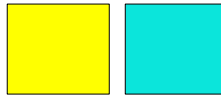


Date: 08 June 2020  
Our ref: Case 10571 Case10572  
Your ref: EN010077 EN010078  
Registration ID: 20024943 20024950



National Infrastructure Planning  
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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Rynd Smith

**Application by East Anglia ONE North Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the East Anglia ONE North Offshore Windfarm**  
**Application by East Anglia TWO Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the East Anglia TWO Offshore Wind Farm**  
**Rule 9 Letters**

Thank you for your two Rule 9 letters dated 21 May 2020 which provided an update on the position of the Examining Authority for the above offshore wind farms due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and also outlined the recent Procedural Decision and a request for further information from Interested Parties. Natural England is responding to both update letters within this reply.

### **1. Request for Practical Information to Support Arrangements**

#### a) Questionnaire

Natural England notes that we have filled in the online questionnaire for one member of staff, Alan Gibson. Alan is one of the senior responsible officers for these applications. We note the request that all members of the case team submit the questionnaire, however, due to the number of staff in the case team and the possibility of changes to the case team, we have only submitted one. The responses on this questionnaire do apply to all members of the case team should they attend hearings.

Natural England has also responded to the questionnaire to provide our representations on how the examinations for both projects may progress with specific consideration to Issue Specific Hearings (ISH). However, Natural England wishes to raise further points not considered as part of the questionnaire:

#### b) Attendance at issue specific hearings

As previously raised in our response to the original Rule 6 Letters sent on 10 March 2020, Natural England considers that the time proposed for the original hearings was very limited and does not expect that issues can be satisfactorily discussed and resolved in this time. We consider that we can best contribute through written contributions and workshops outside of the hearings. Natural England will continue to engage with the Applicant before and throughout the examination to ensure issues are progressed and wherever possible resolved. However, within the questionnaire Natural England has indicated that we would like to attend the hearings. This is to note that, subject to the above, we are reserving the right to attend hearings. As outlined in our previous response, the decision on attendance at any ISH will be based on the outstanding issues, wider resource and technology requirements and ensuring best value. The potential move to virtual hearings has not changed Natural England's position and therefore we would welcome consideration by the Examining Authority on the points we have

previously raised on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

c) Requirements to facilitate Issues Specific Hearings

i) Provision of agenda and Examiners questions

As set out above, should circumstances be such, that Natural England was to attend an ISH then we request that in order to help us do so and enable issues to progress not only is the agenda provided at least two weeks prior to any virtual hearings, but a full list of the examiners questions is also provided by the Planning Inspectorate. This is to enable us to fully discuss the issues and provide a thorough and considered response.

ii) Availability of Equipment

As set out in the our response to the questionnaire, Natural England doesn't currently have the technological equipment to join any virtual hearing other than through audio. Whilst we are working on how this can be resolved, there is currently no time line for achieving this.

iii) Site visits

**Natural England wishes to stress the importance of site visits in order to give due consideration of the seascape, landscape and visual impacts on the protected landscape and would welcome further clarity on how these may be undertaken .**

## **2. Procedural Decision in Respect of Draft Submissions**

Natural England notes the request of the Examining Authority for early submissions of comments on Relevant Representations and draft Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) where possible, by the 11<sup>th</sup> June. Natural England has considered this request and made the decision not to make any early submissions as we would like to consider the applicants response to our Relevant/Written Representations and use the pre examination time to further discuss resolution of issues with the applicant and other Interested Parties through pre-examination workshops. Once these workshops have taken place, Natural England and the Applicant will be in a position to produce a draft SoCG that demonstrates real progress. Until then we believe Natural England's Risks and Issues log submitted at the time of the Relevant Representations provides all of the relevant information on outstanding concerns for the Examining Authority.

For any queries relating to the content of this letter please contact me using the details provided below.

Yours sincerely,

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