

Meeting: Harbour Committee

Date: 8th June 2022

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Developing Commercial Fishing Capacity at Brixham Harbour

When does the decision need to be implemented? 14th June 2022

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Brixham Harbour is uniquely placed geographically by way of immediate access to some of the richest fishing grounds in Europe. Tor Bay Harbour has seen significant success within the industry and now boasts to be the largest commercial fishing port in England, Wales and Northern Ireland when measured by value of catch landed. Having recently been awarded the 'Port of the Year 2022' by industry members and Fishing News readers, Brixham Harbour is increasingly the 'market of choice' for fish products landed along the entirety of the south coast and beyond.
- 1.2 Brixham and its success has driven the requirement for expansion over the past ten years and it is now reaching a critical point for Torbay Council, as the port owner and operator. Brixham has reached capacity in terms of volumes of fish that can be accommodated from both seaward and overland. Due to the level of proven service delivery, Brixham has seen an increase in customer base nationally and therefore our auctioneers have raised their business and infrastructure needs in order to capture the potential increase in volume. The Tor Bay Harbour Masterplan has consistently indicated the need for further port infrastructure in response to the growth and success of the fishing industry in Brixham. We are at a key decision point in relation to expansion if the local economy is to benefit from the opportunities presented by the UK's transition to an independent coastal state, combined with a lack of clear competition regionally.

- 1.3 On the 21st February 2019 the Council unanimously agreed to support the principle of a capital infrastructure investment scheme to expand the fabric of the commercial fishing port at Brixham harbour, and the Director of Place was instructed to prepare a detailed business case including all available grant funding opportunities (ref: decision 180/19).
- 1.4 Preparatory wave modelling, environmental studies and ground condition bore-holes were all undertaken in preparation for a Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 1 bid in 2021. Initial consultations were also held with statutory consultees and local stakeholders.
- 1.5 Unfortunately, the Levelling Up Funding Round 1 was unsuccessful but feedback from the funders was positive, however the project could not be taken forward. In December 2021, a review of the proposed project and potential alternatives was undertaken.
- 1.6 Local feedback on the bid was mixed but focus was centred around objections from Brixham Yacht Club and some local residents, linked to encroachment of port operations into Oxen Cove. These views were expressed despite the consistent strategic objective to expand the harbour estate into this space, contained within the original and subsequent versions of the Port Masterplan. Objections were focussed on the plans which showed an increase in capacity for the movement of articulated lorries and a perceived increase in road traffic. Also, the plans did raise legitimate potential conflict over freehold title, given the area of proposed land reclamation.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 To seek approval from the Harbour Committee to develop commercial fishing capacity at Brixham Harbour in line with the strategic vision set out in the 'Tor Bay Harbour Port Masterplan' and for the Harbour Committee to recommend to Cabinet that the Council submit a bid into the Levelling Up Round 2 fund, in support of this outcome.
- 2.2 Expansion of Brixham's commercial fishing infrastructure will contribute to the following Council themes:
 - a. **Thriving people.** Commercial fishing in Torbay already supports around 600 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs; the proposed expansion will support up to 150 additional direct and 450 indirect FTE employment opportunities with an outreach for further potential growth nationally.
 - b. **Thriving economy.** The expansion of the commercial port will facilitate approximately £5m pa growth in the value of fish and shellfish landed in Brixham. This growth is expected to reach £20m within 5 years. It will also provide a new quayside area of 4500m² for the siting of an extended fishmarket facility to take the extra capacity. It will also provide additional quay space for the smaller distribution vehicles, operated by the fish merchants, thus deconflicting with the lorry park and easing the present congestion.
 - c. **Council fit for the future.** The Council (Tor Bay Harbour Authority) will benefit from increased revenue from additional fish toll income, which should

continue to grow over the next 5 years. This will allow the Harbour Authority to rebuild its reserve fund and address the growing cost of maintaining existing port infrastructure. The additional space will improve efficiency and safety for the landing of vessels and therefore facilitate an improved and safer service delivery that will invariably encourage further landings from sea.

d. **Tackling poverty and deprivation.** The project will directly provide an additional £21m pa Gross Value Added (GVA) into Torbay - an area of recognised coastal deprivation. This funding and the project outputs will be capacity builder for future funding opportunities in order to facilitate employment within areas of deprivation. An example of this is the recent Merchant Naval Welfare Board £2 million fund to support the maritime sphere in areas of mental health and the ability to provide work in areas such as ours.

