

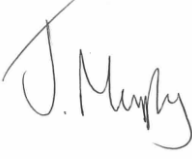
Marine Planning Supporting Statement

**Able Seaton Port Capital and
Maintenance Dredging**

January 2026

CONTROL SHEET (A01/4)

CLIENT:	Able UK Ltd	Fairhurst Group LLP
PROJECT NAME:	Able Seaton Port Capital and Maintenance Dredging	1 Arngrove Court Barack Road Newcastle Upon Tyne NE4 6DB
REPORT TITLE:	Marine Planning Supporting Statement	Tel: 01912210505
PROJECT NUMBER:	138434	
DOCUMENT NUMBER:	[Keywords]38434/501	
STATUS:	Final	

Original Issue		Name	Signature	Date
	Prepared by	Rebecca Camilleri		16/12/2025
	Checked by	Elizabeth Cowx		18/12/2025
	Approved by	Josh Murphy		19/12/25

Update Record	Issue	Date	Status	Description	Signature	
	02				Prepared By	
					Checked	
					Approved	
	03				Prepared By	
					Checked	
					Approved	
	04				Prepared By	
					Checked	
					Approved	

This document has been prepared in accordance with the Fairhurst Quality and Environmental Management System and in accordance with the instructions of the client, Able UK Ltd, for the client's sole and specific use. Any other persons who use any information contained herein do so at their own risk. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by Fairhurst unless otherwise expressly stated within this report. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, all intellectual property rights in, or arising out of, or in connection with this report, are owned by Fairhurst. The client named above has a licence to copy and use this report only for the purposes for which it was provided. The licence to use and copy this report is subject to other terms and conditions agreed between Fairhurst and the client. Fairhurst is the trading name of Fairhurst Group LLP, a limited liability partnership registered in Scotland with the registered number SO307306 and registered office at 43 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2HT.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 4

2.0 Site Description 5

3.0 Proposed Works 7

4.0 Marine Planning History 9

5.0 Marine Policy Assessment 10

6.0 Technical Considerations 17

7.0 Conclusions 21

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Marine Planning Statement (MPS) has been prepared by Fairhurst on behalf of Able UK Ltd, to support a Marine Licence application which includes capital and maintenance dredging and disposal at Able Seaton Port.
- 1.2 The site is already subject to a 10 year licence (Licence Number: L/2017/00012/12) for the “Disposal of dredged material, Maintenance of existing works, Navigational dredging (capital), and Navigational dredging (maintenance))” across a number of berths, Holding Basin and Channel. This is the active licence for dredging at Seaton Port and was granted 02/03/2017. This application essentially pertains an extension of that previous licence period, so dredging may continue uninterrupted.
- 1.3 This supporting statement covers the following key issues:
- The Site Description;
 - Proposed Works;
 - Marine Policy Assessment; and
 - Technical Considerations.
- 1.4 This Marine Planning Supporting Statement sets out all of the relevant material considerations that should be taken into account by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), in the determination of this Marine Licence application. Fairhurst consider that all material considerations have been addressed within the Supporting Statement and all additional information required for determining the application has been provided within the submitted drawings and other application documents.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Able Seaton Port (ASP) is located on the north-east coast of England at the head of the Seaton Channel, a tributary of the River Tees. The Site lies adjacent to the existing Able UK Seaton Port Dry Dock facility at Graythorp, Hartlepool, on the north bank of the Seaton-on-Tees channel at the western end of the Tees estuary.

2.2 Able Seaton Port (ASP) is situated on the north-east coast of England at the head of the Seaton Channel. It was acquired by its current owners in 1996, and since then, Able UK Limited (referred to as Able) has made developments to the Site, including the addition of heavy-duty quays, workshops, and offices. The permitted activities on Site include importing and exporting general cargoes, decommissioning marine structures and vessels, and serving as a fabrication yard for offshore structures. Recently, ASP has expanded its services to support offshore wind farm developers by functioning as a marshalling yard for contractors working on Rounds 2 and 3 wind farms in the North Sea. The ASP area covers approximately 51 hectares.

2.3 ASP is accessed via a 100m wide channel dredged to -9.5mCD. Quay 10 is currently dredged to -13.5mCD. Quay 11 is currently dredged to -11mCD. The Holding Basin is dredged to -9.5mCD. No capital dredging has been undertaken in the TERRCBasin, or across Quays 7-9.

