Eyemouth Harbour Trust

Eyemouth Harbour Pontoon Installation

Environmental Appraisal

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REVISIONS & APPROVALS

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBRIVATION	DEFINITION
CTV	Crew Transfer Vessel
EHT	Eyemouth Harbour Trust
HRA	Habitats Regulations Appraisal
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
km	Kilometres
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
m	Metre
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NMP	National Marine Plan
NNG	Neart na Gaoithe
PMF	Priority Marine Feature
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SHA	Statutory Harbour Authority
SPA	Special Protection Area
WFD	Water Framework Directive

1 INTRODUCTION

Eyemouth Harbour Trust (EHT) as the Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) for Eyemouth Harbour intends to install a new berthing pontoon to support survey vessels and Crew Transfer Vessels (CTV) associated with windfarm operations. The proposed pontoon will be 49.9 m long, 3 m wide and has a freeboard of 800 mm. The proposed pontoon is similar to a previously licensed pontoon for the Neart na Gaoithe (NNG) windfarm operations (Marine Licence MS-00009078), located in close proximity to the new proposed pontoon. This Environmental Appraisal provides supporting information in support of the construction Marine Licence Application under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010.

Figure 1-1 shows the proposed location of the pontoon within the Eyemouth Statutory Harbour Authority limits.

Figure 1-1 Eyemouth Harbour limit and location of proposed pontoon

2 PONTOON INSTALLATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodology

This appraisal covers the installation of a pontoon at the Eyemouth harbour to aid vessels working on windfarm operations. The pontoon will be attached to the existing quayside via brackets. All pontoon components will be transported to Eyemouth Harbour by land and lowered into the water to minimise interaction with the seabed. No piling is necessary to carry out the proposed operations, and any drilling for attaching the pontoon brackets will be carried out at low tide to minimise any underwater noise. As seen in Figure 1-1, the location of proposed installation is in a sheltered quayside area, entirely within Eyemouth Harbour, and as such removed from the wider marine environment.

The purpose of the new pontoon is to provide a new, safer, overnight berthing arrangement away from the quay wall for survey vessels and CTVs. As the pontons provide a replacement berthing arrangement, there will not be an increase in vessel traffic relative to current harbour use.

The pontoon will have an overall length of 49.9 m, width of 3 m and a freeboard of 800 m (Figure 2-1). The installation is expected to take approximately 14 days and will begin in March 2026.

