

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm

Appendix 38 to Deadline 3 Submission: In Principle Offshore Ornithology Monitoring Plan

Relevant Examination Deadline: Deadline 3

Submitted by Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd

Date: March 2019

Revision A

Drafted By:	APEM Ltd and GoBe Consultants
Approved By:	Daniel Bates
Date of Approval:	March 2019
Revision:	A

Revision A	Original document submitted to the Examining Authority
N/A	
N/A	

Copyright © 2019 Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd
All pre-existing rights retained

Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Overview of the draft 'In-Principle' Offshore Ornithology Monitoring Plan (OMP)...	4
1.2	Thanet Extension.....	5
2	In-principle Offshore Ornithology Monitoring Plan.....	6
2.1	Approach to OOMP	6
2.2	The requirement for in-principal monitoring plans	6
2.3	Proposed Ornithology Monitoring Plans for Consideration	7

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of the draft 'In-Principle' Offshore Ornithology Monitoring Plan (OMP)

- 1 Thanet Extension Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as Thanet Extension) has produced an 'in principle' offshore ornithology monitoring plan (OOMP) in order to agree the objectives of any monitoring required by the deemed Marine Licences (dMLs) prior to the grant of consent. In doing so, it is the intention that this will enable all relevant parties to have clarity on the rationale associated with ornithology monitoring requirements and focus from the outset on providing greater certainty on the limitations and deliverability of any monitoring.
- 2 It is the intention of Thanet Extension to consult on this OOMP with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and its scientific advisor (Cefas) and its statutory nature conservation advisor (Natural England) prior to completion of the examination phase. This OOMP is therefore, considered to represent Version 1 (V1.0) and it is envisaged that it will be updated following consultation during the examination phases.
- 3 The in principle OOMP sets out the in-principle monitoring proposals for the marine environment, with a focus on offshore ornithology (seabirds) only. The primary aims of the OOMP are to identify relevant offshore monitoring as required by the conditions of the draft Deemed Marine Licence (dML), to establish the objectives of such monitoring and to set out the guiding principles for delivering any monitoring required by the conditions contained within the draft dML.
- 4 It is the intention that this document will provide the basis for post-consent discussions with the MMO and the relevant statutory advisors to agree the exact detail (for instance; focal species, survey timings and / or methodologies) of any offshore monitoring that is required by the conditions of the dML. It should be noted that the final detailed plans for monitoring work will not be produced until closer to the time that the actual work will be undertaken (following final scheme design). These in turn will be agreed with the MMO (as required by the conditions of the draft dML) in consultation with their statutory advisors, where necessary.

1.2 Thanet Extension

- 5 Thanet Extension is a proposed offshore wind farm (OWF) located in the southern North Sea, being developed by Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd (Vattenfall) and comprising up to 34 wind turbine generators (WTGs) and associated offshore infrastructure. The Thanet Extension array area (i.e. the area in which the WTGs generators are located) is approximately 8 km from the coast of Kent.
- 6 A detailed description of the proposed development (offshore) can be found in the Project Description Chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) (PINS Ref APP-042/ Application Ref 6.2.1 Project Description (Offshore) ES Volume 2, Chapter 1).

2 In-principle Offshore Ornithology Monitoring Plan

2.1 Approach to OOMP

- 7 The approach to the Thanet Extension in-principle OOMP is to set out a number of proposals for implementing the monitoring conditions. The potential effects and receptors (in this case seabirds) from Thanet Extension for which monitoring options are being considered are presented in Section 2.2. Within Section 2.2 each of the potential effects from Thanet Extension are described in brief for the relevant phases of the project's life cycle (construction, operation or decommissioning).
- 8 At this stage no monitoring approaches are outlined for the construction or decommissioning phases. This document outlines the basic rationale behind the proposed monitoring, with reference to the MMO review of post consent monitoring¹ which noted that in some cases, a strategic research programme may provide more certainty than site-specific monitoring.

2.2 The requirement for in-principal monitoring plans

- 9 A number of potential impacts on seabirds (offshore ornithology) associated with the operational phase of Thanet Extension were identified in the Offshore Ornithology Chapter of the ES (PINS Ref APP-045/ Application Ref 6.2.4 Offshore Ornithology – ES Volume 2, Chapter 4). The outcome of the Thanet Extension Offshore Ornithology Chapter of the ES (PINS Ref APP-045/ Application Ref 6.2.4) concluded that the project would cause no more than a minor adverse or negligible effect on seabirds when considering the project alone.
- 10 Whilst no significant effects have been predicted, and this has been agreed with Natural England in the draft SoCG which accompanies this Deadline 3 submission, it has been agreed with Natural England that the aim of this OOMP would be to focus on red-throated diver displacement. Consultation with Natural England has identified that there is merit in validating the predictions in relation to the use of site specific and regional data in predicting displacement effects for red throated diver.

¹ Review of environmental data associated with post-consent monitoring of licence conditions of offshore wind farms

2.3 Proposed Ornithology Monitoring Plans for Consideration

- 11 The key receptor species potentially affected by displacement as a consequence of Thanet Extension is red-throated diver, which is a designated feature of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. The impact of displacement from the Array Area and an area around it (a buffer zone) during the operational phase of the proposed development may result in effective habitat loss and reduction in survival or fitness rates for red-throated diver.
- 12 Natural England's concern focused on the differing degrees of displacement of red-throated diver that have been identified in local post-construction studies, which formed the basis of the Applicant's assessment, and those identified from studies further afield. The Applicant had proposed to Natural England that the draft OOMP should focus on increasing the understanding of red-throated diver displacement. The Applicant had expressed its concern to Natural England that since there was a low density of red-throated diver in and around the proposed Thanet Extension Array Area there was the likelihood that a post-construction site-based study of displacement would have poor statistical power and as a result provide little contribution to our understanding of this species and OWF assessments. The Applicant proposed to Natural England that the alternative of a strategic study should form part of the draft OOMP. The updated SoCG submitted for Deadline 3 records the extent to which agreement has been reached on this point.
- 13 The principles that will inform the final OOMP include the following options. It is important to note that the principles seek to leave final discussion and adoption of the most suitable option to the post-consent phase. It is anticipated that this will allow consideration to be given to the preference for either site specific or more strategic studies to be undertaken in discussion with Natural England and the MMO.
 - Site specific studies (including standardised pre- and post-construction surveys) focussed on determining the potential extent of red-throated diver displacement rates from Thanet Extension. The aim of the study would be to test the key predictions assumed in the Thanet Extension impact assessments;
 - Contribution to a more strategic regional study that addresses a wider Industry question of red-throated diver disturbance responses to OWFs within the southern North Sea, with particular focus on OWFs within or in close proximity to the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. The aim of this would be to determine if different levels of spatial displacement are applicable due to different factors, including diver density, WTG size, the scale of the OWF, sea depth, shipping activity and other environmental factors.

Plan

- Contribution to species-specific studies of red-throated divers in order to reduce knowledge gaps relevant to diver responses to OWFs and the consequence of any potential displacement responses on their survival or fitness. This could be through contribution to existing studies (for instance the JNCC funded project assessing diver movements between breeding and non-breeding locations) or similar species-specific studies carried out by third parties;
- A meta-data analysis / study from OWF projects across the North Sea (UK and non-UK sites) to assess evidence on a wider regional basis in order to identify any common factors that influence spatial displacement from OWFs, including diver density, WTG size, the scale of the OWF, sea depth, shipping activity and other environmental factors.