

Solent Gateway Ltd  
**Marchwood Port Development**  
Stakeholder Discussion Forum  
Report

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# Contents

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	Page	
<b>1</b>	<b>Scope &amp; rationale</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Remit	1
	1.2 Format	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Guests</b>	<b>2</b>
	2.1 Invitations	2
	2.2 Guests	2
<b>3</b>	<b>Feedback</b>	<b>3</b>
	3.1 Development Principles	3
	3.2 Access & Transport	4
	3.3 Layout & Visual Impact	6
	3.4 Environment	7
<b>4</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1 Scope & rationale

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Solent Gateway Limited (SGL) is committed to engaging with the local community on its plans for Marchwood Port and held a stakeholder briefing and discussion forum in line with the activities set out in its Consultation Plan.

Due to Covid19 it was not possible to hold a face to face event and therefore an online stakeholder briefing and discussion forum was held via Zoom from 4.00-6.30pm on Thursday 30 July. The event was attended by 20 participants, including local elected members, from Parish Council to MP, as well as representatives from a range of different community and business groups. It was a very useful exercise in securing feedback to help inform the development of the proposals for the port in advance of the public consultation planned in the Autumn.

## 1.1 Remit

The remit of the discussion forum was to bring together local elected members, business representatives and local community stakeholders for a briefing and discussion on a number of key topic areas in relation to the development of the port. Attendance was by invitation only and SGL invited a variety of different guests with wide ranging interests.

## 1.2 Format

Due to Covid19 restrictions, the forum was held online via Zoom. Zoom was chosen as the best platform as it appears to have the least restrictions (in comparison to Teams and Skype) and can be accessed via the telephone as well internet if necessary. The meeting was recorded for internal purposes and participants were notified of this both in the joining instructions and at the start of the forum. It was requested that no one else record the forum. The forum lasted a total of 2.5 hours.

Following an initial welcome, a short introductory presentation was given by Port Director, Richard Parkinson. He gave an overview of the current and future planned operations of the port, along with the proposed draft layout plan. Guests were asked to put any questions they had in the chat box during this presentation.

Guests were then put into their first breakout rooms. These were topic based and were titled: Development Principles, Access & Transport, Layout & Visual Impact and Environment. Guests were asked to choose which breakout rooms they would like to join when they confirmed they wanted to attend the event.

Each breakout room was given a short presentation on the given topic by a specialist from the project team. There was then time for questions and further discussion.

Everyone then re-joined the main meeting room and a representative from each room gave a short summary of the key points raised. A ten-minute comfort break was then held, followed by a second round of breakout groups.

A final roundup followed the second breakout group and then Richard Parkinson concluded the presentation by providing participants with information about the next steps, including the public consultation on the port development proposals in the Autumn. Richard concluded by extending an open invitation for anyone wishing to come and take a site tour of the port.

## Feedback

Feedback and questions raised were recorded by the project team and are detailed later in this report. Attendees were advised their comments would not be attributed in the report to enable them to fully participate in the discussion. A draft of this report was circulated to all participants to ensure their comments had been captured accurately. The signed off report will be published on the project website ([www.solentgatewayconsultation.com](http://www.solentgatewayconsultation.com)) and will form part of the Consultation Report, which will be submitted with the planning application.

## 2 Guests

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### 2.1 Invitations

Invitations were issued via email on Friday 10 July, giving just under three weeks' notice. Invitees were asked to complete a form confirming their preferred email address, which breakout groups they would like to join, which organisation they represented and also if they had any additional needs. Anybody who did not reply was followed up at least once via email and telephone prior to the event.

Attendance at the event was accepted up until the morning of the event (30 July). Joining instructions with the details of the Zoom meeting, confirming the format and offering a trial in zoom in advance if needed were sent on Tuesday 28 July – two days prior to the event.

### 2.2 Guests

Representatives from the following organisations were invited to attend:

- MP for New Forest East
- New Forest District Council (officers and members)
- Hampshire County Council (officers and members)
- New Forest National Park (officers and members)
- Marchwood Parish Council
- Hythe & Dibden Parish Council
- Totton & Eling Town Council
- Southampton City Council (officers and members)
- Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
- Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
- Marchwood Infant & Junior School
- The Churches in Marchwood
- Forestside Medical Centre

- Solent Protection Society
- New Forest Association
- Associated British Ports
- The Ministry of Defence at Marchwood Port
- M3 Local Enterprise Partnership

A total of 20 guests attended the event along with 11 members of the project team. Two representatives from the Ministry of Defence at Marchwood Port were invited to attend as stakeholders. At the start of the forum, it was confirmed that they were there as local stakeholders not to answer questions about Ministry of Defence Policy.

