

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm

Appendix 25, Annex B to Deadline 1 Submission:
Natural England Letter

Relevant Examination Deadline: 1

Submitted by Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Date: January 2019

Revision A

Drafted By:	Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd
Approved By:	Daniel Bates
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Revision A	Original Document submitted to the Examining Authority
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Date: 08 March 2018
Our ref: 239243
Your ref: N/A



Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
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Dear Sean (cc Duncan Watson),

Thanet Extension Offshore Windfarm – Phase 2 Characterisation Surveys

Thank you for your consultation dated 15 February 2018. The following constitutes Natural England's (NE) advice under our Discretionary Advise Service (DAS).

Reptiles

NE note that "good populations" of reptiles exist across Pegwell Bay Country Park, and "low populations" across the other three areas that were surveyed. Of the species highlighted within the report none of them are designated site features and will not require a licence from ourselves. However, the Viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and the Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) are a UK BAP priority species, and every effort should be made to reduce the predicted impacts upon these species as far as possible. NE would expect further details within the relevant environmental management plan. It should also be stated that sand lizards, which are a European Protected Species (EPS), are unlikely to be affected by the development as their reintroduction site is located in the dune habitat north of the river Stour and therefore outside of the red line boundary.

Badgers

NE acknowledge that the surveys did not find any evidence of badger presence within the survey area and agree with the conclusions presented in the survey report. We welcome the recommendation that survey data is updated prior to any proposed works commencing. If any evidence of badgers is found than a licence may be required from ourselves.

National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Surveys

NE consider that the current NVC survey, plus the addition of the Phase 1 habitat survey has provided sufficient information to determine the baseline conditions and the vegetation communities that occur within the red line boundary of the proposed development. However, NE acknowledge that the surveys took place relatively late on in the field season, and if further surveys are not considered necessary, than any further data that can be obtained from other sources should be utilised to further strengthen the baseline data.

Invertebrates

NE are content that the current assessment has provided sufficient data to characterise and evaluate the value of the site for terrestrial invertebrates. However, we note in section 2.2.2 it states *“The SSSI is also notified for its overall invertebrate assemblage, but no further details are provided regarding the species forming part of this assemblage and therefore it was not possible to assess whether particular species forming part of this assemblage...”* Following further information provided by ourselves, on the species included in the SSSI invertebrate assemblage, we would expect the report to be updated following this information.

Bats

NE acknowledge that a number of bat species were recorded during the surveys. It was also noted, and recently highlighted within a recent evidence plan meeting, that a full seasons worth of data is not available and was not collected, as the months April - July are currently missing. A proposal to carry out further roost emergence surveys and activity surveys in April and May was put forward to partially plug this gap in the data. NE encourage these further surveys are carried out to further strengthen the evidence base. On a similar note, roost surveys were unable to be carried out on a small number of trees that could be potentially affected by the development and were highlighted as having “moderate potential to supporting roosting bats.” Therefore, if it is likely that these trees will be affected by the proposed works, then they should be subject to the two nocturnal roost surveys between May and September.

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

Yours sincerely

Will Hutchinson

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