2.4 This application pertains to the following areas of Able Seaton Port and are identified in Figure 2.1:

- Quays 7-11
- Terrc Basin
- Ground Bed
- Holding Basin
- Seaton Channel

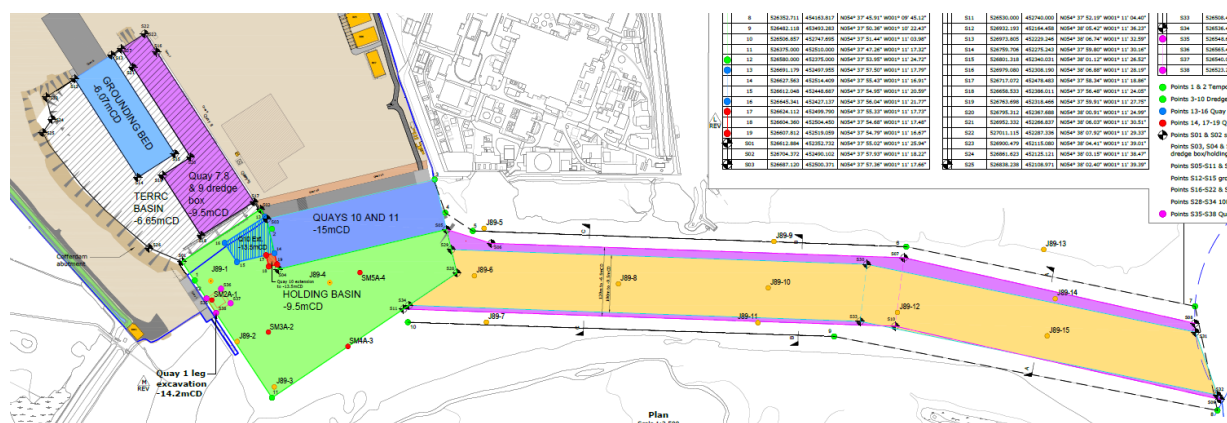


Figure 2.1: Dredge Locations (Drawing No: ASC-001-00009)

-
- 2.5 The Site is located within the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site and the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.0 PROPOSED WORKS

- 3.1 The Proposed Works consist of capital and maintenance dredging at Able Seaton Port over a period of 10 years to deepen the berth levels, as needed.
- 3.2 A maximum of 890,000m³ of material is to be dredged across the licence period, with 250,000m³ comprising capital dredging. The full breakdown can be seen in the table inserted below and submitted alongside this marine licence application.

Figure 3.1: Dredge Volumes Proposed at Able Seaton Port

ASP 2026 Marine Licence		TOTAL VOLUME (M3)	Silt			Clay			Sand			Gravel		
Activity	Description		Volume m ³	Wet Tonnes T/m ³	Dry Tonnes T/m ³	Volume m ³	Wet Tonnes T/m ³	Dry Tonnes T/m ³	Volume m ³	Wet Tonnes T/m ³	Dry Tonnes T/m ³	Volume m ³	Wet Tonnes T/m ³	Dry Tonnes T/m ³
1.1	Deepening of Quays 10 and 11	165,000	16,500	1.3	0.5	16,500	2.2	1.8	66,000	1.9	1.7	66,000	2.2	2
1.2	Maintenance dredging of Seaton Channel, Holding Basin and Quays 10 and 11	400,000	380,000	494,000	190,000	20,000	44,000	36,000						
1.3	Placement of Erosion Matting	N/A												
2.1	Terrc Basin Maintenance Dredging	160,000	160,000	208,000	80,000									
2.2	Grounding Bed Maintenance Dredging	40,000	40,000	52,000	20,000									
2.3	Deepening of Seaton Port Quays 7, 8 and 9	85,000				75,000	165,000	135,000	10,000	19,000	17,000			
2.4	Maintenance dredging of Quays 7, 8 and 9	40,000	40,000	52,000	20,000									
3.1	Disposal To Tees Bay C			21,450	8,250		201,300	164,700		144,400	129,200		145,200	132,000
4.1	Disposal To Tees Bay A			827,450	318,250		44,000	36,000						

Capital Dredging

- 3.3 Capital dredging is proposed across Quays 7-11 to achieve the depths consented under the current dredge licence. To provide detail:
- Quays 7, 8 and 9 are to be dredged to a depth of -9.5m CD removing a total volume of 85,000m³; and
 - Quays 10 and 11 are to be dredged to a depth of -15m CD removing a total volume of 165,000m³.

