". Therefore, the statement within this point that no lobster/ crab pots were observed appears erroneous, as detecting them was not an objective of the survey. Indeed, the words lobster or pots are not even mentioned within the survey report, and crabs are mentioned five times, but not once in reference to pots or potting equipment.	
10.18 - Cornwall IFCA also notes the following statement: "Monthly landings data from 2023 shows that the highest shellfish landings were from April to September and so any displacement would be during this period." Cornwall IFCA finds this statement concerning, firstly that a broad statement should be based upon only one year of data, and most alarmingly that the applicant states that displacement would only occur between April to September. Cornwall IFCA understands the above to be erroneous, with vessel activity occurring all year round (weather dependent).	Although this 2023 data has been used to inform the assessment, it does not contribute to the overall conclusion of whether there will be displacement as a result of project activities. This data is not specific in terms of where fishing activity has taken place, rather it provides what has been landed at each port. Due to the location of the proposed development and works, there is considered to be limited displacement of vessels throughout the year (not just during this period of April to September). The area of potential effect is within the main navigational channel. ES Chapter 10 goes on to state the following: 'these vessels are still subject to FHC Byelaw 49 to avoid deploying fishing gear in locations where it could pose a risk to navigation. Deployed lobster pots act as a significant snag risk for all types of vessels and it is considered highly unlikely that there would be significant potting in the site. This is also true of other shellfish landings (i.e. native oysters, blue mussels, and queen scallops), which take place in the classified shellfish take zones within the estuary (away from the proposed development)'. Therefore, the conclusion of neglible adverse is considered applicable to all months of the year.
10.19 - The ES Chapter 10 section 10.10.10 states "There may be potential for the demolition and construction stage of the proposed development to result in impacts on commercially exploited fish and shellfish species. This in turn could indirectly affect the productivity of the	This text relates to *'potential'* impacts that are then discussed in further detail in the chapter, which concludes a negligible adverse effect. Demolition and construction works associated with the proposed development will be limited to the immediate areas around the existing dock infrastructure, within which there are no fishing grounds. In addition, the Applicant can confirm that the safe navigation of fishing vessels through the docks water will not be impeded by the demolition

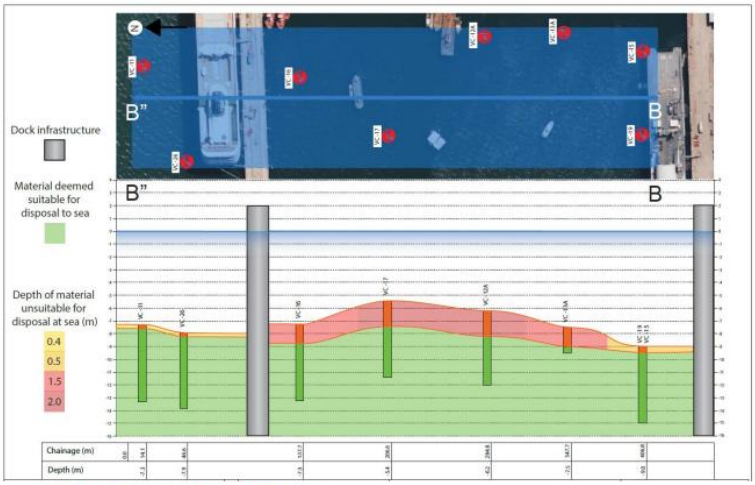
fisheries that target them." Cornwall IFCA finds the conclusion of this point to be of the highest concern, particularly as any impacts on commercially exploited species of fish and shellfish would directly impact fishermen. Cornwall IFCA would ask whether the applicant has a plan in place given the above point?	and construction works. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the construction stage. Communications will formally occur through Notification to Mariners via FDEC's Harbour Master.
10.20 - The ES Chapter 10 section 10.10.12 states: "Potential effects from underwater noise to fish could result in some temporary disturbance of individuals and therefore displacement of stock away from commercial fishing grounds." "Invertebrate species (i.e. crabs, lobsters, oysters, scallops, mussels) are sedentary and unable to avoid exposure to underwater sound. Despite this, due to the physiology of these species, studies have shown that these species have a low sensitivity to noise, and any potential effects will be limited to within a few metres of a sound source." "These fisheries are not considered to be disturbed by underwater noise produced during the construction phase, particularly given their low sensitivity to underwater sound." In regard to the statements within Chapter 10 Section 10.10.12, Cornwall IFCA would reiterate the point made previously, refuting the conclusion that shellfish are not considered to be sensitive to underwater noise, given the acknowledgement in the literature, that this is an under investigated area. Also, Cornwall IFCA would highlight that the conclusion reached in point 10.10.12, directly contradicts the findings within section 10.10.10. In light of the aforementioned points in relation to noise and vibration, Cornwall IFCA would ask the applicant to reassess the conclusion reached in section 10.10.13.	See response to IFCA comment 10.11 – shellfish species have been assessed as having low sensitivity to underwater noise, rather than no sensitivity. This is compared to other species, such as herring which have a high sensitivity to underwater sound. Potential effects, such as TTS is expected to be occur over shorter distances and to be captured as part of the detailed assessment provided, concluding that effects from underwater noise and vibration are not significant.

