

## **CONSIDERATION OF SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL MARINE PLAN**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This document considers the proposed application for a dredging licence for the area adjacent to Lochaline Mine Jetty in relation to the Scotland National Marine Plan. In this regard relevant policies are considered together with relevant commentary within the plan.

### **2.0 Policy and Commentary Relevant to the Development**

Relevant policies contained within Scotland National Marine Plan in relation to the proposal are as follows:

*GEN 1 General planning principle: There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and use of the marine environment when consistent with the policies and objectives of this Plan.*

*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.*

*GEN 3 Social benefit: Sustainable development and use which provides social benefits is encouraged when consistent with the objectives and policies of this Plan.*

*GEN 5 Climate change: Marine planners and decision makers must act in the way best calculated to mitigate, and adapt to, climate change.*

*GEN 9 Natural heritage: Development and use of the marine environment must:*

- (a) Comply with legal requirements for protected areas and protected species.*
- (b) Not result in significant impact on the national status of Priority Marine Features.*
- (c) Protect and, where appropriate, enhance the health of the marine area.*

*TRANSPORT 4: Maintenance, repair, and sustainable development of port and harbour facilities in support of other sectors should be supported in marine planning and decision making.*

In terms of commentary Scotland National Marine Plan goes on to state:

In paragraph 13.13:

*Dredging is an essential activity to maintain existing shipping channels, establish safe approaches to new ports or open up routes to old ports. Dredged material may be disposed of at licensed marine disposal sites or used for alternative purposes such as land reclamation or coastal nourishment, if suitable, to minimise seabed disposal. Licensed areas may change – normally as a result of disuse, monitoring information or the need for sites in additional locations. The consideration of both dredged navigation channels and disposal sites in marine planning and decision making is important to support safe access to ports and the disposal of dredged material in appropriate locations.*

and in paragraph 13.20 in respect of aggregates and mineral transshipment:

*Ports and harbours play an important role in transportation of aggregate material. In Scotland, the most notable is Glensanda Port which services Glensanda Quarry on the Morvern peninsula. It contributes significantly to the Scottish economy, with a business turnover of approximately £40 million and it employs 200 people. As the largest hard rock quarry in Europe, it currently transports approximately 6 million tonnes per annum with expansion to 15 million tonnes per annum anticipated. Being a coastal quarry with no land access, it relies entirely on the marine environment for transportation of aggregate, supplies and personnel.*

### **3.0 Consideration of the Development**

Lochaline Silica Sand Mine is a remote mining facility located adjacent to Lochaline village on the Morvern Peninsula. The Mine employs 32 people directly and is a vital employer in the locality. All silica sand from the mine is despatched by boat. This is the only environmental and economically feasible method of despatching silica sand from the mine and the continued operation of the jetty facility at the mine is critical to the continued operation of the site.

The proposal is for a limited dredging operation to remove what is effectively silica sand which has washed out from the mine stocking facilities over a significant period of time to allow the continued operation of the jetty at the site.

The area of dredge is not designated but the Loch Sunart to the Sound of Jura Marine Protected Area and The Inner Hebrides and the Minches special Area of Conservation are situated circa 700m to the south. Given the potential to reuse the material in roadway maintenance within the mine it is considered that the Best Practical Environmental Option is to bring the material using a long reach excavator, dry and reuse it in the mine. This will limit the disturbance to the sea bed to the absolute minimum.

The dredging operation is therefore consistent with the aims and policies of Scotlands Marine Plan, providing for continued sustainable economic development and employment at the remote west Highland village of Lochaline whilst limiting any environmental impacts associated with the proposed dredging operation.