



Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm

Access Management Strategy

June, 2018, Revision A

Document Reference: 8.4

Pursuant to: APFP Reg. 5(2)(q)

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Thanet Extension Offshore Wind

Access Management Strategy

June 2018

Drafted By:	Regeneris
Approved By:	Helen Jameson
Date of Approval	June 2018
Revision	A

Copyright © 2018 Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

All pre-existing rights reserved



REGENERIS

Thanet Extension Access Management Strategy

June 2018, Revision B

Document Reference: 8.4

Pursuant to: APFP Reg. 5(2)(q)

A Final Report by Mike Furness for
Regeneris Consulting
June 2018

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Thanet Extension Access Management Strategy

June 2018

www.regeneris.co.uk

Contents Page

1.	Introduction	1
	Structure of the Access Management Strategy	1

2.	The Resource	2
-----------	---------------------	----------

3.	Standards to Be Maintained/ Achieved	5
	Current accessibility	6
	Accessibility standards	10
	Overarching principles	12

4.	Practical Proposals	13
	Construction Phase	13
	Operation and Maintenance Phase	18

Appendix A - Bibliography

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Access Management Strategy considers the public rights of way (PRoW) and other access resources that will be impacted by the proposed onshore cable run of Thanet Extension and how they can be managed to mitigate that impact during the construction, operation and maintenance (O&M) and decommissioning phases.
- 1.2 The access resources affected are, for the purposes of this strategy, almost entirely contained within the physical boundaries of Pegwell Bay Country Park (the Park) and Stonelees Nature Reserve (the Nature Reserve).
- 1.3 This strategy is primarily concerned with mitigating impact on countryside access resources, not with their promotion, day-to-day management and/ or levels of use. The strategy proposes a number of actions that will enable access to be maintained largely unaltered throughout the operational lifetime of Thanet Extension.

Structure of the Access Management Strategy

- 1.4 The rest of the Access Management Strategy is structured as follows:
 - Chapter 2 considers the resources available to users in both the Park and Nature Reserve which are of relevance to this Access Management Strategy.
 - Chapter 3 discusses current accessibility standards in both the Park and Nature Reserve in addition to the relevant policy which guides access to these resources. A series of overarching principles are set out.
 - Chapter 4 sets out a series of proposals for managing and reducing the impacts on access generated by the construction and O&M phases of Thanet Extension.

2. The Resource

2.1 Considered as a unit, Pegwell Bay Country Park and Stonelees Nature Reserve total approximately 33 hectares east of Sandwich Road. The Nature Reserve is some 8.2 hectares (20 acres) and wholly open to visitors, subject to accessibility constraints. Of the Park's 25 hectares, the public is permanently excluded from around 4.4 hectares (c. 18%), (consisting of Field 4 *see Figure 2.1*) and the pond area, leaving a maximum available area across both sites of around 29 hectares. However, the Country Park is further subdivided into six small fields as shown in Figure 2.1. The approximate sizes of these fields and the pond are as follows:

- Field 1: 1.1 hectares
- Field 2: 1.6 hectares
- Field 3: 2.2 hectares
- Field 4: 4.1 hectares
- Field 5: 1.2 hectares
- Field 6: 2.1 hectares
- Pond: 0.3 hectares

2.2 The fields are all subject to regular grazing except for Field 1. While fields are being grazed the public is excluded, with access being reinstated once grazing has ceased (Grover, 2017). Therefore, the total area that is subject to permanent or rotational (i.e. regular) closure is approximately 11.5 hectares, which is 46% of the Park's area. This means that 64% of the Park's total area is permanently open to the public.

2.3 Both Pegwell Bay Country Park and Stonelees Nature Reserve offer several fixed-access resources to visitors including parking, toilets, picnic areas and a network of paths. There is also a semi-permanent bird hide. Each of these is described in more detail below:

Parking

2.4 Together both sites provide parking space for 20 to 30 vehicles. Parking is on the basis of purchase of a day and/ or season ticket. An on-site machine issues tickets and records sales.

Figure 2.1 Field layout at Pegwell Bay Country Park



Source: Contains OpenStreetMap data, 2018

Toilets

- 2.5 A toilet block is available adjacent to one of the parking areas. This is fully equipped for use by disabled visitors.

Picnic areas

- 2.6 There are a number of mown picnic areas throughout Pegwell Bay Country Park. The area closest to the car park further benefits from the presence of several picnic benches.

