

Hornsea Offshore Wind Farm

Project Two

Response to Question 2 – Ornithology

Appendix B to the Response submitted for 21 April 2016

Application Reference: EN010053

21 April 2016

smartwind.co.uk

Consideration of Hornsea Project Two effects on the extension to the Hamford Water SPA

The Special Protection Areas (SPAs) considered as part of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Hornsea Project Two were defined through consultation with Natural England throughout the pre-application phase of the project. The designated sites and their associated features potentially affected by the Hornsea Project Two application and required for inclusion in the Report to inform the Appropriate Assessment were confirmed by Natural England in their Written Representations (PINS reference: REP1-037) as: Flamborough and Filey Coast potential Special Protection Area (pSPA), Flamborough Head and Bempton Cliffs SPA and the Humber Estuary SPA and Ramsar site.

Hamford Water Special Protection Area (SPA) is located on the Essex coast 213 km south of Hornsea Project Two, and is designated for a breeding population of little tern and wintering populations of avocet, dark bellied-brent goose, shelduck, teal, ringed plover, grey plover, black-tailed godwit and redshank. A marine extension to the SPA has been proposed to afford protection to foraging areas for little tern, consultation on the proposed extension commenced on the 21st January 2016 and will close on the 21st April 2016. The only other change in the Departmental Brief for the proposed extension to the SPA (pSPA) is an update to the little tern breeding population at the pSPA. No additional species have been included as part of the proposed SPA extension.

All of the features of the Hamford Water SPA were included in the HRA screening process for Hornsea Project Two. A conclusion of No Likely Significant Effects (LSE) was concluded for the wintering features of Hamford Water SPA (PINS reference: APP-0174). Potential impacts on the breeding population of little tern at the SPA were also considered in the HRA Screening report (PINS reference APP-0174) in both the breeding and non-breeding seasons. There was considered to be no connectivity between the SPA and Hornsea Project Two due to the foraging range of the species (mean-maximum = 6.3 km, maximum = 11 km; Thaxter *et al.*, 2012) limited presence of the little tern during project-specific surveys and information relating to the movements of this species. The conclusions reached in relation to Hamford Water SPA were not disputed by any party during the pre-application or examination phases of the Project.

The proposed extension to Hamford Water SPA covers the marine area used for foraging by little terns and is located over 200 km from Hornsea Project Two. No part of Hornsea Project Two interacts with the extension to the SPA. The addition of this feature to the boundary of the SPA does not result in the addition of new species and does not alter the process by which the HRA screening process was undertaken for Hornsea Project Two. It is therefore considered that no impact pathway exists between the pSPA and Hornsea Project Two and that the conclusions drawn as part of the HRA screening process for Hornsea Project Two remain valid. The Secretary of State, as part of a non-material change to the decision for East Anglia One Offshore Wind Farm which is located closer to Hamford Water SPA (84 km), concluded that there would be no LSE as a result of East Anglia One (DECC, 2016¹).

Consultation is also being undertaken for an extension to the Outer Thames Estuary SPA to include breeding populations of common tern and little tern. The Outer Thames Estuary SPA was not included in the HRA screening process for Hornsea Project Two as the original SPA was not designated for species that would potentially interact with the project. The addition of common tern and little tern to the SPA citation is not considered to alter the conclusions of the HRA. Although these species were not included as part of the Outer Thames Estuary in the HRA screening process for the Project, they were included at other SPAs (Breydon Water SPA, Coquet Island SPA, Cromarty Firth SPA, Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA, Deben Estuary SPA, Forth Islands SPA, Foulness SPA, Inner Moray Firth SPA, North Norfolk Coast SPA, The Wash SPA and Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch SPA) with some of

¹DECC, 2016. *Record of the Habitats Regulations Assessment undertaken under regulation 61 of the conservation of habitats and species regulations 2010 and regulation 25 of the offshore habitats regulations for an application under the Planning Act 2008*. [Online]. Available at: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/east-anglia-one-offshore-windfarm/?ipcsection=docs> (Accessed April 2016).



NOTE

these located closer to Hornsea Project Two than the Outer Thames Estuary SPA (e.g. North Norfolk Coast SPA and The Wash SPA). No LSEs were identified for common tern and little tern at these sites based on the foraging range of these species in the breeding season, presence of these species at the Project site and information relating to the movements of both species and therefore it is considered that the same conclusion applies to the Outer Thames Estuary pSPA.