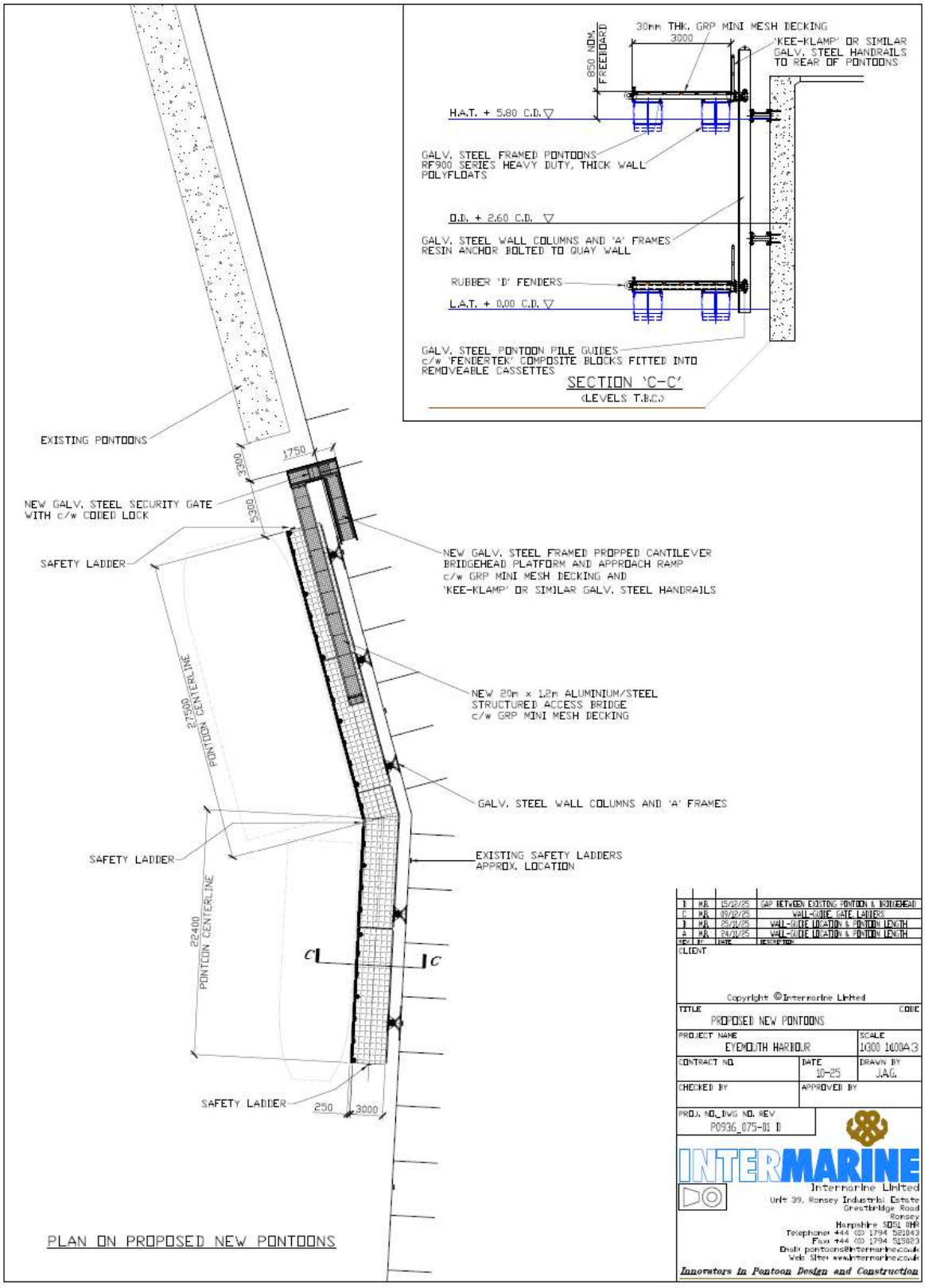

Figure 2-1 Proposed Pontoon Layout

2.2 Consideration of Policies

An assessment of the proposed pontoon installation against the objectives of Scotland's National Marine Plan (NMP) (Scottish Government, 2015) is detailed in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 NMP policies relevant to the proposed operations (Scottish Government, 2015)

POLICY	TITLE	DETAILS
GEN-1	General planning and principle	*Development and use of the marine area should be consistent with the NMP, ensuring activities are undertaken in a sustainable manner that protects and enhances Scotland's natural and historic marine environment.* As discussed in Section 3, due to the temporary and limited nature of the work, so no adverse effects on the environment are anticipated.
GEN-2	Economic Benefit	*Sustainable development and use which provides economic benefit to Scottish communities is encouraged when consistent with the objectives and policies of this Plan.* The purpose of the pontoon installation is to support development of windfarms which is consistent with the NMP objectives and provides a safer alternative to vessel berthing.
GEN-4	Co-existence	*Where conflict over space or resource exists or arises, marine planning should encourage initiatives between sectors to resolve conflict and take account of agreements where this is applicable.* As discussed in Section 3, no impacts on other users of the sea are expected.
GEN-5	Climate change	*Marine planners and decision makers should seek to facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy. They should consider ways to reduce emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gasses.* The pontoon will facilitate safe berthing for offshore windfarm operation and maintenance vessels, enabling the operation and growth of the offshore wind industry, supporting the economic growth and net zero ambitions of both the Scottish and UK Governments.
GEN-7	Landscape/seascape	*Marine planners and decision makers should ensure that development and use of the marine environment take seascape, landscape and visual impacts into account.* As discussed in Section 3, the proposed operations will have a minimal visual impact consistent with existing harbour infrastructure.
GEN-8	Coastal Process and Flooding	*Developments and activities in the marine environment should be resilient to coastal change and flooding, and not have unacceptable adverse impact on coastal processes or contribute to coastal flooding.*

POLICY	TITLE	DETAILS
		The design of the pontoon is fit for purpose and takes into account the current sea conditions and storm/flooding impacts.
GEN-9	Natural heritage	*Development and use of the marine environment must:* • *Comply with legal requirements for protected areas and protected species;* • *Not result in significant impact on the national status of Priority Marine Features (PMFs); and* • *Protect and where appropriate, enhance, the health of the marine area.* As discussed in Section 3, the potential impacts on protected sites and species within the area have been considered however, no significant impacts on designated sites or PMF are anticipated.
GEN-10	Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)	*Opportunities to reduce the introduction of INNS to a minimum or proactively improve the practice of existing activity should be taken when decisions are being made.* As discussed in Section 3, no INNS have been found in the area around Eyemouth Harbour and the installation of the pontoon will not increase vessel traffic. Therefore the introduction and spread of INNS because of installation is considered unlikely.
GEN-12	Water quality and resource	*Developments and activities should not result in a deterioration of the quality of waters to which the Water Framework Directive (WFD), Marine Strategy Framework Directive or other related Directives apply.* As discussed in Section 3, no potential impacts on the waterbody status have been identified from the proposed pontoon installation.
GEN-13	Noise	*Development and use in the marine environment should avoid significant adverse effects of man-made noise and vibration, especially on species sensitive to such effects.* As discussed in Section 3, there is no expected increase in underwater noise generation therefore, no significant adverse effects on sensitive species.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Potential Impacts