Paths

- 2.7 A total in excess of 7 km of paths provide access through and around both Park and Nature Reserve. The network is described in detail in the next chapter of this Strategy Figure 3.1 below.

Signage

- 2.8 Few of the routes in the Park and/ or Nature Reserve are signposted or waymarked, although all of the major paths are either metalled or mown, making them easy to follow on the ground.
- 2.9 The England Coast Path (ECP) is signed around both Pegwell Bay Country Park and Stonelees Nature Reserve.
- 2.10 The cycleway (RR15) is signed where it joins/ leaves Sandwich Road.

Seats

- 2.11 In addition to benches in the picnic area closest to the car park, there are several benches and/ or seats located around both sites. The condition of the seats is variable with several being in a poor condition.

Bird Hide

- 2.12 A large bird hide built into a shipping container is located to give bird-watching opportunities across the bay and is also marked on Figure 3.1 below.
- 2.13 A mobile café operates from the Pegwell Bay Country Park's car park. However, this is not considered to be a material consideration for the purposes of this Access Management Strategy.

3. Standards to Be Maintained/ Achieved

- 3.1 The minimum accessibility standard that should be aimed for during O&M and after decommissioning is that existing on the Park and Nature Reserve immediately before construction begins. That is, the aim should be for visitors to be able to enjoy a level of accessibility that is no less than that enjoyed today. It is noted that this reflects the post-Nemo link conditions. This Strategy acknowledges that there has been some reduction in accessibility levels brought about by Nemo link, compared to earlier times.
- 3.2 Further to this general standard expectation, accessibility is subject to policy and legal provisions. These are discussed below.

Countryside & Coastal Access Improvement Plan

- 3.3 Kent County Council's Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan (CCAIP) contains the following observation:

"The accessibility of routes is very important, not least to support use by the widest range of people, including those with mobility impairments. Our research has shown it makes a huge difference to local communities, with a clear request from Parish Councils to improve route accessibility. Better, more accessible routes also encourage use by infrequent walkers, and good quality routes add to the rural visitor economy offer."

- 3.4 This is translated into a number of policy objectives within the plan, specifically:
- **M2:** Use the Countryside Access Good Design Guide to consider disability in design;
 - **M3:** Officers will proactively seek opportunities to improve the accessibility of the network, following consultation with local landowners and parishes;
 - **M6:** Make promoted routes as accessible as possible and promote them to a wide audience; and
 - **D2:** Secure the protection and enhancement of the access estate through commenting on and influencing, emerging planning policy documents and planning applications that may impact on access to green space and the Public Rights of Way network.

Equality Act 2010

- 3.5 The provision of facilities and services for disabled people is covered by the Equality Act 2010. Most relevant to this strategy is the provision in section 20(4) stating:

“The second requirement is a requirement, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.”

Current accessibility

- 3.6 The current main paths network and key features along them are shown in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 Overview of key paths



Source: Contains OpenStreetMap data, 2018.

- 3.7 There is a variety of accessibility standards exhibited by the current paths network, but these can be reduced to four broad categories with the following attributes:

Category 1 (c. 350 metres in length and c. 5,700 sq. metres)

- 3.8 This includes paths and accessible areas with a sealed surface (usually tarmac) shared with motor vehicles. These routes are flat, with a slight camber or cross-fall and are relatively smooth. The minimum width is approximately five metres. These areas/ lengths are physically accessible to all except for unaccompanied users with visual impairment (because of the proximity of motor vehicles) but, in practice, are dominated by vehicular traffic and used by pedestrians only for reaching their vehicles. The category 1 routes and parking areas are north of the working area and therefore not featured in the strategy's proposals.

Category 2 (c. 2,800 metres in length)

- 3.9 The Thanet Coastal Path (TCP) / ECP around the eastern perimeter of the Park, with a short spur to the car park area, is a constructed stone-surfaced (metalled) path, as is the RR15 cycle path along its western perimeter. Both paths are flat and reasonably smooth, though with some minor puddling in wet weather. The cycle path is generally two to three metres of usable space. However, the ECP is much narrower with encroaching vegetation reducing the hard-surface width to around one metre or less.
- 3.10 The running surface of the (RR15) cycle path has been largely unaffected by the Nemo link, however, the ECP/ car park link path now crosses the Nemo bund over a large ramp. The ramp has variable gradient but is generally constructed at about 3.5° or 1:16.5 (6%), and is considered to meet accessibility standards.
- 3.11 The metalled paths are usable by visitors with a wide range of abilities.

