

Hornsea Project Four

Written Summary of the Applicant's Oral Case at Issue Specific Hearing 12

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1.1 Issue Specific Hearing 12 (ISH12) on Habitats Regulations Assessment matters for the Hornsea Project Four Offshore Wind Farm took place on 22 July 2022 at 09:30 am and was held virtually, with attendees attending via Microsoft Teams.
- 1.1.1.2 The ISH12 broadly followed the agenda published by the Examining Authority (the ExA) on 11 July 2022 (The Agenda). The ExA, the Applicant, and the stakeholders discussed the Agenda items which broadly covered the areas outlined below:
 - the Marine Processes Supplementary Report [REP4-043];
 - MRSea_v2 and baseline ornithological data characterisation.
 - the Ornithological Assessment Sensitivity Report [REP5-065];
 - the Indirect Effects of Forage Fish and Ornithology report [REP5-085];
 - matters relating to derogation and compensation; and
 - overall summary of current positions on project and in-combination HRA effects.



Table 1: Summary of the Issue Specific Hearing 12

ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
Agenda Item	1 - Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the hearing	
1	Welcome, introductions, arrangements	Applicant
		The ExA introduced themselves. The ExA noted that Mr Mahon would lead the hearing.
		The only party in attendance at the hearing was the Applicant.
		The representatives for the Applicant introduced themselves as follows:
		- Gary McGovern, Partner, Pinsent Masons LLP;
		- Sean Sweeney, lead for offshore and intertidal assessments and Associate Director / Hea
		of Ornithology Consultancy, APEM;
		- Matthew Boa, Senior Ornithologist, APEM;
		- Dr Julian Carolan, Consent Project Manager for the Applicant;
		- Fraser Carter, Senior Ornithologist, GoBE consultants;
		- Felicity Browner, Environment Manager for the Applicant;
		- Glen Gillespie, Technical Director at GoBE consultants;
		- Dr Sarah Randall, Derogation Lead for the Applicant; and
		- Rachel Sinclair, Marine Mammal Consultant, SMRU consulting.
	2 – The Marine Processes Supplementary Report [REP4-043]	
2	The ExA noted that the main purpose of the hearing	Gary McGovern confirmed on behalf of the Applicant.
	was to examine matters relating to the Habitats	
	Regulation Assessment (" HRA "), expanding on matters	
	discussed in issue specific hearings 10 (" ISH10") and 11	
	(" ISH11"). The ExA asked whether in the absence of	
	Natural England the Applicant was happy to include	
	their recent submission with reference AS-048 in	
	discussions.	
2.1	The ExA noted that in ISH10, the ExA heard that	Mr McGovern confirmed.
	Natural England's risk log includes issues on receptors	
	for the marine processes assessment. The ExA asked	The ExA noted an action point for Natural England to provide an update on their position.
	whether the Applicant believed the marine processes	
	supplementary report (REP4-043) supports the	
	contention that all pathways have now been	



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	accounted for in the Report to Inform the Appropriate	
2.2	Assessment (" RIAA"). The ExA presumed that the Applicant did not expect to	Mr McGovern confirmed that the Applicant was not proposing to undertake any further work and tha
	undertake any further work and therefore imagined	therefore there were no implications for the Examination timetable.
	there were no implications for the timetable but asked	
	the Applicant to confirm.	
	- MRSea_v2 and baseline ornithological data characterisation	
3.1-3.3	The ExA noted that in ISH11, the parties had	Sean Sweeney, on behalf of the Applicant, confirmed that as requested by Natural England th
	considered the output from running MRSea version 2	Applicant had rerun MRSea_V2 for the four key species (gannet, kittiwake, guillemot and razorbill) an
	and the revised data characterisation. The ExA asked	rerun design-based abundances for all species, including those previously assessed using MRSea_V
	the Applicant to provide a summary of its position on	(fulmar, great black-backed gull and puffin). As detailed in the meeting minutes for the EP Technica
	marine ornithology in relation to the HRA to include	Panel Meeting 16 (REP05-080), the following final approach for baseline characterisation and th
	compensation for kittiwake and the without prejudice	most appropriate data sources for use in impact assessments was agreed with Natural England wi
	compensation for other species. The ExA also asked	respect to qualifying features of the FFC SPA:
	the Applicant to cover agenda items 3.2 and 3.3 in its	
	summary.	Gannet collision risk modelling – Assessed using MRSea_V2 seabird density estimates;
		Gannet displacement analysis – Assessed using design-based abundance estimates;
		• Kittiwake collision risk modelling – Assessed using MRSea_V2 seabird density estimates;
		Guillemot displacement analysis – Assessed using MRSea_V2 seabird density estimates;
		Razorbill displacement analysis – Assessed using design-based abundance estimates; an
		Puffin displacement analysis – Assessed using design-based abundance estimates.
		The differences in the annual predicted impacts between assessments within the DCO Application
		RIAA (APP-167) and the Ornithology EIA & HRA Annex (REP05a-011) are as follows based on the
		Applicant's approach to assessment on seabirds from the Flamborough and Filey Coast Special
		Protection Area (" FFC SPA "):
		• Gannet collision risk modelling – 8.5 to 7.1, resulting in a reduction of 1.4 predicted
		mortalities per annum (excluding the inclusion of macro avoidance);
		• Gannet displacement analysis – 3.2-4.3 to 4.0-5.3, resulting in an increase of between 1.0
		to 1.2 predicted mortalities per annum;
		• Kittiwake collision risk modelling –21.2 to 23.3, resulting in an increase of 2.1 predicted
		mortalities per annum;