10.21 - The ES Chapter 10 section 10.10.17 states: "Suspended sediment concentrations (SSC) and subsequent deposition as a result of the proposed dredging could transport sediment to nearby shellfish fisheries. Sediment plume modelling showed that predicted peak increases in SSC would be elevated at the dredging locations and in the vicinity of the site up to 300m west of the site and up to 900m east of the site (worst-case), at which point the peak increases in concentrations fall below 1mg/l. This would be short-term and would return to baseline levels following the dredging activities." Cornwall IFCA have concerns regarding the above, firstly that the increased suspended sediment concentration could smother shellfish in the vicinity and lead to shellfish die off and reduced catches for local fishermen. Also, the applicant refers to this impact as short term, (the duration of which is undefined), however, within the application the proposed timeline is indicative and could take years to complete, which seems more likely to be a long-term impact, with associated fisheries ramifications.	Please see response to 10.11 on SSC
10.22 - Cornwall IFCA would query the evidence source given in the first sentence of point 10.10.19, number 40, as it is missing from the footnote, and would ask that this is rectified without delay. Given the concerns raised regarding increased suspended sediment concentrations, indicative likely long-term dredging campaign timescale, and suspended sediment deposition over nearby shellfish fisheries (10.10.17), Cornwall IFCA query the assessment outcome within 10.10.20 and ask that it is re-assessed.	This information was taken from the species specific summaries on the Marlin.ac.uk website, which provides species specific individual summaries. The tolerance of these species is considered in the context of natural variability in estuarine conditions, which generally have higher levels of suspended sediments. It is acknolwedged that high increases in SSC, even in the short-term, can negatively impact these species through smothering effects and reduction in growth rates. However, the assessment states that the distances over which sediment will be deposited will avoid the nearby shellfish classification zones, where native oysters, blue mussels, and scallops are targeted. Additional information provided in response to IFCA comment 10.11, provides further confidence that the sediment plume avoids the main Fal Estuary channel where native oyster are known to be present. It was also stated that the 'sediment plume may overlap areas of crabs and lobsters, such as slightly north of the mouth of the Fal estuary, close to Pendennis Point'. However, the SSC concentrations at these locations will be low and would not represent a significant change from

	ambient (i.e. negligible increase in SSC, which is <0.1 mg/l on average).
10.23 - Cornwall IFCA notes the following statement within section 10.10.22 Chapter 10, (listed under permanent displacement of fishing effort), "There is potential for displacement of fishing effort as a result of the operational development." Cornwall IFCA has serious concerns regarding this statement, particularly given that there is no evidence submitted with the application of any direct consultation having been undertaken with the fishing industry. Cornwall IFCA would suggest the applicant rectifies this.	This text relates to *'potential'* impacts that are then discussed in further detail in the chapter, which concludes a negligible adverse effect. The operational stage of the development will not differ significantly from the existing operations at the docks. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the operation of the proposed development. A Navigation Risk Assessment has been undertaken, with recommendations for potential future controls, and concludes – *'Falmouth Docks and Engineering Company and the project team will be able to effectively manage the marine risks associated, ensuring activities are both tolerable and 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable'.*
10.24 - Cornwall IFCA would query the findings of point 10.10.24 within chapter 10 of the ES, given there has been no direct consultation with the fishing industry. Also, the applicant states that fishing vessels >10m would target more offshore waters due to the volume of extant shipping activity (Cornwall IFCA understands this to mean current), and lack of room to manoeuvre. Cornwall IFCA finds that this does not make sense, if vessels are currently unable to manoeuvre around the site, they would already avoid the site and target different waters, this statement appears to infer a displacement effect. Cornwall IFCA would strongly suggest that the applicant looks again at point 10.10.24 and the conclusion therein.	These comments are noted. The statement regarding the presence of >10m is not inferring that there would be a displacement effect, but as stated by IFCA, they would avoid the site and target different waters. Overall, the conclusion of the assessment on the permanent displacement of fishing effort is based on the limited presence of fishing actvitiy within the potential area of effect, which is within the main navigational channel. ES Chapter 10 goes on to state the following: 'FHC Byelaw 49 places restrictions on the deployment of both static and mobile fishing gear in locations where it could pose a risk to navigation'. For example, deployed lobster pots act as a significant snag risk for all types of vessels and it is considered highly unlikely that there would be significant potting in the site. Therefore, the conclusion of neglible adverse is still considered correct.
10.25 - Cornwall IFCA has reviewed point 10.10.25 within Chapter 10 of the ES (see below in italic) and would request that the applicant clarifies what is defined as 'offshore' and provides evidence showing that the main fishing grounds of <10m fishing vessels targeting 'these species will be in offshore areas'. The <10m fishing vessel fleet is the predominant size	Please see previous responses. The operational stage of the development will not differ significantly from the existing operations at the docks. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the operation of the proposed development.