Category 3 (c. 2,100 metres in length)

- 3.12 A high proportion of the paths throughout Pegwell Bay Country Park are mown grass tracks with a general width of three metres. The paths are regularly mown and maintained with a short sward height that both eases accessibility and demarcates the paths on the ground. While these paths are on flat ground, they are prone to undulations and are softer than the metalled paths. As such, they will present some difficulties to self-powered wheel chair and mobility scooter users. Occasionally the paths are on low bunds offering slight elevation (of less than one metre) above the surrounding land.

- 3.13 There are a few locations where Category 3 paths have been intersected by the Nemo link, and ramps installed over the Nemo bund. The ramps are generally steeper on these paths, with average gradients of up to 7.4° or 1:7.5 (13%).

Category 4 (c. 1,550 metres length outside of fenced Stonelees Nature Reserve areas)

- 3.14 There is a lower tier of (walked) minor paths which are not maintained by mowing and which are generally only one metre in width, sometimes less. These paths, although with no overall gradients, tend to be uneven and with tussock vegetation that restricts their use to able-bodied walkers.
- 3.15 The paths on Stonelees Nature Reserve are all considered to fall within this category. However, with the exception of the perimeter ECP, most of the paths on the reserve exclude disabled users because of the number of stiles and fences that need to be negotiated. The paths that require stile crossing have not been included in the accessible length total above.

Structures

- 3.16 In addition to the paths themselves, there is a number of access structures that have been installed which impact upon the site's local accessibility.

Kissing gates

- 3.17 A few kissing gates, with RADAR key access, have been installed on both the Country Park and Nature Reserve, presumably in order to provide access while also enabling active grazing of the land.
- 3.18 There is no evidence of use of the kissing gates by wheelchair and/ or scooter users.

Stiles

- 3.19 There are several stiles in path lines crossing field boundaries within the Stonelees Nature Reserve. Several of these stiles are in poor condition, but all of them are a significant barrier to all but able-bodied visitors. No stiles have been found to be located within Pegwell Bay Country Park.

Steps

- 3.20 Visitors wishing to follow the ECP south from the Park to the Nature Reserve are directed down a short flight of steps and on through a disabled access kissing gate. The steps are an absolute barrier to all mobility scooter and wheelchair users, and significantly reduce accessibility for families with push-chairs.

Accessibility standards

- 3.21 Acceptable accessibility standards vary in relation to the geographical nature of the land, with lower standards acceptable in an open country, semi-wild setting compared to an urban, formal setting. The Countryside for All – Physical Access Standards are defined for four settings:
- Urban and formal;
 - Urban fringe and managed;
 - Rural and working; and
 - Open country, semi-wild and wild land.
- 3.22 The most appropriate category for paths within the Country Park is that of the 'urban fringe and managed' setting. For Stonelees Nature Reserve the 'rural and working' setting is applicable entailing a lower standard of provision, primarily as a softer, 'green' surface.
- 3.23 The key elements of the standard relevant to Pegwell Bay Country Park are:
- Path Surface - must be hard and firm with very few loose stones (none bigger than ten millimetres);
 - Path Width – 1,200 mm minimum width;
 - Width Restrictions – 815 mm minimum width for no more than 300 mm along the length of path – 1,000 mm width for no more than 1,600 mm along the length of the path;
 - Barriers - No stiles, steps, fences, hedges etc. blocking the path;
 - Ramp Gradient - 1:12 maximum;
 - Rise of ramps - Where the path is steeper than 1:20 (i.e. a ramp), a level, resting place – a 'landing' - should be provided. The maximum height rise between landings should be no more than 830 mm.

Table 3.1 Maximum distance between landings for 830 mm vertical climb

Gradient	Maximum Distance Between Landings
1:18	14.94
1:16	13.28
1:14	11.62
1:12	9.9

- Cross Slope - 1:45 maximum;
- Steps – ten millimetres maximum;
- Surface Break - Breaks in path surface as in boardwalks, grates, grills etc. should be no more than 12 mm measured in the direction of travel along the path;
- Clear Walking Tunnel - A tunnel clear of overhanging or encroaching vegetation, and other obstructions should be a minimum of 1,200 mm wide and 2,100 mm high;
- Passing Place - There should be a passing place every 100 metres along the path. The minimum width of the path should be 1,500 mm for 2,000 mm along the length of the path; and
- Resting Places - There should be a resting point every 200 m along the path. Each resting point should have a seat or perch which is placed on surfaced, level ground. Resting points should be set back from the path and, in addition to the path width, be at least 1,200 mm wide and 1,500 mm long.

