

Press release: Dover dredging application decision

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has approved an application from Dover Harbour Board (DHB) to carry out aggregate dredging at Area 521, known as the South Goodwin Sands.

The marine licence granted by the MMO gives DHB permission to extract up to 3 million tonnes of aggregate by trailer suction hopper dredging, which is proposed to be undertaken between September 2019 and September 2020. This follows an application [DHB originally made to the MMO in May 2016](#). The aggregate is required to provide fill material for the wider Dover Western Docks Revival project.

The decision follows extensive public consultation, during which over 1,300 specific representations from the public were received. Issues raised during this consultation were taken into account by the applicant, the MMO and its primary advisers in determining the application.

The MMO believes it was appropriate to grant the licence because it is satisfied, on the basis of the evidence provided, the assessments that have been undertaken and on advice from its primary advisers, that sufficient measures were proposed to protect the marine environment, prevent interference with legitimate users of the seas and mitigate impacts to any other relevant matters. These measures have been captured in the marine licence conditions.

John Tuckett, Chief Executive of the Marine Management Organisation, said:

“We understand the strength of feeling surrounding this development, both for and against. As a regulator that has to balance and manage competing uses of the marine environment we accept that not everyone will be happy with the decisions we make.

“However we are entirely impartial in our marine licencing process and consider and are satisfied that this decision is based on the best available evidence and is proportionate and complies with relevant policy.”

The MMO is committed to transparency and helping people to access the evidence on which it bases its decisions. Details about this case, including the MMO’s decision report and Marine Conservation Zone assessment are available online via the public register of marine licence applications (case reference MLA/2016/00227) and via a [page on the MMO’s website](#).

Companies wanting to carry out commercial aggregate extraction may also need other permissions, such as from the Crown Estate as the owners of the seabed. More information is also available on the [Crown Estate’s website](#).

It is now up to DHB to decide whether they proceed with the dredging project.