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		 Guillemot displacement analysis – 35.1 to 39.5, resulting in an increase of 4.4 predicted mortalities per annum; Razorbill displacement analysis – 1.5 to 1.9, resulting in an increase of 0.4 predicted mortalities per annum; and Puffin Displacement analysis – 0.7 to 0.9, resulting in an increase of 0.2 predicted mortalities per annum. The Applicant considers that these minor differences in predicted impacts do not materially affect the conclusions that an Adverse Effect on Integrity ("AEoI") can be ruled out for all qualifying features of FFC SPA for the project alone. The ExA noted that the Applicant had mentioned macro avoidance in relation to gannet and asked if
		the Applicant intended to remove measures for gannet from the compensation measures, given the results.
		Mr Sweeney confirmed that Natural England had notified the Applicant that there was no longer a need for compensation for gannet. Subject to Natural England's written confirmation therefore, the Applicant intends to remove measures for gannet from the compensation measures.
		The ExA noted an action point for Natural England and the RSPB to confirm their position on the adequacy of the revised baseline and any need for mitigation or compensation at a HRA level.
Agenda Item 4- 4.1	The Ornithological Assessment Sensitivity Report [REP5-065]	
	The ExA asked the Applicant to comment on the implications of the Ornithological Assessment Sensitivity Report (the "Sensitivity Report ") for the HRA and asked whether any updates to the RIAA were needed.	Mr Sweeney outlined that the Applicant's position remained that it considered there are no AEoI for the project alone or in combination for the FFC SPA key species in the RIAA, with the exception of kittiwake in combination with other plans and projects. Within the Sensitivity Report, the Applicant has outlined its position, which remains the same as throughout the Examination. The Sensitivity Report outlines parameters that the Applicant considers would be useful for future assessments. The post-consent monitoring data in particular is very useful.
		The ExA asked the Applicant to clarify whether it had modified its position in relation to kittiwake for the project alone or in combination since the submission of its DCO application.



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		Mr Sweeney advised that the Applicant had altered its position in relation to the AEoI for kittiwake at
		FFC SPA in relation to the in combination assessment due to the Secretary of State's decisions in
		another recent offshore wind farm consent decision.
4.1-4.7	The ExA asked the Applicant to provide a summary of	Mr Sweeney noted that the Applicant wanted to draw the ExA's attention to a report published by
	its position in relation to agenda items 4.1 to 4.7.	The Crown Estate entitled the "Offshore Round 4 Leasing Plan Level HRA" ("The Crown Estate's
		Report") (TCE, 2022). The Applicant thought it was worth considering since The Crown Estate is the
		competent authority for offshore plan-level HRA (for Round 4) and The Crown Estate's Report had
		been approved by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Mr
		Sweeney noted that parameters within The Crown Estate's Report were similar to those put forward
		by the Applicant.
		The ExA asked if the Applicant intended to submit the report into the Examination.
		Mr McGovern confirmed this would be done at Deadline 6.
		Mr Sweeney reiterated that the Applicant's Sensitivity Report had noted that a number of parameters,
		especially for kittiwake, resulted in differences of up to 80% between the various approaches of the
		statutory nature conservation body (" SNCB "), the Applicant, and other parties in the industry. The
		Crown Estate's Report (TCE, 2022) states that the current SNCB parameters have weak applicability
		to offshore wind farms, especially when considering flight speeds and nocturnal activity factors, two
		parameters that would provide considerable reductions to the predicted level of collision risk
		mortality at the HRA level for the assessments of all designated sites in the UK and are more reliably
		informed by considering the recent post-consent monitoring data on collision risk modelling (" CRM ").
		Mr Sweeney moved on to discuss displacement. The Applicant undertook an in-depth review for
		gannet and auk species. Those documents were submitted as REP2-045 for gannet and REP1-069 for
		auks. Mr Sweeney drew attention to the fact that other offshore wind farms were using data coming
		from those reports, some of which had submitted their preliminary environmental information reports,
		Environmental Statements and Report to Inform Appropriate Assessments. Mr Sweeney also drew
		attention to The Crown Estate's Report which states in similar terminology (to the Applicant) that the
		SNCB advocated displacement range for auks is not applicable to offshore wind farms. The upper end
		of the displacement ranges in The Crown Estate's Report are far lower than the displacement figures

