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Haventus – Ardersier Port Site Visit of 11 August 2023

Attendees:

- Ben Leyshon NatureScot
- David Patterson NatureScot
- Nick Everett NatureScot
- Jethro Watson The Highland Council
- Campbell Fleming Haventus
- Jonathan Milne Haventus
- Gregor Ogilvie Haventus
- Campbell Stewart EnviroCentre
- Hugh Addlesee EnviroCentre

Summary of Discussions

Legacy Site Restoration

Spit Geomorphology and Saltmarsh restoration options were discussed. Haventus in combination with EnviroCentre will prepare a plan for enacting the potential interventions discussed on site. This plan will then be issued to NatureScot and The Highland Council for review and approval.

Marine Dredging License

Discussions were held on site and imagery shared (included below where relevant) related to the dredge to -12.9mCD currently under consultation. The relevant topics from Nature Scots response are as follows:

1. What is being sought through a -12.9mCD dredge and relevance to the 2018 EIA;
2. Loss of the predator free island;
3. Dredging Approach/Timing including Winter dredge protocol;
4. Stability and Coastal Processes effects interruption of sand supply and loss of island;
5. Dredge depth sought;
6. Stock pile encroachment on SSSI/SPA habitats; and
7. Seal haul-out areas in relation to the proposed development.

1. What is sought compared to 2018 EIA

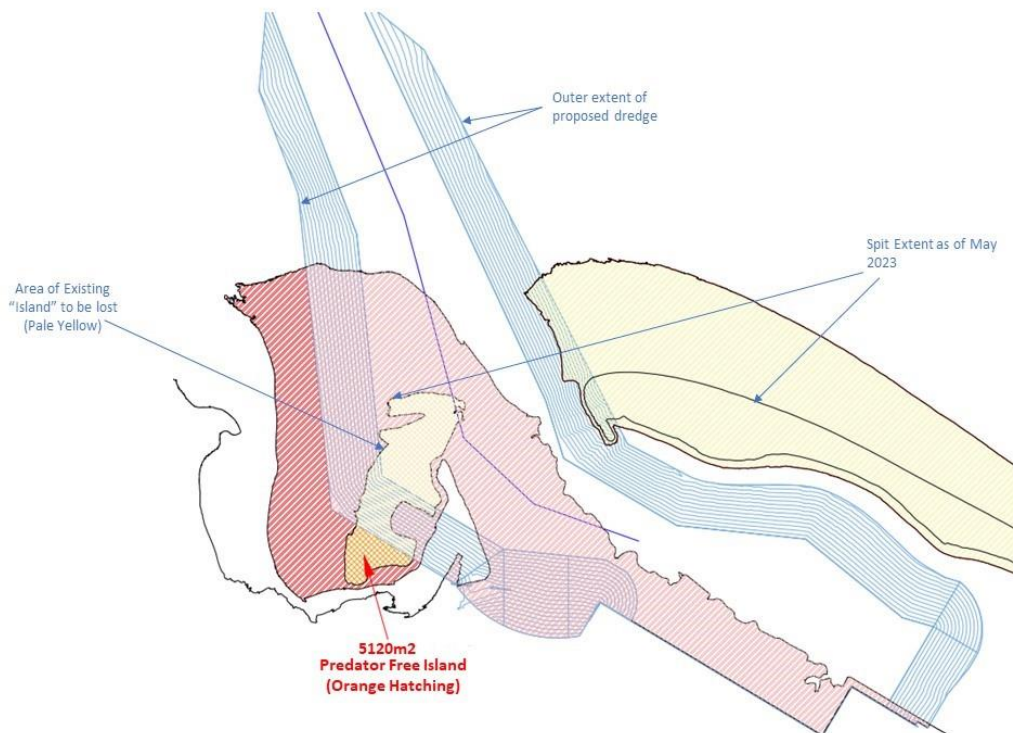
- Increase in dredge depth to -12.9mCD; and
- Increase in associated footprint using a 1:6 stable side slope;
- Operations are entirely consistent to 2018;
- Project description entirely consistent (*“port related services for energy related uses. This will include including marine channel dredging, quay wall realignment, repair and maintenance uses, erection of offices, industrial and storage buildings, the delivery and export of port related cargo and associated infrastructure”*)
- No modification to the consented operational activities described in 2018;
- Integration of Floating Wind Turbines on site is *not* proposed as part of the application;
- Holistic longer-term plan is being developed through the coming year to include the following:
 - Creation of a small -16.5m Wind Turbine Integration dredge pocket at the quayside;
 - Modification to future quay wall shape; and

- Other slope modifications and slope protection within the harbour confines.

This longer-term plan will be consulted upon at the appropriate time, to gain input at concept design stage and ultimately be screened against the EIA Regulations. We envisage this longer-term plan for site development (over and above the 2018 project description) will be subject to the full EIA process.

2. Loss of Predator Free Island

- The 'island' on the western margin of the proposed -12.9mCD dredge will not be lost in its entirety as shown in image below;



- A 5,000m² plus Island will remain (around the size of a football pitch);
- In addition to this island, features are being considered for the lagoon area on the south/southwest margin of the site. Plans for this area will be developed and discussed with NatureScot but are expected to include:
 - Reconnection of the brackish lagoon currently present to the sea so this is a more saline feature;
 - Creation of island features;
 - Retention of this area throughout the life of the site.