The same standards will be adopted within Stonelees Nature Reserve except that reinstatement will be to a natural 'green' surface, in keeping with the rest of the Nature Reserve.

- 3.24 The Countryside for All standards do not include guidance on the appropriate length of landings on a slope. However, Scottish Natural Heritage has also published widely respected standards under its Paths for All partnership. The standards state that the minimum length and width of landings on ramps should be 1,500 mm and 1,200 mm, respectively (Paths for All & Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016). It is proposed that these standards will be adopted for any necessary landings within the Thanet Extension works.

Overarching principles

- All access provided (temporary or permanent) will meet or improve upon the relevant Access for All standards;
- North-south linkage through the park will be maintained at all times;
- The continuity of the ECP, albeit on diversions, will be maintained at all times;
- The continuity of the cycle route, RR15, will be maintained at all times; and
- If necessary, the agreement of relevant land owner(s) (i.e. Kent County Council (KCC)) will be sought for diversions and new links to enable the least inconvenient diversions to be put in place.

4. Practical Proposals

- 4.1 This section sets out a series of proposals for managing and reducing the impacts on access generated by the construction and O&M phases of Thanet Extension. The proposals below are designed to minimise disruption and maximise accessibility in keeping with the purpose and environment of the land, and the current constraints on accessibility.
- 4.2 The decommissioning phase is expected to be a relatively lighter touch version of the construction phase. This phase is too far ahead in the future to meaningfully plan for beyond making broad assumptions. Furthermore, there is considerable uncertainty of the decommissioning process that will be adopted (this will depend on the technology available in the future). With that in mind, please note that current proposals see the cables being removed during the decommissioning phase, but the ducting will be left *in situ*, thus minimising the impacts on Pegwell Bay Country Park.

Construction Phase

- 4.3 During the construction of the cable route, it will be necessary to close off a number of the path segments for varying periods of time. The affected segments and the nature of the interruption is set out in Table 4.1, below. Please note that the segments listed in the table are those identified in Figure 3.1, above.

Table 4.1 Segments affected during the construction of Thanet Extension, and proposals for reducing impacts			
Approach to mitigation	Segment number or feature	Effect	Proposals
Continual management	2.8 RR15	The cycle route, RR15, will need to be regularly crossed by delivery vehicles, operatives and plant during the whole construction period.	A crossing point will be set up such that the cycle route is open at all times except when vehicle crossings are necessary. The crossing point will be manned when in use to ensure the safety of RR15 users.
Ensure continued access (Option 1)	2.6/ 2.7	The ECP/ TCP will be obstructed for a number of months by the construction of the landfall site and transition pit.	A temporary, variable route accessible to all will be created within the RLB to maintain the connectivity of the ECP and TCP (Figure 4.1). The route will be created from removable mats, providing a smooth surface suitable for all abilities, including wheelchair users. Any diversion in excess of 200 metres length will be provided with a suitable resting location. While work is actively taking place, there will be a manned crossing to ensure user safety. At reinstatement, any bund crossing will be constructed to the Countryside for All standards.
Ensure continued access (Option 2)	3.5/ 3.8	These segments provide a main north-south route through the centre of the Park but will be temporarily obstructed while the bund is constructed across them.	Temporary diversions will be used to maintain connectivity, with only the shortest possible diversions (Figure 4.1). The temporary path diversions will be created within the RLB using removable mats, with reinstatement on the original line and to the original standard when work is complete. While work is actively taking place, there will be a manned crossing to ensure user safety.