2.3 The proposed expansion has already been agreed in principle by the Council, through the well-established Port Masterplan and the previous submission of a funding bid into Levelling Up Round 1. This scheme also has the support of the local MPs and the Heart of the South West LEP but it cannot be achieved without external grant funding.

2.4 In December 2020 the Government announced that a £100m fund to “revive the British fishing industry” would be made available ‘imminently’ and this fund has recently been launched. It is expected that the fisheries structural fund will provide further opportunities for external grant funding, which may well be related to future projects at Brixham harbour.

2.5 National Alignment with Joint Fisheries Statement

a. A draft Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) has been published in order to set the direction of fisheries management as required by the Fisheries Act 2020 this is the key framework that is replacing the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). This statement sets out the high-level policies that will guide fisheries over the next 5 to 10 years. Consultation closed in April 2022 and the final JFS will be published in November 2022

b. As its first ambition the draft JFS seeks to protect fish stocks. This project does not go against this ambition as the extension to the fish market is to land, grade and sell fish for and on behalf of their customers. This extension does not facilitate additional targeting of species within the catching sector other than encourage the sale of catch already designated within the Total Allowable Catch as set within the quota system.

c. The draft JFS also seeks to reduce the effects of fishing on the marine and coastal environment. This project will set Brixham as the lead landing facility and service provider for the sale of fish in England and Wales. As a focused centre the control and enforcement of the catching sector is better placed to be effective.

d. A further aim of the JFS is to have a modern, resilient and environmentally responsible industry. The industry is attempting to reduce its impact on the environment by way of trialling alternative methods of fishing for example the changing of trawl beams to the new sum wing method. A full integration of

sustainable projects will be included in the Levelling Up bid and future bids for grant funding.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That the Harbour Committee approve plans to develop commercial fishing capacity at Brixham Harbour, as set out in Appendix 2 (Plan B), in line with the strategic vision set out in the 'Tor Bay Harbour Port Masterplan'.
- 3.2 That the Harbour Committee recommend to Cabinet the expansion of port infrastructure to develop commercial fishing capacity at Brixham Harbour, as set out in Appendix 2 (Plan B), and that the Council submit a bid into the Levelling Up Round 2 fund, in support of this outcome.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Expansion of port infrastructure at Brixham Harbour - Original Levelling Up Bid Round 1, Option 1 (Plan A)

Appendix 2 - Expansion of port infrastructure at Brixham Harbour, Option 2 (Plan B)

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brixham harbour is the largest commercial fishing port in England, Wales and Northern Ireland when measured by value of catch landed. With initial total value in 2011 of £25 million in comparison to £43 million in 2021 and projected figures of £48 million for 2022 and £55 million in 2027. It is quite clear the market share will continue to grow, in this vein due to the high level of service activity centred at Brixham, but this will only happen with further investment.
- 1.2 The uplift in allowable catch along the south coast of England in 2021, recommended by International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), could see up to 20% greater volume of landed product (approximately 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes pa), worth an estimated £5m pa.
- 1.3 The transition to an independent coastal state from 2021 is realising significant uplifts in landings through Brixham by both volume and value.
- 1.5 Brixham has effectively reached capacity in terms of ability to service vessels. Additional alongside berthing space is also a requirement but does not form part of this proposal, but future developments and funding will facilitate future quay designs for both the fishing industry and other maritime spheres.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 There are 3 options currently under consideration:
 - a. **Do nothing (retain the status quo).** This option will not deliver additional capacity to the Bay's commercial fishing industry, which will mean that Brixham will be unable to land the additional catch allowances from either sea or overland. This option will push our fishers and related tenants to look for areas to relocate in order to realise their growth potential within the sector. This is not a recommendation
 - b. **Expand the port infrastructure and resubmit the Levelling Up Round 1 bid (Plan A)** This option will deliver the benefits outlined in the previous reports prior to the LUF Round 1 bid and a land-bridge linking the fishmarket area to Oxen Cove. This bid was unsuccessful and although it provided a good strategic solution, in line with the strategic vision set out in the 'Tor Bay Harbour Port Masterplan', the tight timelines associated with the bid would not allow the Harbour Authority the opportunity to consider and overcome objections received from Brixham Yacht Club. Diagram 1 below sets out the original bid.