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		recommended by the SNCB. The Crown Estate Report also states that the actual displacement levels
		are much lower than the upper end of the ranges used in that report. Mr Sweeney noted again that
		the findings of The Crown Estate's Report had been approved by the Secretary of State for BEIS.
		The ExA noted that it was not necessary to cover macro-avoidance, since the Applicant had already
		addressed this earlier in the hearing.
		On PVA modelling, Mr Boa for the Applicant noted that as advised in ISH11, the Applicant had been
		made aware there was an issue with the PVA Model and had reviewed all PVA modelling accordingly
		The only PVA runs affected are those for kittiwake. As noted earlier, the Applicant has already
		changed its position for the kittiwake feature of the FFC SPA in relation to an in combination AEoI. As
		such, there is no longer a need to use the PVA modelling for that species, since the PVA Model is used
		to find the 'tipping point' for determining an AEoI (or not) and not for determining compensation, which
		the Applicant has already agreed to provide for this species.
		The ExA asked if the Applicant thought it was anywhere close to the AEoI 'tipping point' for the
		impacts of the project alone on kittiwake.
		Mr Boa confirmed it did not.
		On counterfactuals, the position remained as discussed in ISH11. The counterfactual of fina
		population size ("CFPS") is not considered reliable or applicable when considering a density
		independent PVA modelling. As presented within the PVA validation modelling figures presented
		within the Ornithological Assessment Sensitivity Report The final population size becomes more
		unrealistic with increasing timeframe due to the lack of density dependence. The best course of action
		as outlined in ISH11, is to rely solely on the counterfactual of population growth rate ("CFPGR ").
		Regarding regional breeding season populations, Mr Sweeney stated the definitions are defined by
		those colonies which are within foraging range of the Hornsea Four array area. The Applicant, Natura
		England and the RSPB all agree on the latest population sizes used.
		In relation to the definition of breeding seasons, Mr Sweeney noted that there had been an updated
		position from Natural England three days prior to the hearing in their submission with reference AS

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		048. There is still a difference of opinion in relation to the seasonal definitions for gannet and kittiwake.
		The Applicant has put forward its position as well as site-specific and tagging data. Mr Sweeney
		highlighted that it was worth noting that Natural England had confirmed the differences in opinion
		would make no difference to the outcomes of the HRA.
4.8	The ExA noted that Natural England had provided the	Mr Sweeney confirmed.
	Applicant with further advice on apportionment at	
	Deadline 5 in the form of two notes. One had been on	The ExA noted that as outlined in ISH11, the Applicant believes there would similarly be high numbers
	apportionment for gannet and kittiwake and the other	of clusters of auks elsewhere in the North Sea.
	had been on guillemot and razorbill. AS-048 also	
	covers apportionment in the FFC SPA in relation to	Mr Sweeney confirmed and noted that details are provided in the report on the Indirect Effects of
	auks. Natural England have confirmed that their advice	Forage Fish (REP5-085).
	was specific to Hornsea Four due to the large number	
	of auks recorded in August and September and due to	The ExA asked the Applicant to comment on Natural England's belief that Hornsea Project Four could
	the proximity to the FFC SPA. Natural England	be differentiated from other offshore wind farms on the basis of its proximity to the FFC SPA.
	contends that the numbers recorded here are	
	considerably higher than those recorded for other	Mr Sweeney advised that the Applicant disagreed with Natural England on this point. There are
	projects. The Applicant's submissions at Deadline 5a	multiple other projects in the North Sea and these go all the way along the East Coast of England and
	confirm that Natural England's advice was used in the	Scotland. The data from those projects suggests that pulses of auks of similar densities have been
	Applicant's Ornithology EIA and HRA Annex (REP5 -	recorded across Dogger Bank, other Hornsea projects and north of the border in Scottish waters. There
	078) but the Applicant wholly disagrees with Natural	are other Round 4 and ScotWind projects that would have similar experiences of pulses of auks moving
	England's recommendation. The ExA asked the	through their array areas. Mr Sweeney also stated that the density of birds is higher in areas closer to
	Applicant if that was an accurate summary.	the colony area itself (e.g. within the coastal waters in the FFC SPA) in comparison to the Hornsea Four
		array area. However, the higher numbers of birds in this period is not a phenomenon unique to Hornsea
		Project Four and the pulses of birds that do travel through the array area would do so very quickly. M
		Sweeney noted that following Natural England's recommendation here would set a worrying
		precedent and goes against the findings and recommendations within The Crown Estate's Report
		(TCE, 2022).
		The ExA asked the Applicant if it thought it was worth submitting a summary of the similarities
		between The Crown Estate's Report and the Applicant's position on its HRA.