			At reinstatement, any bund crossing will be constructed to the Countryside for All standards.
Ensure continued access (Option 3)	3.2/ 3.9	These segments may need to be closed during the construction phase.	Segments 3.2 and (part of) 3.9 may be used as for a period as the diverted ECP route, during which time they will be fully accessible. While the cables and bund cross, these segments will be closed. No diversion will be offered due to the proximity of the diverted ECP route.
Ensure continued access (Option 4)	2.13	This segment will be interrupted by works to transition the cable from over-ground bund in the Park to a buried trench in the Nature Reserve.	While work is underway, a short diversion will be provided to allow users to skirt around the works on a temporary path. The short diversion will be to a standard suitable for access for all abilities. While work is actively taking place, there will be a manned crossing to ensure user safety. At reinstatement, any bund crossing will be constructed to the Countryside for All standards.
Ensure continued access (Option 5)	4.7 (ECP)	The connection of the ECP to the RR15 will be interrupted as the cable trench is constructed at this location.	This route will be provided with a short, temporary diversion within the RLB while works are in progress. While work is actively taking place, there will be a manned crossing to ensure user safety. At reinstatement, any bund crossing will be constructed to the Countryside for All standards.
Temporary closure (Option 1)	3.3/3.4	These segments run approximately on the line of the cable bund and will be closed while work is in operation.	The ECP diversion and segment 3.10 (which will be untouched) will provide a continuously available alternative while work is in progress. Upon completion, the routes will be reinstated as close as possible to their original standard and line at ground level.

Temporary closure (Option 2)	3.13	This path segment will need to be temporarily closed while it is crossed by the cable bund.	This segment joins the RR15 at the main vehicle access corridor crossing point. The path will, where practicable, be kept open for most of the construction period but will need to be closed while it is crossed by the cable bund. During this time, walkers will be asked to use the alternative segments 3.6, 3.5 and 3.8 route.
Limited access during construction dependent on final design	3.6	This segment will fall within the construction corridor and may need to be closed during the construction phase.	This segment links to 2.8 – the RR15 crossing point. As such, it may not be feasible to keep this path segment open during the construction phase. However, if possible, the construction fence will be sited to the south of this segment, allowing the path to remain open.
No managed access during construction	4.1, 4.2, 4.3	These informal path segments will be severed during the construction phase.	As these are minor paths and are not used for park-vehicle access, it is not proposed to make specific provision during the construction phase.
Re-siting	Bird hide	The bird hide would be unavailable within the construction area.	It is proposed that this unit should be re-sited subject to final design and in discussion with KCC.

4.4 The overall effect of these proposals is shown in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Additional requirements for Thanet Extension construction phase



Source: Contains OpenStreetMap data, 2018.

Operation and Maintenance Phase

- 4.5 All of the current paths are expected to be brought back into full use during the O&M phase. The main paths network will be as shown in Figure 4.2 overleaf.

Ramped bund crossings

- 4.6 If the above ground installation option is selected up to four bund crossings will be required. These will be constructed to a gradient of not greater than 1:12 and a minimum width of three metres to allow access for maintenance vehicles. A landing of not less than 1,500 mm length will be included on each side of the ramp, with a further landing of at least 1,500 mm on top of the bund.
- 4.7 The ramps will have a compacted stone surface, with a wearing layer surface of stone not greater than ten millimetres.

England Coast Path/ Thanet Coast Path

- 4.8 The ECP in the vicinity of the landfall site will be reinstated to a compacted stone surface, with a maximum surface stone size of ten millimetres. The reinstated width will be a minimum of three metres.
- 4.9 The ECP in Stonelees Nature Reserve will be reinstated as a green surface path, in keeping with the rest of the paths on the reserve.

Segment 2.13

- 4.10 This segment will be reinstated in keeping with the ECP as a compacted stone surface.

Bird Hide

- 4.11 The bird hide may have been moved during the Construction Phase. In the event this happens and the new site proves acceptable, it is suggested that the hide remains in its new location. However, if required, the hide can be returned to its original location.

Figure 4.2 Additional requirements for Thanet Extension O&M phase



Source: Contains OpenStreetMap data, 2018.

Appendix A - Bibliography

- Kent County Council, 2013. Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan 2013 -2017. [Available on-line] <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/countryside-policies-and-reports/countryside-and-coastal-access-improvement-plan> [Accessed 6/4/18]
- Grover, L. (2018). Pegwell Bay Country Park – Management Plan 2014-2019 (Updated January 2018). Kent County Council.
- Paths for All & Scottish Natural Heritage. 2016. Outdoor Access Design Guide [Available on-line] <https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa/creating-paths/outdoor-access-design-guide.html> . [Accessed 2/4/18]



REGENERIS

www.regeneris.co.uk

London: 0207 336 6188

Manchester: 0161 234 9910