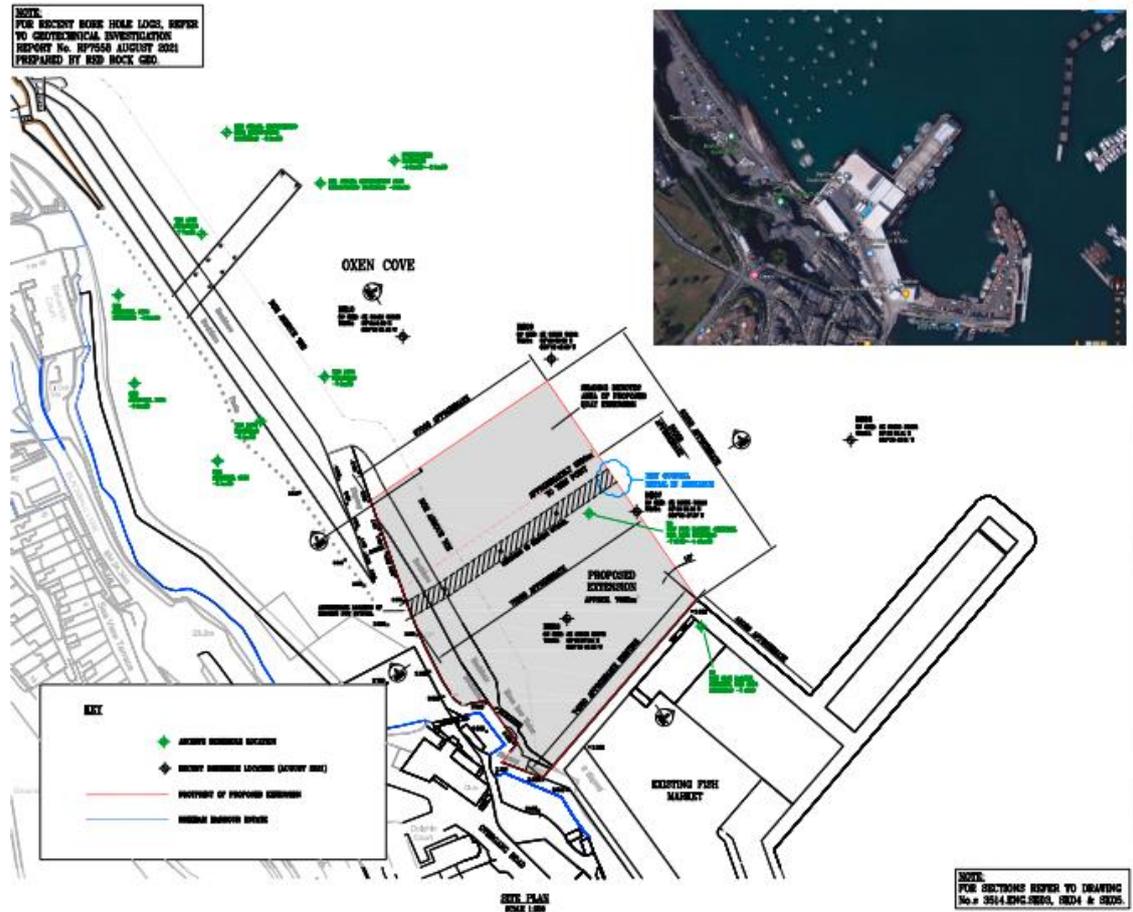


Diagram 1

c. Expand the port infrastructure at Brixham Harbour (Plan B) (the recommendation of this report.)

This plan is a compromise on the original LUF Round 1 bid as there is no conflict or areas for conflict with local neighbouring landowners or title holders. The main focus on the previous bid in comparison to this is that there is no through road (land-bridge) as detailed in Diagram 1/Option 1. There has been firm resistance in the perceived project and its focus on articulated lorries. This option will aim to create a lip and access to the fish market for the smaller vehicles used by buyers and normally the partial cause of congestion within the present lorry parking area.

