

The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Directorate
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Our ref: AE/2018/123475/01-L01
Your ref: EN010080
Date: 2 November 2018

Via email:
HornseaProjectThree@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

HORNSEA PROJECT THREE OFFSHORE WIND FARM. AN APPLICATION FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER. WRITTEN QUESTIONS.

This response relates to the Examining Authority's first set of written questions in relation to the Hornsea Project Three development issued on 9 October 2018. The letter contains comments on questions related to the Environment Agency only.

Q1.13.24

We are content that the timescale drafted in Article 14 of deemed approval if a decision has not been notified within 28 days.

Q1.15.8

We are content with the principles established in the outline Code of Construction Practice. The CoCP refers to consultation with the Environment Agency for site specific works requiring a detailed CoCP. As stated in our Relevant Representation dated 20 July, we consider it necessary that our prior approval of a detailed CoCP is obtained and that this is safeguarded in Development Consent Order Requirements. This will enable us to comment directly on more site specific measures and controls, thus speeding up the process and better protect the environment. It is our understanding that the Applicant is in agreement with this and prior approval is reference in the Statement of Common Ground.

Q1.15.11

We require some amendments to the proposed timing for ecological surveys in relation to water vole. Further clarity is required as to what is meant in Table 10.1 of the Outline Ecological Management Plan. Optimal survey season for water vole is mid April to September. Habitat management works during the months when water vole are over-wintering in their burrows (November - February) are not advised. The table indicated

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that this is 'sub-optimal', however water voles are not active during this time and are therefore unable to move to find alternative refuge. This is also a time when surveys or mitigation should not be carried out. It is our understanding that the Applicant is amending the tables in response to our observations when conducting consultation on the Statement of Common Ground.

In addition to the comments above we recommend the following amendments:

Paragraph 4.3.9.5 'Translocation of water voles, if required, should be completed between 15th February - 15th April'.

Translocation in this context would require trapping, and there is another best practice protocol complete with timings for this activity. We recommend a statement such as: 'Should trapping be required best practice protocol will be adhered to as defined in The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Strachan et al 2016). All activities will be detailed, planned and carried out by an appropriately qualified and licenced ecologist.'

Paragraph 5.2.1.4. Biosecurity measures include the use of disinfectant.

We recommend specifically stating that for work in and near waterbodies the disinfectant to be used is Virkon aquatic. This is because this product is known to be effective against crayfish plague.

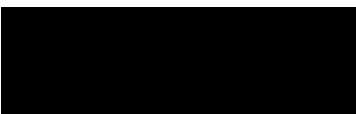
Paragraph 6.2.4. Minor watercourses and ditches

Where open trench crossing techniques have been used, ensure that material excavated from the bed of the watercourse is reinstated so that the gravel material (if present) is on the surface.

As previously noted in our Relevant Representation at 3.1 – 3.3 we have noted that although the outline EMP references pre-approval by the Environment Agency, this is not reflected in the Requirements. We take this opportunity to reiterate our request that the Requirements are amended to include our prior approval of detailed EMPs. This will enable us to comment directly on more site specific measures and controls, thus speeding up the process and better protect the environment. It is our understanding that the Applicant is in agreement with this proposal.

We trust that these comments are useful.

Yours faithfully



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