

Marine Licence Applications

Report No 74. 29 July 2023

This report covers applications submitted since 1 Apr 2023 for work in the Solent not included in previous reports. It excludes applications for burial of human remains at sea.

1. Applications open for consultation

Case ref: MLA/2023/00220

Ocean Village Marina - Pontoon Pile replacement

Submitted 23 May 2023 by Marina Developments Ltd. Consultation closes 24 Aug 2023

Project background

MDL Marinas, owner and operator of Ocean Village Marina, seeks to obtain a marine licence to allow for the removal and direct replacement of piles which are being used to currently secure the pontoons to the seabed. The piles are subject to ongoing condition checks and the approach/ licence will ensure that any damaged or end of life piles are identified within an ongoing programme of maintenance work to ensure the marina remains safe and viable for use. With just over 100 piles present on site this application requests an allowance to replace a proportion of these per year on a rolling programme.

To minimise impacts and avoid undue disturbances to the marina operations, the work is planned to be spread over the next 10 years. It is proposed that the licence permits a maximum of 30 piles to be replaced in the first year to address the current immediate need, with a maximum of 15 piles per year thereafter to a total of 110 piles permitted across the 10 year licence period.

It is considered that the individual piles or pile failures could potentially be addressed over an extended period of time via the self service/fast track approach of licencing however, it has been decided by the applicant to seek a licence covering the maintenance activity for a 10 year period on the basis that this will provide certainty to the regulator and flexibility to the applicant to undertake proactive maintenance works in the most cost and time efficient manner.

2. Applications submitted but not yet open to consultation

2.1

Case ref: MLA/2023/00235

Project AIDA – Marine Soundscape recording experiment, University of Southampton.

Submitted 30 May 2023 by Southampton University

Project background

Project AIDA is an acoustic monitoring project managed by an acoustic research team from the University of Southampton, based at the National Oceanography Centre.

There is a growing awareness of the harm noise pollution can have for marine habitats. Quantification of noise emission levels and noise sources is critical for management of coastal regions, and prediction of biological response to anthropogenic activity, which is increasing [in] the marine environment.

Project AIDA aims to obtain a database of ship traffic noise, biological noise and ambient noise to comprehend the underwater soundscape in waters off East Wittering. The project will collect data from a single deployed seabed moored buoy with an acoustic recorder and hydrophone attached.

The buoy will be stationed offshore East Wittering 477500, 93300 OSGB (50.7340, -0.9032; Lat, Long). The soundscape will be recorded continuously for up to 8 months, with periodic pauses for battery replacement and data removal.

Amalgamation of the collected database will provide insight to the variations in noise production in this aqueous environment, and create a stepping stone for work which aims to automate the identification process of acoustic signatures of ocean noise sources. Automating this process will allow faster acoustic file annotation so more time can be spent focusing on how to manage noise levels and sources, rather than the laborious task of identifying the noise source from messy datasets. The output of the project is a dataset aimed at training sophisticated artificial intelligence models to discriminate between ocean noise sources.

2.2

Case ref: MLA/2023/00237

Western Docks (Capital Dredge) Widening Project

Submitted 3 May 2023 by ABP

Project background

The Port of Southampton, owned and operated by Associated British Ports (ABP), is one of the UK's busiest and most successful deep-water sea ports. Large ships are fixtures of both the cruise and container markets and regularly visit the Port of Southampton. When approaching and leaving the Southampton Container Terminal (SCT), the container vessels have to manoeuvre in a narrow channel through the Western Docks whilst passing large cruise vessels berthed at the Mayflower, Horizon and City Cruise Terminals.

ABP Southampton is proposing to widen the channel to enable container ships to safely manoeuvre and transit whilst Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) bunkering of cruise vessels is taking place in the Western Docks. The capital dredge works will provide an increased passing distance between container vessels transiting the channel through the Western Docks and those cruise vessels berthed alongside which will allow energy to dissipate without causing navigational safety risks and will reduce the potential for interaction with vessels berthed at the Cruise Terminals. The widening of the channel will also facilitate the initiation of container vessels turn on approach and entry to the Upper Swinging Ground in order to improve safety margins. This proposal is to be known as the Western Docks Widening Project (also referred to as the 'proposed works').

Further details on the background and need for the project are provided in Section 2 of the attached Environmental Appraisal.

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