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Our ref: RMAR21
14 March 2007

Mr S. D Eades
MARINET
Allington House
Allington
Chippenham
Wiltshire SN14 6LN

Dear Mr Eades,

**Licence renewal of marine aggregate dredging Area 430 (East of Southwold) -
Scoping Report**

Thank you for your letter dated 20th January 2007. My apologies that I have not responded to your letter sooner.

Firstly, I would like to confirm that a copy of the above mentioned scoping report has been forwarded to Mr Patrick Gowen and that Mr Gowen is now on the list of consultees for all future correspondence.

In response to points 1 and 2 (requesting a full bathymetric survey and a wave model) a Coastal Impact Study (CIS) was conducted for the original EIA. This included: an assessment of the changes in wave refraction behaviour over the dredged area leading to changes in wave energy distribution, height and direction with impacts on the coast and sandbanks; and concluded that the gravel within the dredging area is virtually immobile and that dredging would not affect patterns of sand transport in the vicinity. The CIS assessed 'worst case' scenarios and changes to date are believed to be well within the scope of the assessment. As part of the new EIA the CIS will be reviewed by H R Wallingford (experts in marine physical processes) and compared against recent survey information (bathymetric survey of licence area acquired in 2006) and meteorological data. If the original study is shown to be not applicable, further work will be commissioned. However at this time it is considered that a full bathymetric study of the near shore sandbanks and a wave model will not be required.

A full record of changes to the profiles of the coastline since the original licence was granted (point 3) is not a requirement of the current Government View procedure and therefore will not be included in the scope of the EIA.

I can confirm that a full statement of the physical resource available at Area 430 and the changes that have occurred to this resource since the original licence was granted (point 4) will be included within the scope of the EIA.

I can confirm that a full statement of the extent of benthic knowledge recorded at Area 430 and its surroundings at the time of the application of the original licence (point 5) will be included within the scope of the EIA.





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In response to point 6 (request for current sampling of the benthic community to be cross-referenced to the data at the time of the original application) the EIA will include an assessment of pre-dredging and current biological survey data (acquired in 2006) cross-referencing data where appropriate.

A full and thorough examination of the ecological structure of the site (point 7) was undertaken by Marine Ecological Surveys in 2004. The assessment defined the extent of impacts of dredging and screening on benthic biological resources both within the dredged areas and in the surrounding deposits. The study looked at the impacts on: community composition, abundance and diversity, and the extent of the impact 'footprint', both within and out with of Area 430. The conclusions from this study combined with an assessment of the recently acquired biological samples (2006) will be used to inform the EIA. An assessment of the effects of dredging on species such as marine mammals will also be included.

I can confirm that the extent of knowledge of fish and shellfish recorded at Area 430 and its surroundings at the time of the original licence application (point 8), and an assessment of the impact of dredging on fish and shellfish (point 10) will be included in the EIA. A number of trawls were included in the recent biological survey (2006) in repetition and expansion of the 1994 baseline survey. This data will be used to inform the assessment. However, sampling of the fish and shellfish living in Area 430 throughout the full yearly cycle (point 9) is not a requirement of the Government View and therefore has not be included in the scope of the EIA.

With regards to point 11 (a full historical record of the use of near and offshore sandbanks by birds, marine mammals and elasmobranches), this is not within the scope of the EIA. However, an assessment of the current use of the region by birds, marine mammals and elasmobranches, based on publicly available information and the potential impacts of dredging on the aforementioned will be made.

I can confirm that your understanding of Table 5.1 is correct. A full bathymetric survey of the dredged site was undertaken in 2006. The findings of the survey, including an analysis of changes that have occurred since the original licence was granted, will be included in the EIA. Furthermore, the specification for the biological survey (2006) included the identification of any habitats which may be afforded protection under UK, European and International law. These will be identified and described along with all protected areas that are either currently designated or have been proposed as suitable for designation within and surrounding the licence area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Morton", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anna Morton

Project Manager

CC: Mr P Gowen