

## **SOUTH COAST DREDGING/FISHING LIAISON COMMITTEE**

### **Issues Update Q.3 2016**

#### **Introduction**

At the South Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee meeting that took place in February 2016, it was agreed to trial an alternative way of sharing relevant information relating to marine aggregate dredging activities and the commercial fishing sector. This would look to mirror the approach employed for the equivalent East Coast liaison arrangements since June 2012.

Both sectors agreed that while the local focus remained important, the lines of communication and contacts now existed to allow bi-lateral discussions to take place should any specific liaison issues arise. This had increasingly resulted in the liaison committee meetings becoming a forum for more general updates.

As an alternative, a single annual liaison meeting would now take place in the winter. This would then be supplemented by a written report that provided an update of issues to be circulated electronically, in place of the additional summer liaison committee meetings that had traditionally occurred.

This document represents the first issues update that has been produced, and its usefulness and effectiveness as a replacement for the winter liaison committee meeting will continue to be reflected upon at the next meeting of the South Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee to take place during January/February 2017.

If you have any thoughts on the usefulness or relevance of the information contained within this update, or have any suggestions as to how the liaison arrangements between the marine aggregate and commercial fishing sectors can be improved we would welcome your comments. These can be sent to [bmapa@mineralproducts.org](mailto:bmapa@mineralproducts.org)

#### **Update on aggregate dredging and prospecting applications**

The current status of marine aggregate dredging application areas in the South coast/East Channel regions are detailed in the document that accompanies this update (Current status of South coast/East Channel application areas, August 2016).

### **Fisheries Liaison Arrangements**

The marine aggregate industry, in conjunction with The Crown Estate, continues to fund an electronic reporting arrangement for marine aggregate specific issues through the Kingfisher Fortnightly Bulletin service.

This service commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012, and mirrors the equivalent services already in place for oil & gas, renewable energy and offshore cables – allowing information on changes to active dredging zones, commencement of works on new licence areas, notification of survey works and navigation obstructions to be flagged across the wider fishing sector.

The bulletins can be accessed via the link below, and individuals can also register to receive the published updates via email.

<http://www.seafish.org.uk/industry-support/kingfisher-information-services/kingfisher-bulletins>

As part of the wider licence renewal programme that has been taking place, the established and long standing and largely informal operational code of practice that covers the interaction and communication between marine aggregate operations and fisheries interests was updated in July 2012. The updated document is now formally endorsed by the Marine Management Organisation and The Crown Estate, and is directly referenced in the conditions attached to all marine licences relating to marine aggregate extraction issued after this date.

An updated version of this guidance was adopted in May 2015 to cover the notifications required in advance of the various survey works that may be associated with marine aggregate extraction. An additional section now covers survey operations, and explains the type of surveys that may be undertaken, the risks these may pose to fishing activities and the steps to be taken by marine aggregate operators to minimise any interactions with existing fishing activities. This includes the requirement for a minimum four weeks' notice for surveys taking place outside of active dredging zones unless there are exceptional circumstances. In these instances, additional site specific liaison will be necessary.

[http://www.bmapa.org/documents/Marine\\_Aggregate\\_Fisheries\\_Liaison\\_CoP\\_with\\_survey\\_notifications.pdf](http://www.bmapa.org/documents/Marine_Aggregate_Fisheries_Liaison_CoP_with_survey_notifications.pdf)

### **Regional Active Dredge Area charts**

The 28<sup>th</sup> issue of the Regional Active Dredge Area charts (dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016) were published on the BMAPA and Crown Estate websites in August. These provide a 6-monthly snap-shot of the extent of the area where dredging is permitted (enforced by 'black box' Electronic Monitoring System data), and show changes in the permitted area that have occurred since the previous issue.

Electronic versions of the latest active dredge area charts are available via the following link: [http://www.bmapa.org/issues/other\\_sea\\_users.php](http://www.bmapa.org/issues/other_sea_users.php)

Laminated copies of the charts have been directly circulated to local fisheries interests by the marine aggregate sector. Further copies of these charts can be requested by contacting [bmapa@mineralproducts.org](mailto:bmapa@mineralproducts.org)

The 29<sup>th</sup> issue of the charts will be published in early February 2017 (to be dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017).

### **Annual 'Area Involved' Report**

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual 'Area Involved' report was published by BMAPA and Crown Estate in October 2015. This reports the area of seabed licensed and dredged for marine aggregates during 2014 at both national and regional scales.

The 18<sup>th</sup> annual report (reporting the area of seabed licensed and dredged during 2015) is currently being printed, and a PDF version of the latest report will be available via the following link shortly:

[http://www.bmapa.org/issues/area\\_dredged.php](http://www.bmapa.org/issues/area_dredged.php)

### **Regional Monitoring**

Following the successful completion of the Regional Seabed Monitoring Programme (RSMP) in 2015, which collected baseline seabed sampling data for all marine aggregate licence areas across five dredging regions (including the South coast), industry have been in discussion with MMO and their advisors to establish a blue print to allow the regional approach to be applied to all standard monitoring surveys (seabed sampling and bathymetric/side scan sonar) throughout the lifetime of a typical 15 year marine licence.

Standard monitoring surveys are typically required in years 2/7/12 (bathymetry) and years 4/9/14 (bathymetry, side scan sonar and seabed sampling) to fit with the rolling five year substantive review cycle that takes place throughout each licence term.

In addition, the conditions attached to a marine licence may also require additional monitoring surveys to address site specific sensitivities identified through the licence application process. Where these arise, they will continue to be delivered on a site specific basis.

The new co-ordinated approach will allow industry to commission a single survey to deliver the standard monitoring requirements across all marine aggregate licence areas in a region. In turn, this ensures more consistent monitoring data is collected to help inform the compliance requirements for marine aggregate licences. This coordinated approach will also reduce the potential conflicts with other marine users, including commercial fishing interests, by reducing the number of monitoring surveys that need to take place in each region.

Discussions have also included the need to stagger the timing of the five regional surveys to allow the time and effort to be spread more evenly rather than being condensed into a single year – as occurred with the original RSMP.

Following an evidence and risk review, the South coast region has been identified by the MMO as the first regional survey that needs to be repeated in 2017, with the other regional surveys to follow in subsequent years. As a consequence, the marine aggregate industry has begun the planning process to undertake a year 4 seabed sampling and bathymetric/side scan sonar survey across all current licence areas in the South region next year.

The regional approach to delivering monitoring surveys should also ensure that the notification and liaison requirements established in the Marine Aggregates Fisheries Liaison Code of Practice can be delivered more effectively.

**Next meeting of the South Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee**

The next meeting of the South Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee will take place in Chichester during January/February 2017.

The arrangements for this meeting, together with a draft agenda, will be circulated at least 4 weeks in advance.

The production of this Issues Update has been coordinated by the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association.

British Marine Aggregate Producers Association  
Gillingham House  
38-44 Gillingham Street  
London  
SW1V 1HU

Tel: 0207 963 8000

Email: [bmapa@mineralproducts.org](mailto:bmapa@mineralproducts.org)

www: [www.bmapa.org](http://www.bmapa.org)