class within the Cornwall IFCA district (as defined in the covering letter) and is much constrained by the weather as to when they are able to fish. Therefore, any potential displacement effect as a direct result of increased vessel movements in the area are likely to have a larger impact on this size class of fishing vessels. Cornwall IFCA strongly suggests that the applicant review the conclusion reached below and rectify this forthwith. "The magnitude of impact on <10m vessels targeting monks/anglers, crawfish or crabs is considered to be Very Low as main fishing grounds for these species will be in offshore areas, and therefore temporary exclusion from the site does not represent a loss in available fishing areas. Combined with the Low value/ sensitivity of these receptors (Table 10-9), the effect on vessels <10m targeting monks/ anglers, crawfish or crabs would be Negligible Adverse and therefore not significant."	
10.26 - Given the above points regarding the displacement of fishing activity, the potential impacts on commercial fishing landings and that no evidence has been submitted of consultation with fishermen, Cornwall IFCA therefore question the statement within point 10.10.27 chapter 10, that there will be no significant effect. Cornwall IFCA notes the statement "no significant effect on Falfish landing operations" within point 10.10.27 chapter 10, however, there is no evidence of any consultation being undertaken by the applicant with Falfish, therefore Cornwall IFCA would query how the impact on Falfish during both construction and operation of the site has been reached.	The Applicant has presented at numerous public events and undertaken site visits for local interested parties. Consultation has included key local stakeholders including Harbour User Group meetings of Falmouth Harbour Commissioners, the SAC Management Forum and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Marine and Coastal Partnership. Meetings have also been held with a number of local fishers. FDEC's harbour master and operations team have good working relations with port users, including local fishers, and will ensure ongoing liaison with user groups throughout the operation of the proposed development.
10.27 - Upon review of the 21 vibrocore samples which were	Figure 8.3 below (extracted from ES chapter 8) shows the locations (21 no.) of where cores were taken for analysis. The ground investigation

undertaken by Geotechnical Engineering Limited (GEL), it appears that the majority of these samples did not reach the same depth as that which is proposed to be dredged (down to 10.5m below chart datum in some areas). Cornwall IFCA would query how this data is to be used to inform the amount of contaminated material to be disposed of, as it doesn't appear to be fully representative of the proposed dredge depth.	works were conducted between 18th and 20th March 2024 and consisted of a total of 21 vibrocores (labelled as VC-01 to VC-26) to the maximum depth of 6.0 m below the seabed level (which aligns with the proposed dredge depth). At each location, marine sediment samples were taken at surface level, and at every 1 metre interval until the required depth or bedrock was reached. The locations and depths of samples were agreed in advance with Cefas and the MMO, and tested in line with the MMO and Cefas requirements. The results were screened against relevant action levels to assess the suitability of the dredged material for disposal at sea (as opposed to disposal to land i.e., to a landfill site), which has also been discussed and agreed with Cefas.  **Figure 8.3 The marine development area divided into the North (yellow), East (pink) and West (brown) areas.** Chapter 8 of the ES provides visual figures illustrating the sediment analysis at depth. As an example, below is an extract of ES Figure 8.4. This shows a profile of the seabed and at what depth the material is deemed unsuitable for disposal at sea and therefore will be dredged and disposed of on land (to an appropriate waste facility), and at what depths the dredge arisings can be disposed of to the Falmouth Bay (B) disposal site (depths shown in green).

	 Figure 8.4 Scenario 1: Western Area
10.28 - Cornwall IFCA wish to make further comments pertaining to fisheries: 1. There is a private fishery right on the intertidal between Flushing and Sailor's Creek and there is no evidence of consultation with the lessee. 2. The applicant states that models have been used to assess the worst-case scenario regarding the deposition of sediment as it pertains to Designated Shellfish Waters and Classification zones, however, the applicant does not state the relevant inputs & assumptions for the model. 3. There is no mention of the private right which does have oysters stored in the area of the foreshore/shallow subtidal. 4. Cornwall IFCA officers have had informal discussions with fishermen across different sectors who may be affected by the proposal, and they all have concerns about the proposal, in particular about deposition of dredge material at sea, which they believe is undoubtably very toxic dredge material. 5. Cornwall IFCA strongly suggest that before determination of this application is made, the applicant and developers	As stated above, the proposed development plans have been presented at numerous public events and site meetings, including the SAC advisory committee meetings, Harbour User Group meetings of Falmouth Harbour Commissioners and Falmouth Docks & Engineering Company and the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Marine Partnership Meetings. The Applicant has fully engaged with any person/company that has expressed any interest in the development, including fishers, and has remained open to dialogue throughout the public consultation process. The Applicant is happy to have a meeting on site with IFCA to further discuss the proposed development.

should have a full formal consultation (in person meeting) with fishermen and other potentially impacted persons or interested parties.	