

Aberdeen Harbour Expansion Project
Review of 2015 Environmental Statement

This document has been produced to support marine licence applications made in October 2019 relating to the Aberdeen Harbour Expansion Project (AHEP). The vast majority of the project is unchanged from that consented under the existing marine licences. In 2018, factors including the delay of the start to the blasting programme, the presence of seals in the mitigation zone and adverse weather conditions have limited the amount of rock removed by blasting to date. Therefore, changes to the blasting methodology are necessary to allow the construction of the harbour to be completed. The proposed changes comprise an increase in the duration over which blasting is permitted to take place and an increase in the size of charges to be used, as well as an extension to the overall construction programme.

The table below lists each chapter of the 2015 AHEP Environmental Statement (ES) and states whether additional assessment is required relating to the changes described above, with justification. For those chapters where additional assessment is required, this is presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) (October 2019) submitted with the marine licence applications.

ES chapter No.	ES chapter title	Additional assessment required?	Justification
VOLUME 2: ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT			
Section 1: Introduction and Background			
1	Introduction to the Proposed Development	No	This chapter introduces the project and lists the contents of the ES. No updates are required.
2	Site Selection and Alternatives	No	The site selection took place prior to the ES being produced. As the project is under construction, there is no requirement to revisit the site selection.
3	Description of the Development	Yes	Many aspects of this chapter remain unchanged. The changes proposed in the 2019 applications are described in Section 2.6 of the EIAR.
4	Planning and Legislation	Yes	This chapter describes the legislation applicable to the AHEP. Where changes to legislation have come into force since the 2015 ES was produced, these are described in Section 3 of the EIAR.
5	Environmental Impact Assessment Process	No	The process described in this chapter has been used to assess the effects in the EIAR. No updates are required.

ES chapter No.	ES chapter title	Additional assessment required?	Justification
Section 2: Physical Environment			
6	Marine Physical Environment	No	<p>This chapter was supported by numerical models to inform likely changes on waves, tides and suspended sediments during construction and operation. Outputs were used to underpin assessment of the impacts of the AHEP on biological receptors and on the Nigg Bay SSSI.</p> <p>There will be no change to the location or design parameters of the already consented works as a result of the changes proposed in the 2019 applications. This includes no increase in the dredge area or volume. There will be no changes to the nature of the infrastructure to be constructed and positioned within the consented works site. Shoreline profiles will remain as originally planned and consented. Consequently, the required changes are highly unlikely to result in significant alterations to the seabed bathymetry, wave and tidal regimes, sediment transport and erosion or accretion processes over and above the assessed and permitted impacts and so no additional assessment is required.</p>
7	Marine Water and Sediment Quality	No	<p>This chapter was supported by water quality and sediment plume modelling and monitoring.</p> <p>There will be no change to the location or design parameters of the already consented works as a result of the changes proposed in the 2019 applications. This includes no increase in the dredge area or volume. There will be no changes to the nature of the infrastructure to be constructed and positioned within the consented works site. Consequently, the required changes are highly unlikely to result in significant alterations to sediment disturbance, suspended sediment levels, contaminant levels or water and sediment circulation patterns and so no additional assessment is required.</p>
8	Flood Risk and Surface Water	No	<p>This chapter was supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. There will be no change to the location or design parameters of the already consented works as a result of the changes proposed in the 2019 applications. As such, the required changes are highly unlikely to result in increased flood risk, so no additional assessment is required.</p>
9	Ground Conditions and Contamination	No	<p>There will be no change to the location or design parameters of the already consented works as a result of the changes proposed in the 2019 applications. As such, the required changes are highly unlikely to result in increased risk to ground conditions and contamination, so no additional assessment is required.</p>

ES chapter No.	ES chapter title	Additional assessment required?	Justification
Section 3: Biological Environment			
10	Nature Conservation	No	This chapter describes the designated conservation sites that could be affected by the AHEP. The chapter does not contain an impact assessment: the assessment of potential effects on these sites is considered in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Volume 4 of the ES). As stated below, the HRA has been updated to consider the changes proposed in the 2019 applications, as presented in Section 10 of the EIAR. No changes are required to this chapter.
11	Terrestrial Ecology	No	The changes proposed in the 2019 applications will not result in any increased loss of terrestrial habitat or associated species over and above that already assessed. The volume of material to be removed by dredging and blasting remains the same so that the number of associated vessel and plant movements will not alter and will not impinge on terrestrial habitats any more than already assessed. Additional effects arising from the changes to the blasting methodology on terrestrial ecology are thus not anticipated. Key species, including otter, are already subject to licence compliance monitoring. No additional assessment is required.
12	Benthic Ecology	No	The changes proposed in the 2019 applications are not predicted to increase the area of benthic habitat loss or the quantities of sediments that will be disturbed, and will not increase the risk of releasing sediment contaminants over and above that already assessed. It is already accepted that benthic habitat within Nigg Bay will mostly be removed or severely modified due to the AHEP and will continue to be disturbed during its operation due to maintenance dredging and vessel movements. Sensitivity assessments referenced in the 2015 ES indicated that the benthic receptors present are not sensitive to noise or that the effect is not relevant (effects of noise on crustaceans and cephalopods were addressed in Chapter 13 of the ES: Fish and Shellfish Ecology). Against the wider change in benthic conditions due to the capital dredge and the insensitivity of benthic receptors to noise, additional effects on benthic ecology are not expected and so no additional assessment is required.
13	Fish and Shellfish Ecology	Yes	Fish and shellfish include high value receptors in the area around Nigg Bay that are considered to be comparatively sensitive to changes in underwater noise. The existing ES for the consented AHEP, and subsequent stakeholder views, strongly supported the need