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		Mr McGovern agreed and noted that the Applicant intended to submit the Crown Estate Report at
		Deadline 6, with a summary to follow at Deadline 7.
		The ExA thanked the Applicant and noted an action point to that effect.
		Returning to the subject of apportionment, the ExA noted that the Applicant had demonstrated its
		concerns for the offshore wind industry by using the example of guillemot in the G5.34 Applicant's
		response to Natural England's additional guidance on apportioning of seabirds to FFC SPA for
		Hornsea Project Four (REP5a-018). That shows that using the Applicant's preferred parameters results
		in an output of 175 breeding pairs, whereas using Natural England's preferred parameters results in
		2,000 breeding pairs. The ExA asked the Applicant if this was the parameter of most concern.
		Mr Sweeney confirmed.
		The ExA asked the Applicant if it had developed a hypothesis on why this might be the species with
		the greatest variability.
		Mr Sweeney advised that if an additional matrix is added into the assessment, there are additional
		impact values. For this species (guillemot), it is common practice to assess the potential for an AEOI
		using breeding season and non-breeding season matrices. The addition of a third post-breeding season
		matrix would increase the displacement impact by using three values rather than two.
		The ExA recalled that this matter had been discussed in ISH11 and that the Applicant had outlined
		that there would essentially be double counting of some birds.
		that there would essentially be double counting of some birds.
		Finally, Mr Sweeney reiterated that the Applicant had consulted with Natural England prior to making
		its DCO Application. During expert topic group meeting #9, Natural England had advised it would not
		be a good idea to include an additional matrix for the purpose of the post-breeding season. The
		Applicant also consulted Natural England on the weighted mean approach. As noted by the Applicant
		in ISH11, it is not aware of the reason why Natural England did not respond in writing at that time on
		the weighted mean approach prior to the original DCO application. Mr Sweeney also noted that the
		approach to apportionment taken for the purposes of The Crown Estate's Report which has been
		approved by Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) matches the



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		approach preferred by the Applicant, which is to assess on the basis of two seasons (breeding and non- breeding).
4.9	The ExA recalled that actions had been made in ISH11 for Natural England and the RSPB to respond to Sensitivity Report.	The ExA noted a further action point arising from ISH12 for Natural England and the RSPB to advise whether they had any views on the approach to apportionment of seabirds in the FFC SPA and whether they had concerns about the compensation that Natural England's calculations generate for guillemot.
4.10	The ExA asked the Applicant if it had any comments in relation to the impact of the Sensitivity Report on the Examination timetable.	The Applicant advised it did not.
Agenda Item	5 – The Indirect Effects of Forage Fish and Ornithology report [REF	
5.1	The ExA asked the Applicant whether it believed there were any further implications for the HRA or the RIAA from the Indirect Effects of Forage Fish and Ornithology Report (REP5-085) (the "IEFFOR").	Mr McGovern advised the Applicant was pleased that the IEFFOR confirms and supports the positions already presented by the Applicant. It indicated that the array area is comprised of areas of lower productivity and is of less importance than surrounding areas.
5.2	The ExA noted action points for the RSPB and Natural England to comment on the IEFFOR at Deadline 6.	
5.3	No further Examination timetable implications were noted.	
Agenda Item	6 – Matters relating to derogation and compensation	
6.1	The ExA asked the Applicant to expand on the strategic approach to compensation with reference to DEFRA's consultation on marine net gain.	Dr Sarah Randall on behalf of the Applicant set out the background to the industry approach to strategic compensation.
		Dr Sarah Randall advised that the British Energy Security Strategy ("BESS") sets out the Government's plan to introduce strategic compensation environmental measures. The BESS is current policy. It states that the Government will reduce the process to consent offshore wind farms by "introducing strategic compensation environmental measures including for projects already in the system to offset environmental effects and reduce delays to projects".
		The BESS also states that the Government will set up an industry-funded Marine Recovery Fund to accelerate deployment whilst enhancing the marine environment. The Marine Recovery Fund will first be used for strategic compensation and then for contributions for marine net gain and monitoring.

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		The Crown Estate have also recognised the need for strategic compensation. In the Crown Estate
		Report published on 19 July, the Crown Estate state "it is clear that strategic solutions are now
		required to allow the delivery of appropriate compensatory measures" and that "the identification
		and delivery of compensatory measures at a strategic level has wide support amongst SNCBs and
		NGOs", therefore the Crown Estate will "establish a process for the delivery of compensatory
		measures on a strategic basis" as the result of the Crown Estate Report.
		Defra are also consulting on the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package including
		strategic compensation and the Marine Recovery Fund which they intend to establish next year. It was
		announced during the week of the hearings that the Energy Bill will be amended to include the
		Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package. Defra want to create a library of strategic
		compensation. Defra propose to introduce legislation to enable the establishment of a dedicated
		Marine Recovery Fund that can collect and deploy financial contributions from developers to meet
		the costs of compensatory measures identified in the library of measures. The fund would also operate
		as a project delivery mechanism by procuring the delivery of relevant compensatory measures,
		therefore avoiding delays to consenting as the developers' obligation would extend only to delivering
		the finance for measures rather than delivery of the compensatory measures themselves.
		Dr Sarah Randall explained that there is recognition that greater benefits to the environment and
		designated sites can be provided by large scale and often Government-led measures that cannot be
		delivered by a developer alone. Therefore, the Applicant wanted to provide this option in the DCO,
		alongside an option for funding for the prey availability research.
		Defra propose to ensure that delivery of the compensatory measures and therefore the statutory
		obligation to deliver them would be assured as part of the DCO. This adds reassurance that numerous
		parties beyond the Applicant are supportive of a strategic approach delivering in the short term.
		The ExA asked the Applicant what weight should be attached to the marine net gain consultation.
		The Applicant confirmed it is confident as set out in the BESS that there is a clear trajectory evident
		from BESS and the Defra consultation. Indeed, the BESS clearly signposts the short-term expectation
		that a strategic mechanism will be available to support project specific measures, if needed. All the
		indicators are coalescing around the fund as a clear direction of travel and so suggests it will be of