The installation and operation of the pontoon may cause temporary, short-live and small scale disturbance to the marine environment and other harbour users due to construction noise and increased suspended sediment concentration from the small scale seabed contact. The potential impact pathways and receptors have are discussed in Table 3-1.

As the installation is anticipated to take approximately two weeks and conducted primarily using land-based plant, and will not lead to increased operation vessel traffic, most impacts will be temporary. Furthermore, no piling is required and the surrounding harbour environment is sheltered with low-energy hydrodynamic environment. Bottom disturbance will be minimal as the pontoon will attach to the existing quayside via brackets, reducing seabed interaction. Potential impacts from decommissioning of the pontoon is considered analogous with, or likely less than, those of the installation.

Table 3-1 Potential Impacts Resulting from Pontoon Installation Activities

PHASE	IMPACT SOURCE	IMPACT PATHWAY	CONSIDERATION	CONSIDERED FURTHER?
Construction	Construction noise	Disturbance from underwater or in-air noise	No piling will take place and the drilling required to attach the pontoon brackets to the existing quayside will be temporary and short-lived in nature and carried out at low tide to avoid underwater noise. The site of the pontoon is sheltered in the inner harbour so not exposed to the wider marine environment. Any impacts are therefore likely to be highly localised.	No
	Vessel and plant presence	Disturbance from physical vessel or land-based plant presence	The pontoon installation will be carried out using land-based plant, and as such any in-water working will be limited. No construction vessels will be required and as such, no impacts from vessels entering the harbour will be introduced. The construction activities take place in a busy commercial harbour, and as such any impacts from the land-based plant or workers installation the pontoon will be highly localised and short-lived.	No
	Vessel and plant presence	Other Sea Users	Vessels will not be required to install the pontoon. EHT is the SHA for the proposed pontoon area and will issue appropriate local navigation warnings to make local sea users aware of the dredging activities. EHT will manage the local vessel traffic to ensure impacts on other harbour users are minimised during the works. No significant impacts are expected on other sea users.	No
	Vessel and plant presence	INNS	Installation of the pontoon will not increase vessel traffic to the harbour and all construction components will be brough to site on land. Only new materials will be used in the installation. As no INNS have been recorded in vicinity of Eyemouth Harbour, the likelihood of any introduction or spread of INNS is considered low.	No

PHASE	IMPACT SOURCE	IMPACT PATHWAY	CONSIDERATION	CONSIDERED FURTHER?
	Seabed contact during installation	Water Quality/Suspended Sediment	There is minimal contact with the seabed as the pontoon will be attached to the existing quayside via brackets, further reducing seabed interaction. Therefore, there will be no significant impacts on water quality and suspended sediment.	No
	Seabed contact during installation	Disturbance of benthic species	Minimal ecological interaction is expected from installation of the pontoon as the seabed footprint is small and habitat sensitivity in the area is low as it is within a busy commercial harbour where dredging has previously been carried out to maintain the navigable depth. Due to the previous dredging, no sensitive or high value benthic species or PMF are expected to be present in the area of works.	
Operational	Vessel presence/traffic	Disturbance on marine environment or harbour users caused by operational vessel traffic	The purpose of the new pontoon is to provide a new, safer, overnight berthing arrangement away from the quay wall for survey vessels and CTVs. As the pontons provide a replacement berthing arrangement, there will not be an increase in vessel traffic relative to current harbour use. The change in the berthing arrangement will also not lead to an increased risk of introduction or spread of INNS as the operation will be analogous to the current uses.	No
		Introduction or spread of INNS		No

3.2 Designated Sites

This Section will provide the information required to support the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) and Marine Protected Area (MPA) assessment processes. As such, the proposed pontoon installation activities will be assessed as to whether they are likely to constitute a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on a European Site, in line with the HRA process, or if they are capable of affecting (other than insignificantly), on a Nature Conservation MPA.

LSE on European sites which include Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), as well as Ramsar sites, will be determined. In addition to this, the potential impact on Nature Conservation MPAs and designated seal haul-outs will also be assessed as per sections 82 and 117 of the Marine (Scotland) 2010 Act.

