

Date: 09 October 2023
Our ref:
Your ref: TR030007



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam

NSIP Reference Name / Code: TR030007

Natural England's response to the Examiner's second round of Written Questions (ExQ2)

It is recognised that the current Ports NPS is now outdated and the Government are committed to review ([Review of the national policy statement for ports - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)). Review of the NPS will allow for more ambition to deliver on key environmental matters, allowing incorporation of targets as set out within the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) and overall to support the Government's ambition to recover nature. Natural England acknowledge and support the principles set out within 3.3.3 of the current NPS particularly those as relevant to our remit for the natural environment.

We recognise the development proposal to minimise where possible and mitigate for environmental impacts. As recognised through our pre-application and formal statutory advice we have encouraged the applicants to deliver further biodiversity enhancement, using principals under Biodiversity Net Gain, whilst also recognising this is not a mandatory requirement for NSIPs until 2025. We are aware that ABP have an organisational [Sustainability Strategy](#) and Natural England would welcome future engagement with the applicants to discuss further opportunities for how this development and any future developments align with the ambitions set out. We encourage the applicants to support local strategic opportunities wherever possible.

We welcome the off-site environmental enhancements which involve the improvement of an existing area of woodland known as 'Long Wood', which lies immediately to the east of the port estate, opposite the Port's East Gate as detailed in the Woodland Enhancement Management Plan (WEMP). We acknowledge that measures will be taken to enhance the ecology of the woodland which will consist of:

- Targeted removal of semi-mature tree and scrub to open up the canopy to encourage the development of a greater diversity of woodland ground flora;
- Creation of log and brush piles using felled material;
- All mature oak and ash trees will be retained, and;
- Installation of bird and bat boxes at suitable locations to provide additional nesting and roosting opportunities.

These measures will be accompanied along with a long-term programme of woodland management and monitoring.

We also acknowledge the changes that were made in the original scheme design which aimed to reduce the footprint on the surrounding environment in response to comments raised by consultees early on in the pre-application phase. In summary, the main changes to the scheme included:

- A reduction in the number of berths from four to three (removal of the berth closest to the intertidal);
- Orienting the berths in direction of tidal flows and away from existing infrastructure;
- A reduction in dredged material within the intertidal area.

We also acknowledge the environmental management best practice procedures that will be implemented by contractors during construction as outlined in the Chapter 3: Details of Project Construction and Operation of the Environmental Statement.

For any queries relating to the content of this letter please contact me using the details provided below.

Yours sincerely

J. McBride

Jay McBride
Natural England

Via email only: [REDACTED]