Maintenance Dredging

- 3.4 Subsequent maintenance dredging is proposed to be undertaken to maintain the depths achieved under the current dredge licence and proposed under this application. Specific quantities are as follows:
- Maintenance dredging of Seaton Channel, Holding Basin and Quays 10 and 11 up to a total volume of 400,000m³ across the 10 year period;
 - Maintenance dredging of the Terrc Basin up to a total volume of 160,000m³ across the 10 year period;

- Maintenance dredging of the Grounding Bed up to a total volume of 40,000m³ across the 10 year period; and
- Maintenance dredging of Quays 7, 8 and 9 up to a total volume of 40,000m³ across the 10 year period.

3.5 The dredge volumes proposed within this licence are unfulfilled capacity which remains from the previous licence, where consented depths and amounts were not reached. As such, the proposed new marine licence is essentially an extension of the 2017 licence.

Disposal

3.6 The material removed from Able Seaton Port under this licence will be disposed of across two licenced disposal sites, Tees Bay C and Tees Bay A.

Proposed Dredging Methodology

3.7 The method of dredging will align with the previous license, and will be carried out by a variety of dredging plant. The choice of plant will be governed by the location and depth of material to be removed year on year. The choice of plant will also be affected by ongoing port operations in the basin, as some plant may not prove to be suitable at certain times due to local operational limitations and restrictions.

3.8 Within each work area, the dredging shall initially be carried out to dredge level +0.5m. After the whole of the work area has been dredged to dredge level +0.5m the final 0.5m thickness of material may be removed. Due to the historical use and nature of operations, it is possible that unnatural materials and debris will be encountered. Any scrap or debris will be removed ashore. Unnatural materials, including scrap metal, shall be landed in a workman like manner and transported to a skip located within the development area for offsite disposal.

3.9 The proposed methods of dredging have a very low risk of placing contaminated sediment into suspension in the water column. The concentrations of contaminants present in the silt are at concentrations which have not fluctuated significantly within the length of the licence. In addition, previous maintenance dredging at this location has been successfully undertaken without causing adverse environmental impact.

3.10 This application has been submitted in advance of the receipt of sample results, taken and analysed in line with Sample Plan Request (SAM/2025/00058). These results will be submitted once received.

4.0 MARINE PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Fairhurst have reviewed the MMO's Marine Information System (MIS), and online case management system register for relevant marine licence applications and licences relating to the application site:
- 4.2 A Sample Plan Request was submitted to support this marine licence application for capital and maintenance dredging. A Sample Plan was received 03/11/2025. Reference: SAM/2025/00058.
- 4.3 An Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Request was submitted for this application. The Proposed Works were screened out of requiring an EIA 13/11/2025. Reference: EIA/2025/0036.
- 4.4 Application (Disposal of dredged material, Maintenance of existing works, Navigational dredging (capital), and Navigational dredging (maintenance)) Able Seaton Port berths, Holding Basin and Channel. This is the active licence for dredging at Seaton Port and was granted 02/03/2017 and most recently varied 09/04/2025. Licence Number: L/2017/00012/12.
- 4.5 Application (Other Deposits, Other Dredging) Quay 1 – Stone Load Spreading Pad at Able Seaton Port. This licence was granted 30/10/2023 Licence Number: L/2023/00332/1.
- 4.6 Application (Other deposits) Deposit of inert material into Quay 10 Berthing Pocket at Able Seaton Port. This licence was granted 27/06/2023. Licence Number: L/2023/00228/1.

5.0 MARINE POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This chapter provides an assessment against the policies and vision of the Marine Policy Statement (MPS) and the North East Marine Plan (NEMP).
- 5.2 The MPS is the Framework for preparing Marine Plans and making decisions affecting the marine environment. Decisions must be made in accordance with the MPS unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. The NEMP became a material consideration in decision-making and was adopted in 2021 and has been considered within the policy assessment below.

