



NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION

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Development Office,
Associated British Ports,
Ocean Gate,
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Dear Sir/Madam,

PORT OF SOUTHAMPTON MASTERPLAN 2009 – 2030

The New Forest Association, founded in 1867, is one of the oldest conservation organisations in the world. For 142 years we have campaigned to protect the Forest from threats to its existence and well being.

We are pleased that the New Forest's designation as a National Park in 2005 conferred on it 'the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty'. We note also that the designation has given ABP the status of a 'relevant authority' which must have regard to the statutory National Park purposes when exercising or performing any function that may affect land in the National Park (Section 62, Environment Act 1995). Although the Masterplan contains reference to the New Forest it shows no understanding of this additional level of protection and of the responsibilities that it imposes on ABP since the failure of the previous Dibden Bay application in 2004.

We believe that a major port development at Dibden Bay could not fail to have a significant adverse impact on the New Forest especially visually and in traffic generation. Ecologically it would destroy the link between the Forest and Southampton Water. It would deplete the stock of so called run back land which is crucial for the long term support of the Forest's commoning system of farming.

Whilst the New Forest Association welcomes ABP's intention to ensure that the Port of Southampton continues to thrive, we believe that continued success should be based on its existing footprint. ABP and its predecessors have used adaptation and ingenuity to respond to market forces for many decades without recourse to spatial expansion. We believe that this approach is even more necessary now due to its location adjacent to the new New Forest National Park.

We trust that the final version of the Masterplan when published will contain no reference to future development at Dibden Bay.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Chilcott.