

Stephen D Eades Esq  
Marinet  
Allington House  
Allington  
Chippenham  
Wiltshire SN14 6LN

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 3 July 2007

Dear Mr Eades,

### **MARINE MINERALS DREDGING – AREA 401/2**

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2007. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding. As you know, responsibility for marine minerals dredging proposals has now transferred from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the administration of these responsibilities has now transferred here from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The decision on the Government View (GV) application for Area 401/2, off the Norfolk coast, was issued on 11 April 2007 when a favourable decision was issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. A copy of that decision letter was sent to you on that date but please do let me know should you require further copies. The Secretary of State's reasons for approving the extraction of up to 2 million tonnes of marine sand and gravel per annum from that Area up to the end of 2013 are set out fully in that letter. While you will be disappointed at that outcome, I am sure you will have noted that the conditions annexed to the favourable GV provide for a full substantive review of the dredging to occur in 2010.

At the time of the 2010 review, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will be able to decide whether or not the dredging operations may continue beyond that date and, if so, under what terms and conditions.

A number of changes have been made to final version of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Natural Habitats (Extraction of Minerals by Marine Dredging) (England and Northern Ireland) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 1 May. One of these is a requirement for the Secretary of State to notify specified persons and organisations whenever a dredging proposal is submitted to him (either a new application or a variation to an existing permission) which is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and, thereby, requires the submission of an Environmental Statement – see regulation 12(5). Marinet will be one of these organisations and, accordingly, I can confirm that it will be notified whenever such a proposal is submitted.

There is no provision, however, in the new regulations for such notification of any dredging proposal that will not have a significant effect on the environment and which does not require the submission of an Environmental Statement. In those circumstances, whether in Area 401/2 or elsewhere, we will continue the previously established practice of consulting only appropriate consultation bodies who are key environmental advisers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Bayliss', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a faint dotted line that serves as a baseline for the text below.

**NIGEL BAYLISS**

**MARINE MINERALS CASEWORK ADVISER (Marine Environment Team)**