Marine Policy Statement

- 5.3 As the primary framework for preparing and deciding proposals affecting the marine environment, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009¹ states that decisions must be made in accordance with the MPS unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The UK vision for the marine environment is for *“clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas”*. There are a number of UK high-level marine objectives which set out the broad outcomes for the marine area and reflect the principles of sustainable development. The objectives include:
- Achieving a sustainable marine economy;
 - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
 - Living within environmental limits;
 - Promoting good governance; and
 - Using sound science responsibly.
- 5.5 The MPS states that *“properly planned developments in the marine area can provide environmental and social benefits as well as drive economic development.”* The Proposed Dredging depths and quantities have already been approved and extension of this provides the opportunity for Able Seaton Port to continue their operations to fulfil the economic use of the Site

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

- by the MPS, allowing to accept contracts requiring larger vessels. This will provide long-term benefits for national, regional and local economies.
- 5.6 The MPS states that ports and shipping play an important role in the activities taking place within the marine environment and that they are an essential part of the UK economy, providing the major conduit for the country's imports and exports, and key transport infrastructure between land and sea.
- 5.7 The MPS states that *"halting and, if possible, a reversal of biodiversity loss"* should be an aim of decisions in the marine environment to be in accordance with wider sustainable development and ecological security principles. The MPS states that noise resulting from a range of development activity, including the Proposed Dredging and Disposal, can have an adverse effect on biodiversity, as well as the quality of life of people enjoying nearby areas. This impact must be considered and managed appropriately. The licensable activities proposed within this scheme will be entirely sub-tidal. The sub-tidal habitat is not a feature of any of the designated sites within which the Site sits. The residual impact on biodiversity will be assessed within the accompanying Water Framework Directive Assessment (WFD).
- 5.8 The MPS states, in terms of seascape, that the effects of activities and developments in the marine and coastal area on the landscape, including seascape will vary on a case by case basis according to the type of activity, its location and its setting. The proposal will consist of dredging, which is not considered to have any adverse change to the surrounding landscape/seascape.
- 5.9 As acknowledged in the MPS, the effective operation of active marine areas requires *"the creation, maintenance and development of channels, berths and docks"* achieved through dredging, but which must consider the objective to minimise as far as practicable the pollution caused by the dredging operation and disposal of sediment. Routine sampling will be undertaken to prevent any adverse impacts during the disposal of material, through monitoring the concentration of contaminants to ensure they comply with permitted limits for disposal at sea.
- 5.10 The MPS states that the cumulative impact of developments within the area should be considered. The River Tees is dredged consistently through maintenance by the Harbour Authority. Dredging proposed within this license will unlikely take place at similar times. In addition, this application acts essentially as an extension to the current licence which has been in place since 2017, meaning that any cumulative impacts from surrounding dredge operations will have taken the proposed operations into consideration already, within their own marine licence applications. Therefore, Fairhurst does not consider that the impacts resulting from works will generate cumulative impacts in the tidal zone. Should any other applications be submitted then it would fall on those future proposals to consider the cumulative impact of the works laid out by this application. The MPS states that the cumulative impact of the development along with other developments within the area should be considered. Although Able Seaton Port will be operating

during the dredging period, this is considered to be the established baseline. Therefore, the level of anticipated impacts as a result of works is considered not to give rise to cumulative impacts.

- 5.11 Overall, Fairhurst consider that the Proposed Works is in line with the MPS concerning sustainable development, economic impact, environmental impact, cumulative impact, and impacts on flood risk and seascape.

North East Marine Plan

- 5.12 As previously mentioned, the North East Marine Plan² is the local statutory plan in place for the region, and as such, is a material consideration in decision-making for Marine Licence Applications.
- 5.13 Policy **NE-INF-1** states that *“appropriate marine infrastructure which facilitates land-based activities (and vice versa) should be supported”*. As such, it is considered that the Proposed Dredging works are necessary to fulfil the remaining capacities consented within the previous licence and are critical to expanding the current operations, stimulating both direct and indirect benefits for land based and marine activities. Able Seaton Port serves a variety of sectors thus including, all types of offshore construction vessels, has significant crane capacity and quays, which have been constructed particularly to suit the requirements of the heavy fabrication industry. As such, the dredge depths must be sufficient to accommodate vessels large enough to cope with this demand.
- 5.14 Able Seaton Port’s main selling point is that it is located in the centre of the UK on the North East Coast close to the mouth of the River Tees and is therefore a strong strategic gateway for the port sector. With account to that, this proposal would further strengthen the appeal, thus providing necessary infrastructure to support both marine and terrestrial based activities. In accordance with Policy NE-INF-1, the works comply and supports integration between both marine and terrestrial systems by encouraging proposals which will facilitate economic and operation growth.
- 5.15 Policies **NE-DD-2** and **NE-DD-3** require proposals to avoid or minimise *“adverse impacts on licensed disposal sites”* (NE-DD-2) by pursuing re-use and other alternative opportunities through assessment against the waste hierarchy.

