

07 November 2018

Your Ref: 20010675

Summary of Written Representation - Eastern IFCA

The Applicant has presented further habitat evidence from additional survey data for the near shore cable area. Results indicate approximately 50% of the cable route in the WNNC SAC lies across mixed sediments. Orsted have recognised that subtidal mixed sediments are part of the Annex I Subtidal Sandbanks feature of the SAC, which can include more sensitive habitats than just “subtidal sand”, and have taken a precautionary position in their impact assessment. Eastern IFCA remains concerned that cable burial/maintenance activities could impact sensitive mixed sediment habitats in areas closed to towed demersal fishing, which eliminates such impacts.

Following discussions with the Applicant we accept that impacts on potting will be minimised through appropriate dialogue with fishermen, including the creation of a “commercial fisheries working group” type group if required, and appropriate disturbance payments where necessary. Eastern IFCA accept there is unlikely to be a significant impact on trawling (in the inshore area) because of the low level of activity in the area and the low likelihood of needing cable protection.

Whilst the Applicant has assessed the potential impacts of electro-magnetic fields, Eastern IFCA maintain that not enough is known about electro-magnetic field impacts. We do not consider this can be addressed by a single developer; instead there is a responsibility for the marine cable industry to investigate and conduct research to reduce uncertainty.