Climate Adaptation Scilly
Porthmellon Enterprise Centre
Porth Mellon
Isles of Scilly TR21 0JY

Planning Department
Council of the Isles of Scilly
Town Hall
St Mary's
Isles of Scilly
TR21 0LW

23 September 2021

Dear Lisa

Subject: Porth Hellick P/21/051/FUL

We are writing to address the responses received as part of the formal consultation period for the planning application P/21/051/FUL. We have considered the concerns raised and summarised these with answers below.

Will the proposed boardwalk be able to withstand storms?

The boardwalk will be designed to cope with storms, but if it is affected, it will be maintained. The boardwalk approach is the best choice to allow the dune to move – the boardwalk can be shifted if it does so, while protecting the sand from foot erosion. Boardwalks have been tried and tested in many other dune situations.

The boardwalk could cause a problem for horses for several reasons. The noise from walking on it, the flexible structure will be unnerving, catching a hoof on gaps between the slats and stepping onto, and from, the boardwalk could cause problems. Damage to the boardwalk from horses could easily happen and there is a safety concern if horse riders are not able to clearly see over the bank if other users are on the boardwalk before making a crossing.

The boardwalk is designed to protect the sand from foot erosion, to prevent this offering a 'weak point' in the dune system, which could allow storm surge to overtop the dunes into the Higher Moors. The boardwalk will be designed to cope with storms, but if it is affected, it will be maintained. The materials will be chosen to suit use by horses, wheelchairs and pedestrians. The British Horse Society provide guidance on surfaces – including for boardwalks – which will be used to guide material choice, material strength and boardwalk width. Separate discussions will continue with the community about alternatives for horse access. The boardwalk approach is the best choice to allow the dune to move – the boardwalk can be shifted if it does so. Boardwalks have been tried and tested in many other dune situations.

Won't the access ramp just funnel sea water up and over when there's a storm?

The access ramp and dune won't focus waves over the top because they're all at the same angle with respect to the beach and at the same level with respect to each other. The dune/access ramp will provide additional height to reduce the number of waves able to flow into the leat.

On page 28 of the 'Site Information' document from the planning application it states: 'It is agreed that the beach access ramp will not be designed to accommodate the launching of boats", and in the 'Design Statement Redacted' planning document it states 'It is understood that the client has in discussions with Dutchy and it no longer the intention of Dutchy that boats will be launched from the beach." Will the access ramp be able to handle boats being towed over it and will the Duchy continue to allow boat users to launch at Porth Hellick?

Despite what it says in the design documents, the ramp will be strong enough to allow boat trailers to pass over it. The boats can be launched once a vehicle has driven over the ramp onto the beach.

It's proposed that the beach access ramp will be made from Dycel blocks and then infilled. Is there a risk that this topsoil will be washed during a storm event exposing the block work?

If the soil is washed out during a storm, it will be replaced.

How deep is the beachside anchor beam for the access ramp being buried?

There will be a minimum of 400 mm of beach cover above the concrete anchor beam**.**

Why can't we just use storm boards at the existing access point instead of building a ramp?

Building the extension to the dune standing replicates a natural process, which is more in keeping with the natural environment at Porth Hellick. The construction approach for the dune will resist the ramp being exposed and left 'proud' by storms. Storm boards also require someone to be available to attend to them during storm events, which may not be feasible in a severe storm at Porth Hellick. A dune is a passive measure requiring less ongoing intervention.

Who is maintaining the leat and outflow pipe?

The leat and outflow pipe are the property of the Duchy of Cornwall. Any work on this is outside the current scope of the project.

Will raising the dune at the east end of the bay cause more erosion to the undefended area adjacent to it?

The sea will not typically affect the dune and it will only infrequently be touched by waves. Sand beaches and dunes are 'soft' coastlines, which absorb wave energy as the waves move the sand around. The dunes will not cause additional erosion at the undefended area adjacent to it.

How high will the new dune be above its existing level? And how long?

The new dune will be about 0.6 m above existing ground level at the boatshed, about 0.9 m above existing ground level over the leat and about 0.8 m above existing ground level at its western end. The crest of the new dune is about 50 m long and its total footprint is about 75 m long.

Will it be possible to access the shed on the east side and the beach during construction and late March?

Access to the shed will be allowed during the construction period. The Contractor should facilitate convenient and safe access to it when it is practicable to do so. Work is due to be completed by early March so the constraints here should be limited. However, work on the access ramp could be scheduled first to reduce the risk if the construction time slips.

Will the construction impact the new plover nesting site and the eels that require access into the leat?

The works will not take place when plovers are nesting. The works do not affect the leat or the leat discharge pipe, so neither plovers nor eels are expected to be affected by the works.

Will you be using* Fascicularia bicolor *to bind the bank together?

Natural England are requesting that the restored sand dune sections are planted with native species, rather than the non-native *Fascicularia bicolor*. However, if this approach does not perform well, then we will use alternative vegetation.

What are the dates of the construction work?

The current plan is that work will begin in early January 2022 and be completed in early March 2022. If construction is delayed beyond March then there are contingencies to defer work until autumn 2022.

With the amount of peat and soil that gets washed from the Downs in the winter months, is there a risk of this being forced into the leat due to the proposed track improvements?

The access track to the site that is muddy in wetter months will be protected with geotextile and overlaid with gravel at weak points to reduce the volume of silt being washed from the path. This approach also prevents silt arriving at the path from other sources (outside the path) progressing any further, by acting as a giant filter.

With the large amount of materials being transported to the site, what improvements are being made to the access track over the Downs? Will drainage be considered to prevent the track becoming waterlogged?

To improve access from Spray View and to prevent additional erosion, the worst parts of the track will be filled with geotextile and gravel. We aren't currently planning to install drainage pipes, but the presence of gravel will prevent water flowing down the track.

The track down from Spray View is only getting worse. Are there plans to encourage fewer vehicles to use this route to the beach?

This falls outside the scope of this project.

There are other places around the bay, such as the old sea wall under the westerly face of Dick's Carn, that would benefit of a survey and potentially improvement. Have these been looked at and could they be included as part of the work?

This extra work is not currently part of this project.

Who will own and maintain the works once they are completed?

This is being discussed with the Duchy of Cornwall at present.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen Swabey
Project Director
Climate Adaptation Scilly
Tel: 07871 982 620
Email: stephen.swabey@scilly.gov.uk