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60f6f3df8fa8f50c7450ebf1/FINAL_North_East_Marine_Plan_1.pdf

- 5.16 In terms of alternatives for sea disposal, the only alternative would be for the applicant to dispose of all the material to landfill, however, this is not cost-effective for the operations of the business as a whole. The proposal to remove any contaminated material from being disposed of offshore is considered the best option both economically and environmentally. Therefore, any opportunities to match dredged material *“to suitable sites”*, only to dispose of it as waste. As a result, the applicant would not be able to operate efficiently. The proposal maintains the current disposal arrangements and is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 5.17 Policy **NE-PS-1** supports development which is compatible to existing port and harbour activities and those which will enable *“future opportunity for sustainable expansion of port and harbour activities”*. Dredging is a common activity which is undertaken frequently along the River Tees and as such, the proposal is in keeping with the existing uses in the vicinity, all of which are industrial port and harbour activities. Furthermore, these works enable future economic sustainability of those activities through ensuring that the facilities on the Tees are suitable for the growing need for deeper berths to service the various industrial sector operations whilst also fulfilling the requirements of the current licence.
- 5.18 Policy **NE-SCP-1** poses that, *“proposals should ensure that they are compatible with their surroundings ... [and] should take account of the character, quality and distinctiveness of the seascape and landscape”*. The seascape that surrounds the Proposed Works is considered mainly industrial. The nature of the dredging works being entirely subtidal means that no impact on seascapes or landscapes will occur.
- 5.19 Policy **NE-BIO-2** states that *“Proposals that enhance or facilitate native species or habitat adaptation or connectivity, or native species migration, will be supported.”* Policy **NE-DIST-1** states that *“Proposals that may have significant adverse impacts on highly mobile species through disturbance or displacement must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:*
- a) avoid*
 - b) minimise*
 - c) mitigate*
- adverse impacts so they are no longer significant.”*
- 5.20 It is known that the River Tees hosts Salmon, Sea Trout and River Lamprey as well as European Eel and Sea Lamprey. The proposal does have the potential to temporarily disrupt fish habitat if not properly managed. This proposal will avoid and minimise these impacts by timing the works to ensure that migration of salmon will not be disrupted. The existing dredging sites have been in operation using controls and mitigation measures agreed to by the relevant authorities. The

Proposed Dredge campaigns would implement these controls, limiting the impact on ecology and keeping in line with the previously agreed measures from approved licenses.

- 5.21 **NE-BIO-3** requires that Proposed Works consider coastal habitats and that they *“demonstrate that they will, in order of preference: avoid; minimise; mitigate; compensate for - net habitat loss.”* In light of this, the Proposed Works are located within the vicinity of extended Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) with Proposed Dredging works extending into the SPA. It is established that maintenance dredging is already undertaken at this Site in the locations proposed as part of this submission as well as frequently along the River Tees and Able Seaton Port. In addition, the licensable activities proposed within this scheme will be entirely sub-tidal. The sub-tidal habitat is not a feature of any of the designated sites within which the Site sits.
- 5.22 Appropriate dredging methods and best practice, will limit the potential for contamination of the watercourse and an associated adverse effect on the qualifying features of the SPA. It is considered that this risk can be mitigated through the implementation of already previously agreed appropriate measures. As discussed, the existing dredging sites have been in operation using controls and mitigation measures agreed to by the relevant authorities. The Proposed Dredging would implement these controls, limiting the impact on ecology and keeping in line with previously agreed measures from approved licenses.
- 5.23 Policy **NE-CE-1** states that: *“proposals which may have adverse cumulative effects with other existing, authorised, or reasonably foreseeable proposals must demonstrate that they will, in order of preference:*
- a) avoid*
 - b) minimise*
 - c) mitigate*
- adverse cumulative and/or in-combination effects so they are no longer significant.”*
- 5.24 As mentioned previously, approved dredging operations undertaken outside of the application would not cause any cumulative impact. Although Able Seaton Port will be operating during dredging periods, this is considered to be the established baseline. Therefore, the level of anticipated impacts as a result of works is considered not to give rise to cumulative impacts.
- 5.25 Policy **NE-CO-1** states that: *“Proposals that optimise the use of space and incorporate opportunities for co-existence and cooperation with existing activities will be supported”*. The Proposed Works would improve the Able Seaton Port’s ability to optimise the use of space by deepening existing dredging berths to accommodate larger ships.