The following criteria has been used to screen designated sites for the assessment of LSE or assessment of whether the pontoon installation is capable of affecting (other than insignificantly) on a Nature Conservation MPA.

- SACs, MPAs and Marine conservation Zones (MCZs) with cetaceans as qualifying features within 50 km of the pontoon;
- SACs, MPAs and MCZs with harbour seal interests within 50 km of the pontoon and breeding grey seal within 20 km of the pontoon;
- Designated seal haul-outs or grey seal breeding sites that overlap with or are located within 500 m of the pontoon;
- SACs or MCZs with otter interests that overlap with or are located within 500 m of the pontoon;
- SPAs with birds as qualifying features that overlap with or are located within 2 km of the pontoon; and
- SACs, MPAs and MCZs with seabed / benthic protected features within 2 km of the pontoon.

The designated sites within the vicinity of the Eyemouth Harbour are shown in Figure 3-1. The likely impacts have been assessed within Table 3-2, taking the proposed pathways in Table 3-1 in to account.

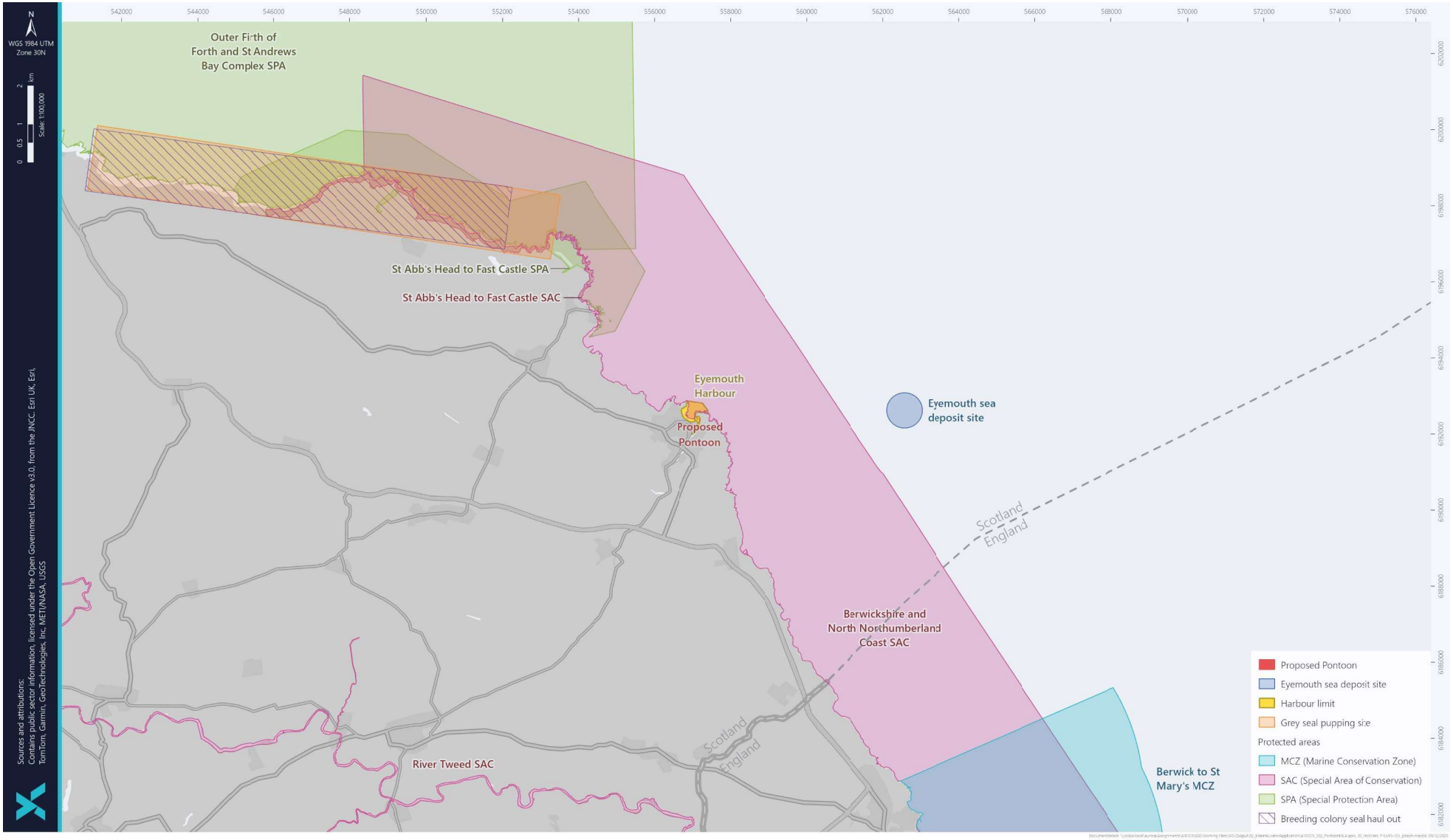

Figure 3-1 Designated Sites in the vicinity of Eyemouth Harbour

Table 3-2 Designated Sites within the vicinity of the Eyemouth Harbour

SITE	DESIGNATED FEATURES	POTENTIAL IMPACTS	DISTANCE	REQUIREMENT FOR FURTHER ASSESSMENT
Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2024)	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide; • Large shallow inlets and bays; • Reefs; and • Submerged or partially submerged sea caves	Minimal contact with the seabed is expected from proposed operations as the pontoon is being attached to the quayside via brackets. The SAC boundary does not overlap the proposed pontoon installation location, and is sheltered by the harbour approach and wall. As contact with seabed is minimal, and the location is sheltered and isolated from the SAC, any sedimentation impacts are limited and temporary. There is no LSE on the benthic features of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC as result of the pontoon installation.	<1 km, but not overlapping	No LSE anticipated
	• Grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*).	Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC is within the potential connectivity range for grey seal. The proposed pontoon installation will take place within an existing operation harbour, sheltered from the SAC by the harbour entrance and wall. No significant underwater noise generation expected from pontoon installation as the pontoon will be		

SITE	DESIGNATED FEATURES	POTENTIAL IMPACTS	DISTANCE	REQUIREMENT FOR FURTHER ASSESSMENT
		attached to the existing harbour wall with brackets, and the installation will be carried out from land. There will be no increase in vessel traffic as a result of construction or operation of the pontoon. No LSE on the grey seal feature of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC is anticipated.		

3.3 WFD Considerations

Consideration of WFD objectives was assessed to confirm whether the pontoon installation will cause, or contribute to, the deterioration of the current stratus of the water body or jeopardise the water body achieving '*good*' status. The current water body status for the Wheat Stack to Berwick-Upon-Tweed is '*good*'. The WFD assessment considers the following key receptors that contribute to the waterbody status:

- Hydrology and morphology;
- Biology – sensitive habitats and species;
- Water quality;
- Protected areas; and
- INNS.

Table 3-3 provides the consideration of each of these receptors. The assessment concludes that the pontoon installation is not capable of affecting the status of the Wheat Stack to Berwick-Upon-Tweed waterbody.

Table 3-3 WFD Assessment

KEY RECEPTOR	COMMENT	POTENTIAL FOR AFFECTING THE WATERBODY STATUS
Hydrology and-morphology	No hydro-morphological impacts are expected from pontoon installation due to the brackets being installed into the quay and minimal contact with the seabed.	No
Biology – habitats and fish	The location of the pontoon is not classified as a highly sensitive area and has recently been subject to dredging. Installation of the pontoon will involve minimal contact with the seabed therefore, impacts on habitats and fish is negligible.	No
Water Quality	There is minimal contact with the seabed as the pontoon will be attached to the existing quayside via brackets, further reducing seabed interaction. No impacts on water quality from the proposal are anticipated (see Table 3-1).	No
Protected Areas	As detailed in Table 3-2 the only site potentially impacted by the pontoon is the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC which is in close proximity but does not overlap. The installation of the pontoon will not affect the benthic protected features as there is minimal seabed contact and there will not be an increase in noise or vessel traffic in turn, no impacts on seals. No LSE on the site is anticipated.	No
INNS	Installation of the pontoon will not increase vessel traffic during construction or operation of the pontoon, and as such the likelihood of any introduction or spread of INNS is considered low.	No

4 CONCLUSION

The proposed pontoon installation at Eyemouth Harbour will be short-lived and any impacts will be highly localised. No significant impacts from any potential impact pathways are predicted following the assessment presented in Table 3-1. Only the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC is within the connectivity range of the pontoon installation, but due to the sheltered nature of the installation location and the temporary nature of the activity, no LSE on the site is anticipated.

As the EHT is the SHA for the area where pontoon installation will take place, it is able to manage the impacts on other harbour users through alternative berthing arrangements during the works and local notifications to marine users.

Due to the lack of environmental impacts from the pontoon installation, no mitigation is not proposed, but all waste generated will be covered under the installation contractor's EP01 Waste Management Procedure and EP02 Environmental Management Procedure, and no waste will be released not the marine environment.

REFERENCES

JNCC (2024). Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC. Available online at: https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0017072.

Scottish Government (2015). Scotland's National Marine Plan A Single Framework for Managing Our Seas. Published by The Scottish Government, March 2015. Available online at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-marine-plan/.