



Hornsea Project Four

Letter of Comfort Between Hornsea Four and The Wildlife Trusts

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Revision Summary

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Revision Change Log

<i>Rev</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Description</i>
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Letter of Comfort between Hornsea Four & The Wildlife Trusts

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1.1 This letter of comfort between Ørsted Hornsea Project Four Limited (the Applicant) and The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) has been prepared for submission into the Hornsea Project Four Offshore Wind Farm (Hornsea Four) DCO application.
- 1.1.1.2 TWT, with more than 800,000 members are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the full range of the UK's habitats and species, whether they be in the countryside, in cities or at sea. TWT manages 2,300 reserves covering more than 90,000 hectares of land including coastal reserves; TWT stand up for wildlife, inspire people about the natural world and foster sustainable living.
- 1.1.1.3 The Applicant and TWT have had constructive engagement since mid-2018 through the Evidence Plan Process in which TWT were an active member of the Hornsea Four Marine Mammal Panel, which informed and guided the Hornsea Four Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for marine mammals.
- 1.1.1.4 On 21 April 2022 the Applicant agreed with TWT to withdraw the Examination document G1.19 Statement of Common Ground between Hornsea Project Four and The Wildlife Trusts submitted at Deadline 1 (REP1-047) and replace this with a Letter of Comfort (LoC) for submission at Deadline 5. The reason for this being twofold; a) that although TWT has outstanding concerns about the project, there is currently a lack of resource to engage in the examination and b) that matters on which both parties remain in discussion are strategic in scope. Therefore, a LoC is considered to be more appropriate than a statement of common ground in order to capture the ongoing collaborative nature of discussions at a portfolio level. This does not preclude TWT raising concerns at a project level.
- 1.1.1.5 The ultimate parent company of Ørsted Hornsea Project Four Ltd is Ørsted A/S (Ørsted). Part of the A/S Ørsted group of companies develops, constructs, and operates offshore and onshore wind farms, bioenergy plants and provides energy products to its customers. Ørsted is the world leader in offshore wind, with around 30 years' experience and a strong track record delivering successful projects, with approximately 6.8 GW constructed offshore wind farms worldwide, and a further 3.1 GW under construction. In the UK, Ørsted owns or operates 12 operational offshore wind farms, which generate enough green electricity to power over 4.5 million UK homes a year.
- 1.1.1.6 Ørsted and TWT are committed to working in a collaborative manner at a strategic level to ensure continued engagement across Ørsted's UK portfolio of offshore windfarm projects. This engagement is led by Ørsted's Strategic Environment Team and TWT's Marine Conservation Team and is in addition to any engagement that TWT may have in relation to a specific Ørsted project, for example as part of a Working Group or as a consultee. TWT and Ørsted can confirm that at present resources will be focussed upon strategic discussions.

Any further project specific material comments from TWT will be communicated to Ørsted prior to formal submission.

- 1.1.1.7 Ørsted's Strategic Environment Team and TWT's Marine Conservation Team have regular bilateral meetings, approximately every two months. The bilateral meetings aim to provide project specific and strategic work updates, to agree areas of common ground and identify opportunities for collaborative working. Discussions can include focus on TWT's overarching interests in relation to the challenges of reaching net zero by 2050 whilst achieving nature's recovery and include varied topics such as mitigation, compensation, biodiversity net gain, underwater noise management and monitoring.

1.2 Examples of Collaboration

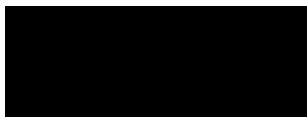
- 1.2.1.1 As a global sustainability leader with a strong commitment to protect biodiversity, Ørsted has set the ambition to deliver a net-positive biodiversity impact in all renewable energy projects it commissions from 2030 at the latest. Ørsted are also actively seeking to identify and pilot initiatives that can have a positive impact on biodiversity before 2030, including benthic habitat enhancement, regeneration of intertidal habitats and incorporating nature-inclusive design principles. To address the challenge of measuring biodiversity impact, Ørsted have joined the Science Based Targets Network Corporate Engagement Program and the IUCN's Impact Mitigation and Compensation working group. These programmes will help to develop nature science-based targets and advance long-term development of tools and guidance to measure Ørsted's impact and dependencies on biodiversity, land, water, and oceans. TWT welcome Ørsted's biodiversity ambition and look forward to receiving ongoing updates on the progress of Ørsted's ambition.
- 1.2.1.2 Ørsted have an active Research and Development Programme with strategic targets to deliver data and evidence to reduce global consenting risks. Ørsted are uniquely placed in industry to deliver targets in relation to marine mammals and underwater noise with the establishment of an in-house underwater noise competence centre (UnNo-X). TWT welcome Ørsted's strategic Research and Development targets and in-house expertise, which aim to address concerns of direct relevance to TWT.
- 1.2.1.3 Ørsted are proactively engaged in academic research and industry forums to address environmental consenting risks that directly relate to TWT concerns. Ørsted are presently funding an ambitious research project, PREDICT (Predicting seasonal movement of marine top predators using fish migration routes and autonomous platforms). The project brings together academia and industry to investigate fish migration patterns as prey availability to better predict the locations and seasons where top-level predators (seabirds and mammals) may have increased interaction with wind farms. Ørsted are also active members of a wide range of industry groups. Ørsted will continue to provide updates to TWT on research and industry forum outputs at the regular bilateral meetings. TWT welcome Ørsted's participation in research and forums and the ongoing updates provided at bilateral meetings.
- 1.2.1.4 Ørsted are pleased to be working in partnership with the North West Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and The Crown Estate on the successful Marine Futures Internship Programme, which recently launched its fourth year. Through the programme, interns have gained valuable skills, knowledge and experience across a variety of marine sectors and have gone

on to work in TWT, Ørsted and Natural England. The recent agreed expansion of the programme to the East Coast is an exciting opportunity to develop and expand on this positive partnership.

- 1.2.1.5 In relation to compensation, Ørsted are leading an offshore wind industry collaboration, forming a Derogation Subgroup under the Offshore Wind Industry Council's (OWIC) Derogation Group. The group aims to establish a mechanism for and delivery of effective compensatory measures (as may be required under the Habitats Regulations) on a strategic scale. The OWIC Derogation Subgroup will provide updates to TWT via OWIC Pathways to Growth Coordination Group and will engage with TWT as the workstreams develop. Ørsted will also continue to provide updates directly to TWT at the regular bilateral meetings. TWT are appreciative of the ongoing updates on the progress of developing strategic compensation measures. TWT are keen to be involved in this process.
- 1.2.1.6 Ørsted and TWT will continue to engage at a strategic level to investigate and develop opportunities for collaborative working with the aim of addressing industry and TWT's interests in relation to the challenges of reaching net zero by 2050 whilst achieving nature's recovery and include varied topics such as mitigation, compensation, biodiversity net gain, underwater noise management and monitoring. TWT and Ørsted can confirm that at present resources will be focussed upon strategic discussions. Any further project specific material comments from TWT will be communicated to Ørsted prior to formal submission.

Signed on behalf of Orsted Hornsea Project Four Limited

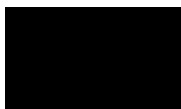
Julian Carolan



Consents Project Manager

Signed on behalf of The Wildlife Trusts

Tania Davey



Marine Planning Manager