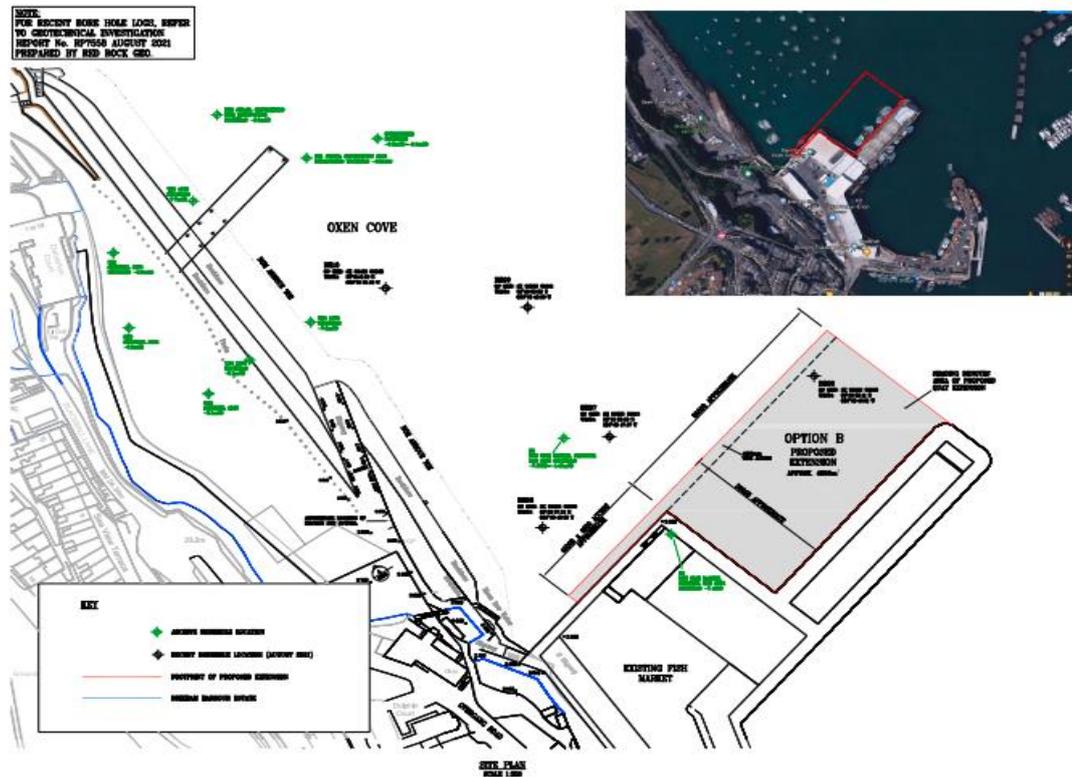


Diagram 2

Notes

- i. Initial discussions with TDA have highlighted that this option in principle would be more cost effective however with the ever-increasing cost of building materials we may not see savings as high as before.
- ii. The floor space provided is 4500 m² and will provide a market with a capacity of 4000m² if the present cuttle market remains. This will be costed however due to the time constraints it is recommended that any amalgamation of the old cuttle market can be attempted via the new fisheries structural funds.
- iii. Diagram 2 shows that with the extension as in Option B the long-term programme plan is to potentially create an alternative basin. One major point raised with the objections to LUF Round 1 was that focus should be given to a Northern Arm. Funds for a capital spend of that size are not present and unlikely to be so due to the present financial climate. This project will facilitate the use of the fisheries funds and potential projects could include the extension of the present shellfish quay which would provide shelter and continual use of the landing berths on the northern side. This could placate the need for a Northern Arm but will need further investigation.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 If built, the uplift in fish tolls to the Council will be beneficial but certainly not sufficient to fund the scheme, additional revenues can also be achieved from leasing the storage and market halls.

3.2 This report assumes that delivery of the scheme by the Council solely on the basis of borrowing against the income is unaffordable and the scheme will require additional project funding from the following sources:

- Levelling Up Fund Round 2
- The new Fisheries Structural Fund

3.3 A full and detailed business plan will be submitted as part of the Levelling Up Round 2 submission, as required by the funder. Council borrowing is likely to be required in addition to any external grants, any borrowing will be sought on the basis of an affordable and viable business case.

3.4 The Harbour Committee cannot authorise capital spend above £25,000.

3.5 Project development costs are anticipated to be fully supported by the Levelling Up Fund capacity grant received by the Council. Any spend that the Council incurs beyond the available grant will be abortive costs in the event that no scheme progresses or if the bid is unsuccessful.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 The Tor Bay Harbour Authority already have the power to undertake such works under section 18 of the Brixham Harbour Act 1836 (and incorporated into the Tor Bay Harbour Act 1970); and section 9 of the Harbours Act 1964.