- 5.26 Policy **NE-EMP-1** states “[p]roposals that result in a net increase to marine-related employment will be supported particularly ... in locations identified as the most deprived”. In 2019, over 60% of Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Hartlepool Built Up Areas (BUA) were in the top 20% most deprived in England in terms of Employment, and Health Deprivation and Disability³. Whilst it is difficult to demonstrate a net increase as a result of dredging works, it is considered that the extended use of the quayside for larger vessels will provide further opportunities for employment in the longer term.
- 5.27 Policy **NE-INNS-1** states that “Proposals that reduce the risk of introduction and/or spread of invasive non-native species should be supported.” and Policy **NE-INNS-2** states “Public authorities with functions to manage activities that could potentially introduce, transport or spread invasive non-native species should implement adequate biosecurity measures to avoid or minimise the risk of introducing, transporting or spreading invasive non-native species.” The accompanying Water Framework Directive Assessment addresses the potential issue of invasive non-native species, and finds that the appropriate measures are in place to prevent INNS introduction and spread. The Proposed Works are therefore in accordance with both Policy **NE-INNS-1** and 2.
- 5.28 Policy **NE-PS-4** states, “Proposals promoting or facilitating sustainable coastal and/or short sea shipping as an alternative to road, rail or air transport will be supported where appropriate.” The Proposed Works would allow for larger ships to access the port, supporting and improving the current facilities.
- 5.29 Policy **NE-REN-1** states that “Proposals that enable the provision of renewable energy technologies and associated supply chains, will be supported.” Able Seaton Port provides direct access to the North Sea, which is becoming increasingly integral in the energy and renewables sector. Although the dredge campaigns themselves are not related directly to renewable energy, the provision of the necessary facilities for offshore wind parts manufacturers will require the additional depth proposed. This makes this application foundational to realising socio-economic benefits of such industries and supply chains locating in the North East.
- 5.30 Policy **NE-CC-2** states, “[p]roposals in the north east marine plan areas should demonstrate for the lifetime of the project that they are resilient to the impacts of climate change and coastal change”. The proposal for a capital dredge and subsequent maintenance dredges on a recurring

³ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68779cbe2bad77c3dae4dc74/Hartlepool.pdf>

dredge campaign period ensures that the capacity of the Site is made resilient to changing conditions for as long as possible, by having the ability to adjust to those changes as they arise over time.

- 5.31 Policy **NE-WQ-1** requires that any proposal which may “*cause deterioration of water quality*” to demonstrate how they will avoid, minimise or mitigate that deterioration in the marine environment. In relation to the risk of impacts on water quality arising from the Proposed Works, a Water Framework Directive Assessment accompanies this application, which shows that the risk of water pollution is low and temporary, with the identified mitigation measures in place. As such, it is considered that the proposed works comprise a water-compatible development. The WFD Assessment, demonstrates that the proposal will not cause any deterioration of water quality, in keeping with the aims of Policy NE-WQ-1. Also, sediment sampling and analysis will be undertaken in accordance with OSPAR Guidance to confirm that any dredged material is suitable for safe disposal at the designated disposal sites. This is critical, ensuring that material is only disposed of if any contaminant levels fall within acceptable levels.

Other Relevant Policy

- 5.32 Paragraph **3.4.16** of the National Policy Statement for Ports states that “*there is a compelling need for substantial additional port capacity over the next 20–30 years, to be met by a combination of development already consented and development for which applications have yet to be received.*”
- 5.33 The Proposed Dredging seeks to support the current licence by fulfilling the capacity which remains from the previous licence where consented depths and amounts were not reached, as such, the proposed new marine licence is essentially an extension of the 2017 licence. This will enable Able Seaton Port to continue to act as a strategic gateway for the Port industry, thus making Able Seaton Port a competitive location for shipping and related industries. With this in mind, Able Seaton Port will continue to contribute significantly to both the UK and regional capacity for these industries.

