

Hornsea Offshore Wind Farm

Project Two

Appendix referred to in response to EL4 – correspondence with Natural England

**Appendix DDD to the Response submitted for Deadline I
Application Reference: EN010053**

15 July 2015

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8th March 2013
 Ref: 7633-20130308-NE

Jamie McPherson
 Natural England
 Lancaster House
 Hampshire Court
 Newcastle upon Tyne
 NE4 7YH

Dear Jamie,

Hornsea Offshore Wind Farm Project Two Onshore cable route and HVDC converter / HVAC substation site Onshore ecology surveys

Following recent correspondence on 31st January 2013 regarding the Section 42 request for comments on Project One and Project Two of the Hornsea Zone, we are writing to you on behalf of Smart Wind Limited to seek the view of Natural England on the validity and currency of the onshore environmental surveys undertaken to date.

Given that the proposed onshore infrastructure (both onshore cable route and HVDC converter / HVAC substation site at North Killingholme) for Project Two is immediately adjacent to Project One, the synergies were identified at an early stage and as such environmental surveys were designed to inform the EIA for both Project One and Project Two.

Natural England has previously been consulted on the EIA Scoping Report for Project Two and jointly with the JNCC, responded to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in a letter dated 6th November 2012 (Giles Alcock, Natural England) which is appended to the PINS Scoping Opinion for Project Two. In Annex A7: Onshore Environment attached to the letter the following statement is made:

"We are pleased to note that a phase 1 habitat survey, and further surveys including hedgerow and micro-habitat assessments, have been carried out as indicated in section 8.5.12. We advise that habitat surveys for EIA should be equivalent to Phase 2, and that further ornithological, botanical and invertebrate surveys should be carried out at appropriate times in the year to establish whether any scarce or priority species are present."

The following onshore ecology surveys have been carried out with dates:

- Desk Study (2011);
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2011);
- Phase 1 Intertidal Habitat Survey (2011);
- Hedgerow Survey (2011);
- Botany of semi-improved grass fields (2012);





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- Breeding birds (2011);
- Wintering birds (2011-2012);
- Great crested newt (2011 and 2012 - largely different ponds in each year)
- Reptiles (2012);
- Bat activity (2011);
- Bat roost (2011 and 2012);
- Otters and water voles (2011); and
- Badgers (2011 and checked on activity on the route 2012).

These surveys are all reported in Volume 3 of the Project One draft Environmental Statement issued to Natural England on 31st January 2013 together with the information contained within the relevant Ecology Annexes in Volume 6.

Current Natural England guidance indicates that surveys should not be over two to three years old for medium to high impact schemes or multi-plot or phased developments. Clearly this is very general guidance and in assessing the continued validity of surveys the nature of the survey and the potential for change in the habitats or species which are the subject of the surveys must be considered. Based on these considerations, and on the basis that there is no significant change in the Project Two onshore cable route and HVDC converter/ HVAC substation site from that which is currently proposed, it is our view that the above surveys would continue to provide robust data to inform the Project Two EIA for a DCO submission to PINS currently scheduled for Q1 2014.

Our view is also influenced by the consideration that further protected species surveys are likely to be carried out for the Project One development in 2014, prior to commencement of construction programmed for 2015 (subject to grant of consent), to confirm the position regarding protected species licensing, and to inform any license applications which may be required.

Whilst we appreciate that it is for the Applicant to come to a view as to whether the existing surveys provide sufficient information for the purposes of EIA it would be helpful to have Natural England's views on the approach we propose to adopt before our next meeting currently proposed for 1000hrs on Tuesday 26th March at Natural England offices in Newcastle.

I look forward to your comments.

Regards

Keith Jones
 Senior Director

Copy by email to: [Giles Alcock](mailto:Giles.Alcock@rps.com), [James Walsh](mailto:James.Walsh@rps.com) and [James Bussell](mailto:James.Bussell@rps.com)



From: Walsh, James (NE) <James.Walsh@naturalengland.org.uk> Sent: Fri 02/08/2013 11:00:00
To: Sheelagh Guilmartin
Cc: McPherson, Jamie (NE); Burton, Louise (NE)
Subject: RE: Hornsea Project Two - Phase 1 Consultation & Survey Validity

Sheelagh

Thank you for your letter detailing the ecological survey schedule for Hornsea Project Two. I can confirm that Natural England is satisfied with the proposed schedule. Please note that for wintering birds, there is a large amount of existing recent survey data for the fields around the converter station site that has been gathered as part of the South Humber Gateway strategic mitigation proposals. This data is available via the Humber Environmental Data Centre and should be used to inform the HRA.

It would also be helpful, in particular for intertidal habitat surveys, to state the rationale for assuming that survey data will still be valid up until the point when updates will be carried out, i.e. no material change in land use or habitat is expected to take place during that period.

I hope this is helpful. Please contact me if I can provide any further advice.

Kind regards

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