4.2 The above powers are subject to the successful granting of a licence by the Marine Management Organisation under powers granted to them in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (as amended). The cost of seeking a pre-application consent is one of the deliverables that can be achieved through the LUF feasibility funding.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Extensive engagement has taken place for LUF Round 1 and Option B has seen initial consultation with Brixham Yacht club and Brixham Town Council due to the previous objections received. If this report is successful further consultation will take place.

- Local MPs (and also briefed to Prime Minister during his visit in 2019);
- Marine Management Organisation;
- Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority;
- Natural England;
- Local Enterprise Partnership;
- Brixham Town Council;
- Brixham Yacht Club;
- Brixham Junior Sailing Club;
- Marine Developments Limited (Brixham);
- Brixham Trawler Agents;
- Fishing industry representatives;
- South West Water;
- Harbour liaison fora.

5.2 Some special interest groups such as Better Devon, Ocean Rebellion and Extinction Rebellion have raised concerns regarding this project, however numbers have been low.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 The TDA will be commissioned to undertake this work and all subsequent phases of the project.

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 Recent protests have raised the profile of this capital request but this is based on a potential lack of understanding of the industry. This infrastructure upgrade will make Brixham the lead in landing facilities and enable the industry to encourage additional companies to the area to assist the fleet to meet Government targets in emission reduction and fishing methods. Recent industry trials have included but are not limited to the following :

- Completed a successful gear trial of a Sumwing. Innovative trawl design that uses a wing to lift the gear off the seabed and reduce drag and seabed impact. Achieved 30% reduction in fuel use, 80% reduction of surface area on the seabed and 69% reduction in benthic material brought up in the trawl. The report is available on the Seafish website, and the skipper is still using the Sumwing. Collaboration still underway with the inventor of the sumwing so this can be used across the entire fleet.
- Trailing the Ecomotus technology on a vessel. The technology splits hydrogen from water and injects it into the fuel to improve the efficiency of the burn, reducing fuel use and improving engine power so the skipper can throttle back
- Stakeholders are Members of the Maritime UK SW innovation group focusing on decarbonization of fishing. This group meets bi-weekly to discuss the issues to do with technologies, regulations, and infrastructure. We are pulling together case studies and recommended pilot projects.
- Working with Exeter University Centre for Future Clean Mobility. We are providing them data on fuel use and engine power of different vessels and they provide us with recommendations of technologies and improvements
- Working with Bangor University on a research project which will gather empirical evidence to quantify blue carbon released by mobile benthic gears. Funded by the Fishing Industry Science Partnership Fund
- Providing data to PhD researcher at Heriot Watt University on emissions, engine maintenance, vessel modifications
- General reduction in weight of gear through reducing the amount of throme-rope, to improve fuel efficiency
- Engaging with a Centre for Environment Food and Rural Affairs project on 'pathways to net zero for fishing' project. This involves attending workshops and interviews
- Working with Keep Britain Tidy, Odyssey Innovation and Millspeed recycling on ensuring all the parts of the net that can be recycled do get recycled
- A new form of throme-rope was trialled to see if it wears away less quickly and therefore produces less marine microplastic, a report is being produced by Seafish