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		benefit to projects such as Hornsea Four as set out in the BESS. In addition, the Applicant's
		compensation case does not rest solely on the Marine Recovery Fund as it has put forward very
		comprehensive measures. The Applicant has demonstrated that the measures are viable and can be
		delivered and secured.
		The ExA asked the Applicant to explain how the measures would be secured.
		Mr McGovern advised that any obligations would be secured through the DCO. Mr McGovern also
		reiterated, in relation to the weight to be attached to the potential establishment of the Marine
		Recovery Fund, that commitment is published policy in the BESS for the Secretary of State for Business,
		Energy and Industrial Strategy, who is the decision maker for this DCO, and weight can be attached
		accordingly. The Secretary of State is entitled to be satisfied that he will implement the policy
		commitments made in the BESS. It is also important to note that the Applicant does not place
		exclusive reliance upon the Marine Recovery Fund and it is not the only compensation measure being
		proposed for Hornsea Four. Rather, it is a tool in the toolbox.
		The ExA noted that there was a discussion in ISH7 on the approach to securing compensation
		measures in the DCO. The Applicant explained that £500,000 would be paid into the Marine Recovery
		Fund or an alternative fund. The ExA asked whether that payment would be made whether or not the
		Applicant ultimately decided to follow a strategy of providing physical compensation measures or c
		strategic approach (i.e. funding rather than physical measures).
		Mr McGovern confirmed the payment would be made in any event.
		The ExA asked whether the financial contribution related only to kittiwake for the FFC special feature.
		Mr McGovern confirmed.
		The ExA asked the Applicant if it would make multiple strategic payments if the Secretary of State
		found AEoI for other species.
		Mr McGovern advised that there would only be one payment.



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		The ExA asked the Applicant to explain the intention behind the drafting of paragraph 2(1)(i) of Part 1
		of Schedule 16 in relation to the derogation and compensation case.
		Mr McGovern advised that the intention had been to provide the maximum flexibility to the Applicant
		and to Defra to have the option to resorting to strategic compensation measures, as that may allow
		for a more holistic approach which may provide the maximum ecological benefit for the national site network.
		The ExA asked if that meant that the Applicant had been looking at other programmes taking place
		at time the Applicant will need to provide compensation or whether the Applicant would propose new measures.
		Mr McGovern advised that both options were entirely possible. There may be schemes on going that
		the Applicant would contribute to, or the Applicant may propose its own schemes. The details could be addressed in the kittiwake compensation implementation and monitoring plan (the "KCIMP").
		The ExA asked the Applicant to clarify, in relation the drafting, how a situation may arise where only a partial payment is necessary.
		Mr McGovern advised that for certain species, the Applicant was proposing several measures rather
		than just one. It may be decided that it makes sense to implement one of those measures but instead of implementing the others, to make a financial contribution to another scheme.
		The ExA asked the Applicant to explain how the payments would work in relation to adaptive
		management. Would payments simply be made when practical measures are shown to be failing through the monitoring put in place?
		Mr McGovern confirmed that payments connected to adaptive management measures could be made if those measures were failing.
		The ExA noted that there could be a situation where the measures are implemented correctly but they fail to achieve their goals. Would additional payments need to be made in that scenario?



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		Mr McGovern envisaged that this would be part of the discussion on agreeing the contribution to th
		fund and agreeing contingency measures. The KCIMP also needs to include details of adaptiv
		management.
		The ExA asked the Applicant if it considered that the drafting allowed for such payments in the cas
		of failed adaptive management measures.
		Mr McGovern confirmed.
		The ExA asked the Applicant to confirm whether the need to provide compensation measures wou
		fall away if the Secretary of State were to find no AEoI for kittiwake in combination with other project
		The ExA also asked whether Schedule 16 and the associated provisions could be removed from t
		DCO if this were found to be the case.
		Mr McGovern confirmed that the compensation provisions would not be required in that scenario a
		Schedule 16 could be easily removed from the DCO.
		The ExA noted that in the Applicant's Deadline 5 submission Orsted's Approach to Strateg
		Ecological Compensation (REP5-086), the date provided for a payment to the Marine Recovery Fu
		is late 2023. The ExA asked the Applicant to confirm that the timescales would align with t
		envisaged construction programme for Hornsea Four
		Mr McGovern confirmed that the currently envisaged timing for establishment of the MRF would alig
		well with the Hornsea Four programme.
		Post Hearing Clarification: the current drafting provides for payment into the Marine Recovery Fun
		pre-operation of the turbines. So far as the timing of the payment in lieu of the compensation measur
		or adaptive management measures, this remains to be discussed with DEFRA and the OOEG.
		The ExA asked the Applicant whether it believed REP5-086 provided a robust justification for t
		strategic approach to compensation and whether the ExA might benefit from more of a comparis
		between physical and strategic measures.



