



North Sunderland Harbour

Safety Management System

Section 4 – Conservancy & Dredging

Introduction

This document sets out the policy that North Sunderland Harbour Commissioners wish to be adopted to govern the conduct of hydrography, port surveys and dredging in the port.

Along with the rest of the SMS, it will be reviewed annually by the Harbour Master and will need to be reapproved by the Commissioners in the event of significant changes.

Hydrography

Every port needs a baseline of hydrographic surveys to establish trends and to identify areas in the port that require dredging attention.

It is a basic function of a Statutory Harbour Authority to maintain the safety of navigation within its port area.

In order for this to be achieved, a full port hydrographic sonar survey will be conducted in 2024, 2025 & 2026 to establish silting and scouring trends and to enable meaningful comparisons with historical survey data.

The content of these surveys will then be communicated to the Hydrographic Office and to port users.

The periodicity of future surveys will be assessed in 2026, but it is expected that they should only be required every 2 years or when any significant alterations are made to the port that may affect the depth of water available.

Dredging:

Section 31(1) of the 1931 North Sunderland Harbour Act empowers the Harbour Authority to dredge, remove and sell the dredged materials from within the Statutory Harbour Authority Area – provided that permission to do so has been granted by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)(as was the Board of Trade).

The 1931 Act empowers the Harbour Authority to “dredge, scour and excavate any portion of the foreshore and the bed of the sea necessary to secure a sufficient waterway” in order to keep the channel and the port open.

Understanding trends in siltation or scouring from the hydrographic surveys will allow the Harbour Master to establish the requirement for dredging in the harbour and its approaches.

If a dredge campaign were deemed necessary, the Harbour Master will first be required to explain the requirement for approval and funding by the Commissioners.

The Harbour Master will then need to apply for a maintenance dredge licence from the MMO using the powers of the 1931 Act.

Upon granting of the MMO licence, the Harbour Master will then need to approach no less than 2 companies for a quote for the completion and execution of the dredge work.

Dredge work in the harbour will almost certainly not be suitable for a large dredge ship, more likely a jack-up barge with a back hoe or even land digger over successive low waters. The details will need to be finalised once the location of the dredge requirement is known.