## 3 Feedback

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Questions asked and feedback received from each of the topic groups has been amalgamated and grouped by theme. There were no questions asked in the chat box during the initial presentation. We have not specifically identified the source of each comment to protect their privacy.

### 3.1 Development Principles

#### 1. Employment & Business

- Local supply chains are key – important for procurement.
- Long term legacy of project – impacts of Covid19 – young people in particular.
- How can indigenous businesses benefit?
- Important to create jobs for all and skills for life.
- What percentage of jobs will be taken up by local people?
- Will jobs be onsite or off site?
- Will jobs be advertised locally?
- How many employees are based in the New Forest?
- Council Council's Future's initiative-training for young people fund for the construction process – would there be opportunities here?

#### 2. Community

- Important to show the benefits to the community and tell the story.
- Local residents view the Marchwood Port development as an opportunity rather than a threat.
- Economic discussion especially difficult in the current climate.
- What are the housing implications of the scheme – will people be relatively local, or will more housing be needed?
- Opportunity for benefits for improvements along the residential boundary?

#### 3. Ministry of Defence

- Does the MOD have priority? If they need more capacity in the future does that impact the availability of port services for other customers?
- How do the military requirements for security impact on the ecology/visual mitigation on the existing boundary?
- What type of storage will there be on site? How much will be container storage?

#### 4. Environmental Impacts

- Concerns about containers and proximity to residential properties (visual/noise).
- Will dredging take place to accommodate larger vessels?
- Could this present a better alternative for container storage than existing storage?

#### 5. Transport

- Will there be car storage? Will this result in additional traffic?
- How to tackle the rail crossing challenge?
- Use of rail would be a positive for Marchwood residents – reduce traffic.
- Movement of “stuff” - what proportion will be moved by rail/road?

## 3.2 Access & Transport

### 1. Overall

- Need to balance the job creation and benefits of development with the impact on the road and rail.
- Interested to hear the potential for two vessels per day.
- Concern about noise from ship engines if ships are docked overnight – this can be heard in the village. Keen for electric docking stations to reduce noise.
- Support for the creation of c. 1,100 new jobs including for school leavers.

### 2. Site wide development

- Interest in the volume of space to be developed and the scope of open storage provision.
- Keen to see space of higher quality provision, which will attract more activity and generate more employment.
- Concern about the potential detrimental impact on the village from the neighbouring site.

### 3. Rail

- Concern that increased use of the railway will cause disruption at Marchwood level crossings and in Totton level crossing and question if there is no more space available on the rail network will this impact the proposals.
- It may not be possible to secure increased use of the rail line.

- Support for use of the sea in and sea out.
- Interest in use of the rail line for freight outside of peak hours, one of the problems with a passenger line will be the crossings in the village could increase congestion.
- If there was a passenger service that stopped at Marchwood then those working onsite could come via train to work.
- A passenger service would come with level crossing improvements.
- There used to be 18 trains a day when the Fawley Refinery trains were running.

#### **4. Road**

- Road access is difficult for Marchwood Village – route is past lots of houses.
- Consideration should be given to a direct access onto the A326 – this would require land not currently in SGL’s ownership but should be explored.
- Important to ensure that HGVs/ port traffic follow the signed route and don’t go through the village – could cameras or other enforcement be considered.
- It is good to create new jobs, but we also need to consider the impact on the road network of people coming for work.
- As well as making sure the signed route is followed it is also important it is at an appropriate speed.
- Important to be mindful of the Infant and Junior School and Twiggs Lane where lorries sometimes mount the pavement to pass.
- The West route and the M271 is now a Clean Air Zone – it is important that the nitrogen dioxide levels are controlled.
- Need to look at noise and air quality from the road.
- Interesting to understand how traffic from the port will be estimated, a port development is not straight forward.
- Marchwood Parish Council is in discussions with Hampshire County Council to find an integrated solution and we need to consider ABP and Fawley Waterside – everything needs to be sequenced together.
- Important to bring forward infrastructure before new development.
- One of the faults of the planning system is to say you mustn’t make things worse, not that you should make them better.

#### **5. Sustainable transport**

- Need to think about how employees might be able to get to the new jobs without use of cars

#### **6. Construction**

- When the construction works start onsite will there be parking for construction staff.

#### **7. New access**

- Keen to understand the exact location of the new access into the site.