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		Mr McGovern advised that the Applicant's submissions provide a rational and clear basis for including the option of resorting to strategic compensation. A detailed comparison of strategic and physical (i.e. project specific) measures could be difficult at this stage, as it is not yet clear exactly what compensation projects the Marine Recovery Fund will cover. However, Mr McGovern reiterated that it is a reasonable expectation that strategic compensation could, in some cases, secure better outcomes and more readily ensure cohesion for the national site network as compared to isolated project- specific measures.
		The ExA noted action points for Natural England and the RSPB to advise whether they believe the Applicant's HRA documents provide robust rationale and justification for the strategic approach to compensation.
6.2	The ExA noted there had been considerable progress on the identification of the offshore platform to be repurposed for the kittiwake nesting site. The ExA noted that the Applicant had signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Wenlock gas field platform but that it was investigating any factors which may make it unsuitable. The ExA asked what type of factors could make the platform unsuitable.	Felicity Browner for the Applicant advised that the repurposing of the oil and gas platform was a novel approach and the Applicant needed to undertake further surveys but it was confident that the platform being considered is viable. The platform is relatively new, having been built in 2006. The Applicant has carried out an initial review of the documents relating to the platform. The Applicant believes it will be possible to extend the lifetime of the structure but it will be doing more structural integrity reviews in due course.
		than any ecological concerns. Ms Browner confirmed that was the case and noted that the structure now has 69 occupied nests, which is an increase on 57 from last year. The Applicant has no reservations on the ecological viability of the structure.
		The ExA asked the Applicant what made it think that its proposed compensation measures would encourage greater use of the structure by kittiwake than would occur naturally.
		Ms Browner outlined that the design of the structure would be optimised for kittiwake. It is currently an oil and gas platform and is therefore not as hospitable as it could be for nesting kittiwake. Ms



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		Browner noted that the Applicant was starting to create designs specifically for the Wenlock
		platform.
		The ExA asked if the rig was still in use.
		Ms Browner confirmed that it was but that it was due to cease activities in 2023. The user of the
		platform has already submitted a decommissioning plan.
		The ExA asked if that timeline would work with Natural England's requested lead times for the
		compensation measures before operation.
		Ms Browner confirmed.
		The ExA asked if the same platform also supported the guillemot and razorbill without prejudice
		compensation.
		Ms Browner advised that it was a separate platform that we surveyed during the wider offshore
		nesting survey.
		The ExA noted finally that the RSPB had raised a question at Deadline 3 on how the liability for the
		offshore platforms would be managed and asked the Applicant to explain.
		Mr McGovern outlined that the Applicant intended to submit a note explaining the mechanisms for
		transfer. There would essentially be two steps. The Applicant would enter into an asset purchase
		agreement for the structure. Then there would be a need to transfer responsibility to the Applican
		and to amend the decommissioning plan for the platform. The Applicant has been discussing the transfer with regulators and does not believe there are any regulatory barriers to the approach.
		and ster with regulators and abes not believe there are any regulatory barners to the approach.
6.2	On bycatch reduction, the ExA noted that there had	Fraser Carter for the Applicant confirmed that the bycatch reduction work for auks would cease i
	been promising results in studies on bycatch reduction	strategic compensation were adopted.
	for auks. The ExA asked the Applicant if its involvement	
	in this field would cease if it adopted strategic	The ExA asked whether the bycatch reduction compensation for gannet fell away with the inclusio
	compensation.	of macro avoidance in the displacement modelling.



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		Mr Carter confirmed.
6.2	Regarding predator eradication, the ExA noted it had seen the Applicant's responses to the RSPB's submissions from Deadlines 3 and 4 and noted that the Applicant had stated that the compensation measures in the Channel Islands would be legally binding. The ExA asked what the Applicant meant by that phrase.	Mr McGovern noted that the Memorandum of Understanding (" MoU ") that had been signed with the States of Guernsey and granted the Applicant exclusivity to provide compensation measures in certain areas. This was what was meant by the Applicant by "legally binding". The ExA asked what weight it could give to the MoU, given that it had not seen the content of that document.
		Mr McGovern advised that the Applicant intended to discuss with Guernsey to assess whether any more of the content of the MoU could be disclosed. Mr McGovern stated that the ExA could place reliance on the fact that the Applicant has secured a legally binding agreement that secures exclusivity in respect to the territory needed for this measure. The Applicant feels it has gone further than other offshore wind farm projects have in relation to without prejudice compensation measures. The ExA noted that the MoU guarantees the Applicant the area but did not mean the measures would
		be delivered. Mr McGovern agreed that the existence of the MoU was not a cast iron guarantee that the compensation measures would be delivered but it was still an important milestone in the compensation case for the Applicant. Mr McGovern also noted that the area secured by the MoU was the Applicant's preferred site, but not the only one available. Ultimately, if the Secretary of State were to decide that this compensation should be necessary, the Applicant would need to provide it in order to progress the project, so it is in the Applicant's interests to ensure that the measures are capable of being provided.
		The ExA noted that the Applicant had said in some of its documents relating to compensation that cliffs are protected as special sites of interest by legislation. The ExA asked if that protection was for all cliffs in Guernsey or just those forming part of Ramsar sites.
		Mr McGovern advised it was his understanding that this protection applied to all cliffs but this would be checked and confirmed.



