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Head of Planning  
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23 November 2020

Dear Sir

## **Portland Energy Recovery Facility - WP/20/00692/DCC**

Portland Port supports Powerfuel's request for planning permission to build a 15 MW power station on a brownfield site on port land that is recognised in the West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan area as a "Key Employment Site". This project is vital to the future development, growth and continued success of the port. The maritime services sector is important for the local area and includes the shipping, ports and maritime business services industry as well as supporting other industries in Dorset. Portland Port is the only deep water port in Dorset and is also of national and international importance. The land and water space combined is in excess of 2400 hectares. It is a vital part of the local economy and the south west region. The port has been very successful over the last 24 years in attracting and supporting a broad range of tenants and port users, including both large and small companies. The port attracts employment and investment to the area and is a major asset to the local community.

If we are to continue to grow, we will need more electrical power, whether that be for tenants or ships. The existing power supply to the island has a capacity of 18 MW. The current peak demand is 11 MW, and another 2 MW is reserved for projects in process, whilst a further 0.8 MW will be used by a project under construction when it comes online in 2021. That leaves only 4.2 MW spare capacity if the power station is not built. If you then take the potential power requirements of ships at berth, and focus solely on demand from cruise vessels, there is a clear shortage of capacity. Neither the port nor local government can afford the multi-million pound investment required to secure the additional supply across the causeway.

To illustrate the issue, a single small cruise ship requires more than the available spare capacity, needing around 6 MW. The largest cruise ships currently in operation require up to 12 MW at berth. Scale that up to multiple ships at berth and include non-cruise shipping and you have some idea of the Port's challenge, and why Powerfuel offers the first viable solution. Having worked on potential offshore wind, tidal and other energy projects for in excess of a decade we have experienced significant disappointment and therefore hope this project will be seen as an essential local solution. Clearly, without the power station the port will not be

able to provide shore power to the cruise lines. From the discussions that we have had with our cruise line customers it is equally clear that in the next few years they will reach a point where they start to plan their itineraries around the ports which can provide shore power. Thus, the provision of this service at Portland Port is both an opportunity and a threat.

In considering the need for environmental compliance, ports are without question one of the most highly regulated industries in the world. We engage frequently with a number of regulatory bodies, including the Local Planning Authority, Environment Agency, Natural England, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and Marine Management Organisation. We have a high degree of respect for these organisations and are confident that the project can be delivered such that it complies with all applicable regulations. We must stress the point that, having secured planning permission Powerfuel must also secure an environmental permit to operate the facility from the Environment Agency and is subject to ongoing scrutiny for the lifetime of the operation. This will require the operator to continuously monitor the emissions and report any breaches. Failure to meet the strict air quality conditions results in severe penalties, including the closure of the facility.

Regarding landscape considerations, we stress our earlier point that the port is a key employment site comprising an industrial operational business park. We have welcomed the engagement between the Powerfuel project team and the key decision-makers on this matter through the planning process, and can see the evidence of this in how the design of the facility has evolved taking account of its surroundings i.e. the industrial nature, the landscape, geology and heritage.

On the matter of transport, our sea and road links are fundamental to the operation of the port, and a reason why the port proactively engages with the local authority on an ongoing basis. It is an obvious location for the Powerfuel project, on a site with pre-existing consent for a power station and offering land and sea transport options. We hope that the key decision-makers won't be deterred by a marginal increase in traffic which, based on the worst-case scenarios, equates to only 0.4% of vehicle movements per day across the causeway. It is vital that we all continue the good work to improve access to Portland and Portland Port with the significant wider benefits that form part of the Western Growth Corridor.

This project is absolutely vital to the future of Portland Port and will provide essential electrical power headroom for the continued development of businesses on the island of Portland.

Yours faithfully



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**W T REEVES**  
**Chief Executive**