6.0 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Fairhurst have considered the acceptability of the Proposed Works in relation to the following matters:

- Principle of Development;
- Sediment Quality;
- Water Quality; and
- Biodiversity.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The Principle of Development is to be established by reviewing the Proposed Works in accordance with relevant marine planning policy, an exercise that has been undertaken in Chapter 5 above.
- 6.3 The proposal pertains to a capital dredge to increase the depth and maintenance dredge to maintain the depth to ensure high capacity vessels can berth at Able Seaton Port. It is established that the Proposed Works are identified as a requirement. Therefore, the works are necessary to fulfil the remaining capacities of the current licence. With that in mind, any future development will not be able to progress without doing so.
- 6.4 Furthermore, the proposed dredging is essential to the socio-economic benefits mentioned within Chapter 5 and the overall spatial efficiency of the Site being maximised. The capital dredge is needed to attract the next generation of offshore renewable energy and subsea manufacturing supply chains which require the greater depth in order to transport their products efficiently. Whereas maintenance dredging is required for the removal and relocation of sediment that builds up as a result of the works. Overall, the capital dredging proposed as part of this application is not anticipated to increase the need for any future maintenance dredging in this location.
- 6.5 Therefore, it is considered that this proposal is fully compatible with the existing activity on the Tees, and with the wider policy ambitions of the Tees Valley. Similarly, it is sensitive to the existing seascape, landscape and character of the area, and the important ecological receptors in the Tees such as Salmon. As such, the proposal is fully compliant with the requirements of the MPS and the NEMP, aligned with the policy aims of NE-INF-1, NE-PS-1, NE-CE-1, NE-CC-2 and NE-WQ-1 and, as such, should be supported in principle on this basis.

Sediment Quality

- 6.6 In light of OSPAR requirements, a series of sampling and analysis is being undertaken to assess the quality of the sediment which would be disturbed, removed and disposed of from the Site. It is noteworthy that this application has been submitted ahead of any sampling results however,

sampling will be submitted once received. All samples will be undertaken and analysed in accordance with CEFAS and OSPAR guidance, the scope of which has been proposed through a sample plan request (SAM/2025/00058).

- 6.7 Based on previous sample results, and the proposed method, the proposed dredging has a very low risk of placing contaminated sediment into suspension in the water column. The concentrations of contaminants present in the silt are concentrations which have not fluctuated significantly within the length of the licence. In addition, previous maintenance dredging at this location has been successfully undertaken without causing adverse environmental impact.
- 6.8 With consideration to the above, the Sample Results will be made available following submission of this application. It is anticipated that the sample results will be made available in January 2026 and therefore, this application will be accompanied by a covering letter which will detail the results of the samples and the corresponding action levels.
- 6.9 Overall, it is not anticipated that the proposed method of removing and disposing of the material so as to minimise ecological and water quality will jeopardise the status of the water body.

Water Quality

- 6.10 Given the nature of the works being in the marine environment, there is a minor risk of pollution from oils, fuels or chemicals stored on-site or within close proximity to the watercourse. With any dredging works, there is also potential for changes to water turbidity as a result of changes in load of sediment entering the watercourse.
- 6.11 As such, the proposed dredging works, in particular with regard to the industrial and shipping history of the Tees, there is the potential for the works to contribute to turbidity, toxicity and deoxygenation of the Tees water body. However, these effects will be temporary, short-term and localised. Given the nature of the Site and surrounding area, it is considered that the disturbance of sediment and resuspension will be accepted with the baseline of the Site. Although with appropriate mitigation measures set in place, it is considered unlikely that there will be any significant impacts on the water quality.
- 6.12 Regardless, the relevant conditions attached to this marine licence application will require the implementation of standard pollution controls which would prevent any accidents or chemical release occurring within the marine environment. A detailed series of best construction working practices will be agreed upon with the appointed contractor, which are proposed to avoid any pollution entering the marine and thereby the water environment.
- 6.13 With account to the above, Fairhurst consider that the Proposed Works will be in accordance with the MPS and North East Marine Plan in regards to any water quality impacts.