3. Dredging Approach (Method/Timing)

- A large cutter suction dredger (as described in the 2018 EIA) will be brought to site and used to carry out the dredging required over a summer campaign. This (as was the case in the 2018 EIA) will be a 24/7 summer operation with appropriate mitigation consistent with the original dredge consent for a large dredger (e.g. the summertime dredge will be through the night);
- It is expected that the dredge can be completed in one summer campaign but two summers have been allowed for within the proposed application
- The larger cutter suction dredger will not be used in winter;

- The small dredger or plough could be used during the winter under the existing winter dredge protocol, but it is not envisaged this will be required given the proposed summer dredge campaign described above;

4. Stability and Coastal Processes

- The Arup design is based on a conservative stable 1:6 dredge slope;
- The creation of the deeper channel is also expected to trap sand moving from east to west along the outer edge of the spit;
- Any sand accumulating in the newly formed channel will be dredged or ploughed onto the western margin of the new dredge channel so that the sand supply to the 'island' and intertidal areas to the west of the channel (SPA/SSSI) is maintained (not cut off). This management activity is confirmed and will be put in place as part of the maintenance dredge programme;

5. Dredge Depth

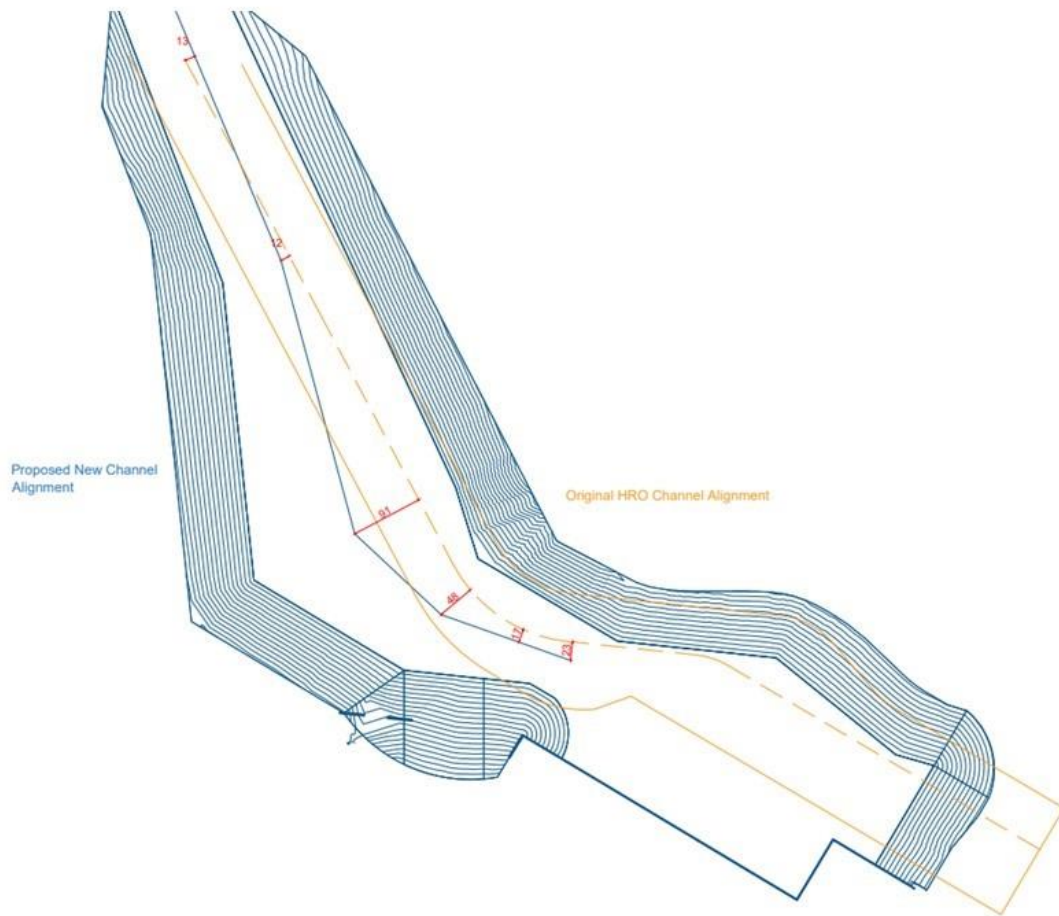
- There are no plans or proposals to take the access channel or entirety of the inner harbour to 16.5m in the future;
- A small dredge pocket within the confines of the harbour could be brought forward in the future for Wind Turbine Integration at quayside (see Item C above);
- In addition to the above points it is noted that 'Area C' from the consented dredge is not expected to be taken forward and will be committed to an area for additional bio diversity benefit.

6. Sand Stockpile Encroachment onto SSSI

- As observed on site sand has encroached onto the very edge of the SSSI;
- This is currently being excavated back to remove that overspill;
- Future stockpile management will ensure that this does not occur again;
- The bund that will remain on the western and northern margins of the sand stockpile will be shaped so as to screen any plant operating on the sand stockpile from the adjacent intertidal areas;

7. Seal Haul-out Areas

- Compared to the previous channel centreline, the centreline of the proposed navigable channel (that vessels will use) moves only slightly to the West, as shown in the sketch below (approximately 91m maximum difference westward);



- This closest point of the currently proposed channel centreline (vessel route), to the westernmost edge of the intertidal areas to the west, is approximately 410m.