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Date: 15 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

SCREENING OPINION UNDER THE MARINE WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

Thank you for your screening opinion request dated 20 April 2022 in regards to the proposed redevelopment of the ferry terminal, including land reclamation, construction of new piers and a breakwater and removal of old infrastructure at Gourock Ferry Terminal, Gourock (“the Proposed Works”).

The Scottish Ministers consider the Proposed Works to fall under paragraph 10(g) of schedule 2 of The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (“the 2017 MW Regulations”), with the Proposed Works meeting the corresponding threshold described in column 2 of schedule 2. Consequently, the Scottish Ministers are obliged to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the Proposed Works are, or are not, an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) project under the 2017 MW Regulations.

Under regulation 10(5) of the 2017 MW Regulations, the Scottish Ministers have consulted with NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (“SEPA”), Inverclyde Council and Historic Environment Scotland (“HES”) as to their view on whether the Proposed Works are an EIA project. Copies of the consultation responses received are attached for your review (at Appendix I). Inverclyde Council have not been able to provide a response to date.

When making a determination as to whether schedule 2 works are an EIA project, the Scottish Ministers must provide their reasons in a written statement, taking into account such the selection criteria set out in schedule 3 of the 2017 MW Regulations as are relevant to the Proposed Works. In this regard, the Scottish Ministers have considered the following:

Characteristics of the works

The Proposed Works consists of the worst case scenario for the required upgrade of the existing infrastructure at Gourock ferry terminal, which is now at the end of its serviceable life. This covers a total area of approximately 4.1 hectares ("ha"), an increase to the existing infrastructure of 1.9ha.

The Proposed Works consist of land reclamation bound by a quay wall, approximately 530 metres ("m") in length, constructed using a combination of combi and sheet piling offset from the existing quay wall. The area will be infilled using approximately 100,000 cubic metres of imported granular material and will be capped with concrete and geotextile. If the seabed within the area designated for land reclamation is deemed unsuitable, dredging will be carried out to prepare the seabed.

The existing linkspan, passenger boat steps and disused boat steps will be removed prior to the construction of the open piled finger pier, adjacent linkspan, bank seat and lifting dolphins. The open piled finger pier will be approximately 150m long and 20m wide constructed using steel tube piles with a concrete deck and adjacent concrete linkspan support structure for the new linkspan to be installed on. The piles will likely be installed through a combination of vibratory and impact hammers. An additional passenger only service berth will be positioned to the north of the open piled finger pier. This berth will consist of either a 70m long floating pontoon with a gangway or an additional finger pier with gangways. If chosen, the floating pontoon and gangway will be constructed off-site and floated in.

The proposed rubble mound breakwater will be constructed on the north of the site to provide shelter for the new berths and will be approximately 170m long. Wave modelling of the final pier design will determine whether the breakwater is required, however it has been considered as a worst case scenario.

It is estimated that the total timescale of the Proposed Works will be two years and will take place over two 12 month phases.

Location of the works

The Proposed Works are located at the existing Gourock ferry terminal site. The Proposed Works are not located within any designated sites, however are in close proximity to the Inner Clyde Special Protection Area ("SPA"), Inner Clyde Ramsar and Inner Clyde Site of Special Scientific Interest.

NatureScot advised that based on the sufficient distance between the Proposed Works and designated sites, the Proposed Works will not have any likely significant effect on the designated features of the Inner Clyde SPA or any other international designation.

NatureScot also advised that its main concerns are due to the underwater noise from the piling and construction activities and the potential for these to disturb marine mammals. However NatureScot agree with the suggested standard mitigation within the screening report and are aware of the proposal to submit a Construction Environmental Management Plan ("CEMP") as well as an EPS licence application, if applicable. The Scottish Ministers advise the applicant to engage with NatureScot to further discuss mitigation options as plans are finalised, to ensure all required information is included to support any marine licence application.

NatureScot are of the view that an EIA is not required for the Proposed Works and that adequate mitigation measures can be identified and implemented through the marine

licensing process to ensure that there will not be a significant effect on natural heritage receptors from the Proposed Works.

HES advised that the Proposed Works will not have any significant impacts upon scheduled monuments in its vicinity, such as Kempock Stone, Inverkip. HES further advised that maritime archaeology should be assessed. This can be done through the marine licensing process.

Characteristics of the potential impact

SEPA advised that there is unlikely to be a significant increase in risk of flooding elsewhere due to the land reclamation as it is unlikely to impact on maximum tidal levels in the area. SEPA requested the opportunity to review the wave modelling carried out to inform the design of the Proposed Works, however this can be done through the marine licence application. SEPA further advised that in respect to its interests, assuming standard environmental best practises are implemented as detailed in the screening report, the Proposed Works are unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore it does not consider an EIA to be required. Standard environmental best practises can be addressed through the marine licensing process.

The Scottish Ministers are content that the embedded mitigation within the Proposed Works, in particular the mitigation regarding disturbance to marine mammals, is sufficient to ensure there will be no significant impacts on the environment. The Scottish Ministers are content that this can be secured through the marine licensing process.

Conclusion

In view of the findings above, the Scottish Ministers are of the opinion that the Proposed Works are not an EIA project under the 2017 MW Regulations and, therefore, an EIA is not required to be carried out in respect of the Proposed Works.

If you increase, alter or extend the Proposed Works, you are advised to contact Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team again to confirm if the screening opinion is still valid.

A copy of the screening opinion has been forwarded to Inverclyde Council planning department. The screening opinion has also been made publicly available through the [Marine Scotland Information website](#).

If you require any further assistance or advice on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Hamish Wright

Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team