29 COMMERCIAL NAVIGATION

29.1 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

1. The proximity of the proposed capital disposal site to main shipping routes is an important factor, because of the potential for conflict with commercial navigation and safety considerations. A shipping lane is present in the vicinity of the proposed site although this lane has no legal status. The shipping lane runs south towards the English Channel and to the north through the North Sea. A second shipping lane bisects the north-south route and is used by vessels approaching Felixstowe, Harwich and the Thames estuary. The centre point of the proposed disposal site is located within the shipping route that runs from south to north.

29.2 POTENTIAL IMPACTS DURING THE DISPOSAL PHASE

29.2.1 Movements of disposal barges interfering with commercial navigation

1. Disposal activities would lead to a temporary increase in the volume of traffic in the vicinity of the proposed disposal site. The area is already used by large numbers of vessels, as there is a north-south shipping route immediately to the west of the proposed disposal site. Therefore, under existing conditions, the presence of vessels is not an unusual occurrence. The disposal vessels would, however, have to cross the shipping route in order to dispose of dredged material.

2. Despite this fact, the temporary nature of the disposal phase for the construction works means that there would only be the potential for an impact of **minor adverse significance** on commercial navigation to arise.

Mitigation and residual impact

3. Other than following required navigation operating procedures, no mitigation measures are possible. There would remain, therefore, the potential for a residual impact of **minor adverse significance.**

29.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS DURING THE POST-DISPOSAL PHASE

29.3.1 Potential interference with navigation due to presence of material on the seabed

1. The proposed disposal site is situated in water depths in excess of 50m and, therefore, there would be **no impact** on commercial navigation during the post-disposal phase. To put the propose disposal in context, approximately 16Mm^3 of stiff clay were disposed of at the Roughs Tower disposal ground (located in water depths of 10m to 20m) as a result of the 1998/2000 deepening of the approach channel to the Haven ports which, although resulting in a measurable decrease in water depth, was considered to pose no hazard to shipping (Rees *et al.,* 2002).

Mitigation and residual impact

2. No mitigation measures are required and there would be **no residual impact**.