Biodiversity

- 6.14 The Site is situated within a number of designated ecological sites including the Teesmouth and Cleveland SPA. The SPA is protected for the use of birds including breeding Little Tern passage Sandwich Tern, wintering Knot, Redshank, and an assemblage of over 20,000 wintering waterfowl. Works of any kind within and in close proximity to this area could generate adverse impacts, disturbing the protected features through excessive noise and vibration, or visual disturbance.
- 6.15 The Application Site also lies within the Teesmouth and Cleveland SSSI, which is designated as an area of special interest for a range of nationally important features which occur within and are supported by its “mosaic of coastal and freshwater habitats”, including the likes of Harbour seals, a diverse assemblage of breeding and non-breeding birds, saltmarsh, sand dunes and Jurassic and Quaternary geologic features.
- 6.16 As previously mentioned, the Application Site overlaps with the Teesmouth and Cleveland Ramsar Site.
- 6.17 The only habitat which is likely to experience a temporary change is the subtidal habitat. Furthermore, the dredge to be undertaken as part of this application is to fulfil the intentions of the original licence and the site currently dredged up to -13.5mCD. Therefore, it can be concluded that there will be no substantial loss of existing habitat, and no permanent change to the habitat, as it will be recolonised over time from the surrounding undisturbed areas of sediment, and will be built up again over time due to natural sedimentation of the River Tees, hence the requirement for dredging in this location.
- 6.18 Moreover, subtidal sediment habitats are not accounted for as part of the designated features of either the SSSI or SPA, and thus, it is considered that there is no risk to the integrity of those designations as a result of the temporary disturbance to the sediment habitats where the surface layers have been removed through dredging activity.
- 6.19 In addition, previous maintenance dredging at this location has been successfully undertaken without causing adverse environmental impact and the baseline level of dredging and industrial work along the Tees is so well established and historical so is therefore is considered to be acceptable within the wider context. Despite the above, any potential impacts cannot be underestimated and have been identified and assessed within the shadow HRA and the WFD.
- 6.20 Construction in close proximity to a watercourse has a number of identified pressure pathways on biological elements through visual disruption, light pollution, and noise and vibration, depending on the extent/location of the works. If this is not mitigated correctly, the underwater noise resulting from the dredging works can cause harm or even mortality to fish.

- 6.21 Given that the River Tees hosts native migratory Salmon, Sea Trout and some Lamprey species, there is an important biodiversity consideration in terms of the potential impact along the Tees. . Given the nature of the subtidal works, the impact on these special protected areas is considered to be low as appropriate mitigation measures have been put in place to further avoid and minimise disruption as far as practicable.
- 6.22 Mitigation measures include but, are not limited to the following: dredging will seek to avoid the need for artificial lighting where possible, and any artificial lighting required will not be directed at the water in order to minimise disturbance; the scale of the proposed works has been kept to the previously established operational depth and area to facilitate the required activities at Able Seaton Port; and the use of an experience contractor will ensure adherence to standard best practice measures to minimise disturbance. As such, it is not anticipated that there will be any more than temporary disturbance to biodiversity, in line with the previously approved baseline.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Marine Licence Supporting Statement has been prepared by Fairhurst, on behalf of Able UK, to accompany a Marine Licence application for capital and maintenance dredging and disposal works at Able Seaton Port.
- 7.2 This Marine Licence Supporting Statement has identified a number of contributing factors in support of the proposal and illustrates a number of benefits to be derived from the granting a Marine Licence for the proposal. This Statement also sets out that, with appropriate mitigation, the Proposed Works will not result in any adverse impacts on the marine environment nor seascape of the area.
- 7.3 As such, Fairhurst considers that the principle of development is acceptable and the works are in accordance with policies of the MPS and the North East Marine Plan.

Aberdeen

Bristol

Dundee

Edinburgh

Elgin

Glasgow

Huddersfield

Inverness

Leeds

London

Newcastle

Sevenoaks

Taunton

Thurso

Watford

Westhill

www.fairhurst.co.uk



CIVIL ENGINEERING • STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING • TRANSPORTATION •
GEOTECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING • TRANSPORT PLANNING •
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT • LANDSCAPE & URBAN DESIGN • WATER
SERVICES • HEALTH & SAFETY • MINING LEGACY SPECIALISTS

FAIRHURST