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		The ExA asked what sort of protection the cliffs benefitted from and whether it was similar to what
		would be expected in respect of a UK SSSI.
		Mr McGovern highlighted that he was not qualified to practice in Guernsey but that he believed the
		protection was similar to that received under Site of Special Scientific Interest protection in England.
		The ExA asked the Applicant to provide a clarification note on the nature of the protection after the
		hearing and confirm that it applied to all cliffs.
		Post Hearing Clarification: The States of Guernsey have confirmed that the Sites of Special
		Significance relate to the south coast cliffs of Guernsey, this particular designation does not extend to Herm, Jethou and the Humps however it is only considered a planning designation and the necessary
		environmental protections are pursuant to the Ramsar listing and Animal Welfare Law adopted by
		the State.
		The ExA asked if all sites under consideration for the provision of compensation measures were Ramsar
		sites.
		Dr Randall advised that not all sites under consideration were covered by Ramsar but all of the
		Applicant's preferred sites for the provision of compensation were within Ramsar sites.
		The ExA noted that the Predator Eradication Roadmap (REP5-030) suggests that the number of
		breeding pairs needed for compensation would be low. The ExA asked which modelling approach this
		was based on, given the variance in the research.
		Mr Carter advised these calculations were based on the Applicant's recommended approach.
		The ExA noted that the Predator Eradication Roadmap referred to a low amount of habitat being
		needed for compensation. The ExA asked the Applicant to clarify what this meant.
		Mr Carter clarified that this was referring to the density of guillemot and razorbill populations. As they
		live in high density populations, they do not take much space for nesting.



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		The ExA noted that the Applicant's suggestion was to distribute the area required for compensation
		over 1 to 3 locations and asked the Applicant to confirm if that was correct.
		Mr Carter advised that the Applicant's focus would be in the Herm archipelago and the surrounding
		islands. The other locations referenced in the Predator Eradication Roadmap refer to locations for adaptive management.
		The ExA asked the Applicant what assumptions had been made about density of individual nests in the areas identified by the Applicant.
		Mr Carter advised that for the Bailiwick of Guernsey, a number of different approaches had been taken. The focus was trying to ascertain the density at which the birds nest. Across the islands included in the feasibility report, many of the nesting sites were low-lying boulder fields. The Applicant has therefore considered multiple types of habitat. The Applicant has taken a precautionary approach and has presumed 20 birds per square metre. The RSPB actually noted that a higher density could be used, but the Applicant has maintained the figure of 20 birds per sq metre to be sure it is taking a suitably precautionary approach.
		The ExA asked if the Applicant used the same density for large and small sites.
		Mr Carter confirmed.
		The ExA asked if the Applicant was confident that the negative factors which were likely to act more strongly on the periphery of a colony than those in the centre would not be a significant factor.
		Mr Carter confirmed the Applicant did not believe this would be an issue.
		The ExA noted that in the Predator Eradication Roadmap, the Applicant said that if a reinvasion occurred it would undertake further eradication and continue monitoring and biosecurity measures. The document Predator Eradication and Control Opportunities within the Bailiwick of Guernsey (REP5a-019) suggests that even islands within swimming distance can be successfully controlled if ongoing biosecurity is instigated. The ExA asked what the ongoing biosecurity would entail.

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ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		Mr Carter outlined that the Applicant had undertaken site visits and an analysis of previous biosecurity
		measures. The companies that are undertaking the feasibility studies on behalf of the Application are
		world leaders in predator eradication and a lot of their previous projects were undertaken on behalf
		of the RSPB. The exact detail of what biosecurity measures would look like will depend on the location
		of the islands and islets. The Applicant would discuss that with the Offshore Ornithology Engagement
		Group (the " OOEC ").
		The ExA asked whether 'biosecurity' would include things like baiting and trapping.
		Mr Carter confirmed that potentially it would. The consultants working with the Applicant have
		looked at a number of options including some novel monitoring techniques. One of the site visits
		supported by the Applicant involved sending a number of ornithologists to the Isle of Scilly to see what
		had worked there. That island was within swimming distance of known rat colonies from the mainland
		The Applicant is confident it will be able to implement successful measures with the consensus of the OOEG.
		The ExA asked for how long and at what frequency the Applicant would propose maintaining the predator eradication measures.
		Mr Carter indicated that this would be for the life of the project. The frequency of monitoring would
		be determined in collaboration with the OOEG.
		The ExA asked if the inclusion of eradication sites within easy swimming distance of rat colonies formed
		part of the Applicant's without prejudice compensation case or whether the Applicant saw it as an
		academic study.
		Mr Carter advised that the Applicant's preferred location was outside of swimming distances of known
		colonies. However, if adaptive measures are required, the Applicant could look at how populations
		could be controlled which are within swimming distance.
		The ExA noted that the Applicant had outlined how the predator eradication measures would be
		effective and could be secured, but that the RSPB had outstanding concerns around the fact that
		studies would not be concluded before October 2022.



