APPENDIX 4 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DIBDEN BAY

Introduction

A4.1 This appendix provides some background information on the Port of Southampton’s strategic land reserve known as Dibden Bay.

Location, Size and Ownership

A4.2 Dibden Bay is an area of reclaimed land of approximately 240 hectares located between Marchwood Seamounting Centre to the north-west and Hythe Village Marina to the south-east. The site has a frontage onto the River Test of approximately 2.1 kilometres. The site is fully owned by ABP.

A4.3 Other land within the vicinity of Dibden Bay is also owned by ABP. A plan showing ABP’s overall land ownership in the vicinity of Dibden Bay is shown at Appendix 2 of this written statement.

A4.4 The reclaimed land at Dibden Bay, and some of ABP’s other land holdings in the vicinity of Dibden Bay are located within New Forest District outside of the National Park. ABP’s remaining land holdings in this location are within the New Forest National Park.

Site History and Use

A4.5 The then partly reclaimed Dibden Bay was purchased with the sanction of the Government of the day by ABP’s predecessor, the nationalised British Transport Docks Board, in the 1960’s. The reclaim was created by the provision of engineered enclosed gravel bunds and the deposition within them of very large quantities of material dredged from the marine channel providing access to the Port of Southampton.

A4.6 Since its creation the reclaim has largely been used for grazing on a series of temporary licences. The use of the site for these purposes has been allowed by ABP pending the site’s development for Port and related purposes.

Site Designations

A4.7 The reclaimed land at Dibden Bay is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (designated in April 2002) and the majority of the site is also designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The foreshore area is a designated SSSI, RAMSAR and Special Protection Area (SPA). These designations are shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

A4.8 The Dibden Bay site was originally included within the Draft National Park Boundary put forward by the then Countryside Agency (now Natural England) but was removed from the boundary by the Secretary of State following a public inquiry in 2002.

A4.9 The Dibden Bay site is port operational land as defined by sections 263 and 264 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
A4.10 The draft Port Security (Port of Southampton) Designation Order 2013 includes the Dibden Bay site within the jurisdiction of the Southampton Port Security Authority.

Planning History

A4.11 Whilst there have been various consent applications for different activities on parts of the site since its creation, the major application of relevance to the site was the Dibden Terminal proposals in 2001.

A4.12 The Dibden Terminal proposals (which were drawn up against the policy and background position occurring in the years up to 2001) sought the development of Dibden Bay as an extension to the commercial port of Southampton. The proposals included facilities for the handling of deep-sea container, ro-ro and aggregate cargoes, associated road and rail connections and various nature conservation mitigation and compensation proposals.

A4.13 Consent for these proposals was sought via a Harbour Revision Order, a Transport and Works Act Order and a series of planning applications. These applications were collectively considered at a 13-month public inquiry in 2001/2002. If applied for today, the Dibden Terminal proposals would have constituted a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

A4.14 Consents for the various Dibden Terminal applications were refused by the relevant Secretaries of State in April 2004.

A4.15 Since the refusal of the Dibden Terminal proposals, the Dibden Bay site has remained in the ownership of ABP and has remained identified as the strategic land reserve for the expansion of the Port of Southampton. The site was identified as such in the Port of Southampton Master Plan 2009 – 2030.