ES chapter No.	ES chapter title	Additional assessment required?	Justification
			to introduce mitigation to partition adverse levels of noise arising from blasting from fish and shellfish and as a consequence, the Construction Environmental Management Document (CEMD) is heavily influenced by the need to protect these species from this activity in compliance with condition 3.2.4 of the current Construction Marine Licence. Because of these aspects, additional assessment has been carried out on the effects of the changes proposed in the 2019 applications on fish and shellfish during construction of the AHEP. The assessment is presented in Section 5 of the EIAR.
14	Marine Ornithology	Yes	There is the potential for marine birds to be affected by the changes proposed in the 2019 applications during the construction phase, so an additional assessment has been carried out in Section 7 of the EIAR.
15	Marine Mammals	Yes	Marine mammals could be affected by the changes proposed in the 2019 applications during the construction phase, so an additional assessment has been carried out in Section 6 of the EIAR.
Section 4: Human Environment			
16	Socio-economics	No	The changes proposed in the 2019 applications will not change the overall project design or operation of the harbour and so economic effects of the AHEP will not be altered. The design and footprint of the AHEP remains unchanged so that there will be no significant changes to the availability of paths and routes, wildlife watching, cruise tourism and amenity use over and above that already assessed in the 2015 ES. Consequently, no additional assessment is required.
17	Seascape, Landscape and Visual Effects	No	The changes proposed in the 2019 applications will not change the design of the AHEP and so no change to visual impacts will occur over and above those already assessed and accepted, so no additional assessment is required.
18	Traffic and Transport	No	The changes proposed in the 2019 applications will not alter the build design and therefore none of the operational traffic and transport impacts of the port will be altered. During construction there is mitigation for construction traffic, including the requirement of a transport and traffic plan in the Marine Licence and Harbour Revision Order. No additional assessment is required.

ES chapter No.	ES chapter title	Additional assessment required?	Justification
19	Air Quality	No	Overall vehicle transit to and from the site will not increase due the changes proposed in the 2019 applications. The changes will not require more plant machinery to be used. Similarly, dust from construction activities will not increase as the volume of material moved will remain the same, except the removal rate will be slower. No additional assessment is required.
20	Terrestrial Noise and Vibration	No	Chapter 13 of the approved CEMD describes the mitigation and monitoring that has been put in place in compliance with condition 3.2.4 of the current Construction Marine Licence. This includes remote noise and vibration monitoring during blasting at agreed locations, and trigger levels that should not be exceeded, as well as the imposition of temporal restriction on noisy activities. Airborne noise and vibration arising from the AHEP works is monitored at agreed locations, and exceedances above agreed threshold levels are isolated and identified. From analysis of noise records and community survey responses during blasting in 2018, blasting noise has not been identified as a disturbance factor. The increase in size and duration of explosive charges could increase levels of airborne noise although there are already control measures which restrict associated effects including limiting blasting to daylight hours and to Monday – Saturday only. The required changes are unlikely to result in significant alterations to terrestrial noise and vibration, so no additional assessment is required.
21	Shipping and Navigation	No	It is not foreseen that the extension of the overall construction programme will increase the number of construction vessels, as the volume of material to be moved remains the same. However, all construction vessels will continue to be managed under the existing mitigation as set out in the 2015 ES, Marine Licences and CEMD. No additional assessment is required.
22	Commercial Fishing	No	The assessment in the 2015 ES was based upon commercial fishing being displaced from the harbour during construction and operation. Therefore, the changes proposed in the 2019 applications should not alter or have any further impact on commercial fishing, so no additional assessment is required.
23	Other Users	No	The assessment in the 2015 ES was based upon other users being displaced from the harbour during construction and operation. Therefore, the changes proposed in the 2019

ES chapter No.	ES chapter title	Additional assessment required?	Justification
			applications should not alter or have any further impact on other users, so no additional assessment is required.
24	Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	No	The changes proposed in the 2019 applications will not alter the volume of material to be removed, the location or subsequently change the risk to archaeological features, so no additional assessment is required.
VOLUME 4: HABITATS REGULATIONS APPRAISAL		Yes	There is the potential for the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment to be altered by the changes proposed in the 2019 applications, so the HRA has been updated and is presented in Section 10 of the EIAR.