

Harwich Haven Authority acknowledges the importance of developing UK offshore renewable generation and is supportive of all initiatives that reduce carbon emissions and are aligned to net zero targets.

As the Statutory Harbour Authority and Trust Port our core remit is to provide safety of navigation to vessels using the waters within our 150 square mile jurisdiction area. Our jurisdiction covers a 12-mile approach to Harwich Harbour, the River Stour, and parts of the River Orwell. We are responsible for the conservancy of the main navigation channel into the Haven, which requires an ongoing maintenance dredging programme to maintain the depth required to accommodate the very largest and deepest container vessels in operation. We operate a 24/7, 365 day a year service to provide pilotage services to five port operators in the Haven, Port of Felixstowe, Navyard, Harwich International Port, Port of Mistley and the Port of Ipswich. The continuous, and uninterrupted flow, of vessels into the Port of Felixstowe is critical to UK trade, with approximately 40% of all containerised goods entering the UK via this gateway.

In the early Autumn, 2023 we completed a £130m large-scale project to deepen the navigational approach channel into Harwich Harbour to 16.0m below chart datum. The purpose of the project is to accommodate the ever-growing breed of Megamax vessels in operation that (400 metres with a draught of 17.3 metres) call at the Haven ports. With a deeper navigational channel, and new deeper berths at the Port of Felixstowe, we envisage the combined value proposition will attract many more shipping lines to use the Port of Felixstowe and therefore vessels arriving and departing the Haven will increase. The worldwide maritime industry trend for less ship movements but larger vessels carrying equivalent tonnage looks set to continue. The Haven trade gateway is critical to UK PLC and our pilotage services cannot be interrupted. Delayed or missed Megamax arrivals would cause significant cost implications to Harwich Haven Authority. The ports industry is highly competitive and dissatisfied shipping lines are highly likely to look for an alternative port, potentially in Europe, if they do not receive the service standards they require.

As a Trust Port we operate commercially but we do not have shareholders, which allows us to reinvest a percentage of our surplus profits back into the Haven for the benefit of stakeholders. We define a stakeholder as anyone that uses, or has an interest in, the Haven and/or our operations. Harwich Haven Authority acts as a custodian of the Haven, and we have responsibility to Protect, Conserve and Improve our area of jurisdiction.

We understand that regulatory bodies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency will have been included within your consultation. We would therefore echo any concerns they may have raised in relation to the legally protected and designated areas that exist within the Haven.

During development, construction and operation of the Fives Estuaries Offshore Wind we wish to be registered as an Interested Party and consulted with, including with regard to the below specific points:

Maintaining the safety of navigation and safe passage for ships in the Sunk area.

Maintaining the safety of navigation and safe passage for ships within Harwich Haven Authority harbour limits.

Maintaining the safety of navigation and safe passage for ships within the approaches Harwich Haven Authority harbour limits.

Maintaining the safety of navigation and safe passage for ships within adjacent waters to Harwich Haven Authority harbour limits.

Ensuring the safety and continued operability of pilot boarding and landing operations in the Sunk area.

Requiring protective measures within the DCO to ensure that the cable route is at a suitable depth to ensure future deep draught vessels can navigate the Sunk area. The cable (and any covering material e.g. rock armour) must be at least 22 metres below Chart Datum to allow future vessel with a draught of 20 metres.

Controlling development and project construction related marine operations to ensure that there are no concurrent Restricted Ability to Manoeuvrer (RAM) operations occurring in the Sunk area. This must include the other DCO cable projects in this arear; North Falls project and the National Grid Sea Link project.

Exclusion zone(s) must not be put in place in the Sunk area or channel that would restrict 24/7/365 vessel access requirements or pilot boarding operations etc.

Safety zone(s) must not be able to impede vessel traffic movements within the Sunk area or normal operations such as pilot boarding.

In the Sunk area, cable depth needs to consider that the world's largest vessels may anchor and dredge anchors in emergency scenario.

It must be considered that should a serious incident occur, there may be a significant irreversible environmental harm. As the risk of the worst credible outcome is not precisely calculable in advance, the Precautionary Principle alongside the ALARP principle must be used when considering navigational risk assessment.

All works within Harwich Haven Authority statutory harbour limits will require a Work License.