## 3.3 Layout & Visual Impact

### 1. Playing fields

- Concern was expressed that the loss of the playing fields would add pressure on local community facilities.
- As rugby studs cause damage to the community pitches, which is a maintenance issue, it was asked that consideration be given to the provision of such pitches in terms of replacement pitches on MOD land.

### 2. Community

- Potential for community access/facilities to be open for community use was raised. Although it was explained that this would not be possible due to the security required by the MOD and to safely run an active port, there are opportunities for organised tours for community groups and school trips – now and in the future.
- Public consultation and the importance of giving people the opportunity to discuss the proposals in person as well as see the information online.
- Key local stakeholders and the need to engage the local schools was stressed. It was confirmed they had been invited to the stakeholder workshop and all efforts will be made to engage with them throughout the process. The offer of school site visits was reiterated.

### 3. Visual Impact

- The height on container storage stacking was discussed and concern expressed that six high may be too high.
- Location of the containers and how the site layout will be designed to be ensure it is less obtrusive from key sight lines, without inhibiting the port's effective operation was discussed.
- Landscaping was discussed and the need to bunding/screening to reduce noise and visual impact. Screening using soft landscaping is being assessed as this will provide a natural screen and have create ecological habitats.

### 4. Transport

- The proportion of goods being moved by sea and rail was discussed. Stakeholders are keen to understand the amount of additional road movements anticipated from the proposals, as this is a key cause of concern in the local community.
- Sequencing of road and junction improvements (as potentially driven by other developments in the area) and if this would happen before development takes place.
- Port entrance and improved speed of processing to reduce impact from queuing vehicles on local road network.
- Concern was expressed about the increase of traffic on the road – from commercial/industrial development as well as all the new houses that are being developed in the area – and whether cumulative impacts will

be taken into consideration.

- The need to have a Plan B for rail movements was stressed in case the passenger line feasibility study found it to be a viable option.
- How large pieces of equipment such as wind turbines would be taken to/from the port was raised and it was advised that they would come in and go out by sea.

## 5. Security

- Site security and the need for the MOD to be involved in the process to ensure their ongoing enhanced security needs are met as the commercial elements of the port are developed.

## 3.4 Environment

### 1. Biodiversity

- Support for the opportunities for enhanced ecological areas between the residential area and the port. Suggestion that specific native species should be used.
- Question regarding habitats on site and whether any onsite habitat is subject to any designation.
- Concern that the additional hard standing would result in loss of biodiversity.
- Pumpfield Farm to the South West of the site has green areas with a wide range of species on their grazing fields.
- Importance of ensuring biodiversity net gain.
- Support for proposals for enhancing the natural environment and achieving biodiversity net gain.
- Question regarding how much mitigation would be on-site and how much would be off-site, and whether off-site locations have been identified.
- Green Halo Partnership seeks to ensure that developments enhance natural capital ie the goods and services provided by the natural environment which underpin our economy and communities.

### 2. Visual Impact

- Concern about the height of container unit storage and the potential adverse visual impact.
- Query over the height of the warehousing units and the importance of considering the visual impact of these buildings.
- Importance of retaining the rural aspect of views from the coast and marine area, potentially by providing landscaping near to the water's edge. Support for development of CGIs / visual assessment from the sea location.

### 3. Noise

- Concern over potential noise from moving container units (particularly empty units) at night based on experience of noise impacts from current operations. Proposals for locating containers as far from residential properties as possible.
- Question as to whether landscaping would have the added benefit of helping to minimise the effects of noise.

### 4. Sustainability

- Suggestion that there should be provision for shoreside power so the ships don't have to run their engines whilst in the dock. This would reduce the impacts of noise and air pollution.
- Encourage SGL to have policies to encourage cleaner less damaging ships to dock in the port so there would be less pollution from the additional ships.
- Question of potential for additional dredging being required.
- Opportunity to create a rail connected warehouse rather than decommissioning the railway line.
- Future South Low Carbon Group has access to funding for carbon reduction projects and may be worth consulting in relation to co-funding opportunities.
- SGL should explore opportunities for green energy eg. solar panels and opportunities for creating green jobs.

## 4 Conclusion

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SGL would like to thank everyone who attended the stakeholder discussion forum. All guests actively participated and were open to sharing ideas about the potential issues and opportunities associated with the port development project. The feedback received will be shared with the rest of the project team and taken into consideration as the project progresses.

This report was circulated to attendees before being published on the project website to ensure their comments had been captured accurately before being published on the consultation website: [www.solentgatewayconsultation.com](http://www.solentgatewayconsultation.com).

It will also form part of the Consultation Report and a response from SGL will be provided to the questions raised and details given of how the comments received have been reflected or addressed in the final planning application.