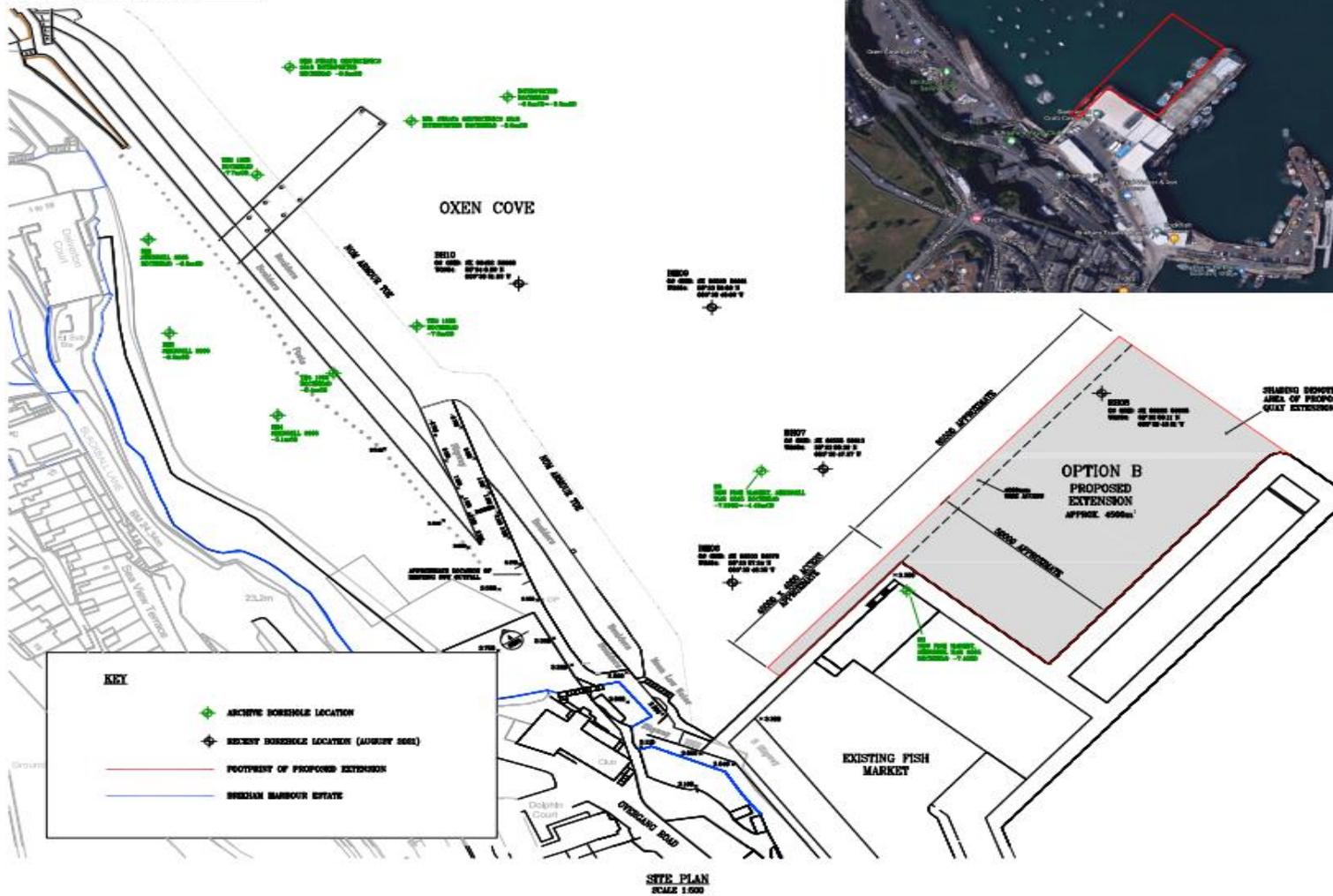
Equality Impacts

8.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Increased access to the industry and additional skilled job opportunities will assist people of all ages		
People with caring Responsibilities			No discernible impact
People with a disability	While there are very few roles at sea for people with a disability, the creation of additional roles ashore may provide new opportunities.		
Women or men	Additional employment opportunities will be open to all.		Not a relevant consideration in the industry
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	Additional employment opportunities will be open to all.		Not a relevant consideration in the industry
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	Additional employment opportunities will be open to all.		Not a relevant consideration in the industry
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Additional employment opportunities will be open to all.		Not a relevant consideration in the industry
People who are transgendered	Additional employment opportunities will be open to all.		Not a relevant consideration in the industry
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	Additional employment opportunities will be open to all.		Not a relevant consideration in the industry

	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No discernible impact
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	If delivered the project will provide an additional £21m GVA pa into the local regional economy		
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Fishing is an active occupation and will have a positive effect on public health		
9	Cumulative Council Impact (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	The Council could receive c£500,000 additional fish toll revenue from the project. In contrast, the loss of Oxen Cove as a pay and display car park will impact Council revenues however the overall benefit is positive.		
10.	Cumulative Community Impacts (proposed changes within the wider community (inc the public sector) which might worsen the impacts identified above)	The loss of Oxen Cove car park to the public will have a minor impact		

Appendix 2 - Expansion of port infrastructure at Brixham Harbour, Option 2 (Plan B)

NOTE:
FOR RECENT BORE HOLE LOGS, REFER
TO GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION
REPORT No. RP7558 AUGUST 2021
PREPARED BY RED ROCK GEO.



REVISIONS

No.	Date	Details	U.M.S.
1	16 MAY 2022	FOR DISCUSSION	

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FOR DISCUSSION

TORBAY COUNCIL

PROPOSED QUAY EXTENSION
TO FISH MARKET,
BRIXHAM HARBOUR

OPTION B
3514, ENG. SK102 P