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		The ExA noted an action point for the RSPB and Natural England to provide an update on their position
6.2		in light of the most recent documents submitted by the Applicant.
0.2	The ExA asked the Applicant to comment on	Mr Carter outlined that the aim of the document entitled Compensation Measures for FFC SPA:
	submissions from Natural England at Deadline 4 and	Compensation Connectivity Note (REP3-032) was to draw together evidence on guillemot and
	the RSPB at Deadline 5 regarding the extent to which	razorbill and to show the connectivity of various networks. The summary was that the Applicant was
	there is sufficient evidence of connectivity to be	able to show the Channel Island areas as being within the correct geographical location and having
	confident that compensation for auks would benefit	the same race of guillemot such that when the birds disperse, they will enter the wider population and
	the FFC SPA.	recruit into the FFC SPA and other SPAs. Around 50% of guillemot recruit into non-native colonies. As
		the preferred compensation locations are within a prime location in the English Channel, there would
		be a significant number of birds contributing to the population associated with the FFC SPA.
		The ExA noted that Natural England and the RSPB would have seen the report the Applicant was
		referring to before making their comments on the connectivity of the populations, meaning they did
		not agree with the Applicant's assessments.
		Mr Carter noted that section 3.4 of Annex 1 to the Compensation Measures for FFC SPA: Ecological
		Connectivity of Compensation Measures (REP3-034) outlined the weaknesses in the data for guillemot
		and razorbill. The Applicant has provided an overview of the data that does exist. The ability to prove
		that a bird from one location recruits into another is almost impossible based on current technology.
		Due to a lack of alternatives, the Applicant has to go on the basis of the data that exists, from which
		the Applicant has been able to show that there is likely connectivity between the Channel Islands and
		the national site network. Mr Carter advised that colonies all along the coast of England would be
		supported by these measures.
6.2	The ExA asked the Applicant to outline any OSPAR	Mr McGovern advised that OSPAR was only relevant to the artificial nesting structure and not any
	implications from opting for strategic compensation	other proposed compensation measure.
	measures as opposed to physical ones.	
		The ExA asked whether it was possible that the Applicant would contribute to a scheme that was
		providing such a structure as part of the Marine Recovery Fund rather than providing the structure
		itself.
		Mr McGovern confirmed this was possible.



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
		The ExA asked how the responsibilities for ensuring that OSPAR is complied with would change in that
		scenario.
		Mr McGovern stated that ultimately in both scenarios the responsibility would fall to the Secretary of
		State.
		The ExA asked who would decide on the timing of the measures if secured as part of strategic
		compensation.
		Mr McGovern advised that this would be a matter for discussion later with Defra at the stage of
		providing the compensation. It would likely depend on the nature of the measure.
Agenda Item 7	7 – Overall summary of current positions on project and in-combined in the second s	nation HRA effects
7	The ExA asked the Applicant to provide a brief	Mr Gillespie noted that the Applicant's current position is that it cannot rule out an AEoI for kittiwake
	summary of its position for project alone and in	of FFC SPA in combination with other plans and projects. The Applicant has provided compensation
	combination HRA effects.	plans and roadmaps on that basis.
		The Applicant's position is that there is no risk of AEoI for guillemot, razorbill or gannet from the project
		alone or in-combination. Mr Gillespie believed it was worth noting that it believes Natural England is
		likely to agree there was no AEoI for gannet in the FFC SPA. The Applicant believed Natural England
		would confirm no AEoI on the gannet feature in writing at the next Deadline (Deadline 6). The
		Applicant has provided its without prejudice compensation plans and roadmaps in the event that the
		Secretary of State disagrees that there is no AEoI other than for kittiwake in combination with other
		projects. The Applicant's approach to compensation is precautionary and flexible, and is deliverable scalable and securable.
		The Applicant's position will not change before the end of the Examination other than to potentially
		remove gannet from the scope of the without prejudice compensation package.
		The ExA asked the Applicant whether it would update the Examination Deliverables Summary (REP5 -
		059) to be clear which reports have already been submitted and whether anything further should be
		expected before the close of the Examination.
		Mr McGovern confirmed.



ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
AOB	
The ExA asked the Applicant whether it had anything further to add in relation to the HRA for marine mammals and disturbance noise as discussed in ISH10.	Mr McGovern advised there were no further implications for the HRA.
Reminder to the Applicant to update European site citations.	Mr McGovern advised that the Applicant was not aware of any updates so this would be confirmed at Deadline 6.
The ExA asked the Applicant to summarise its position in relation to barrier effects and the way they are dealt with in the HRA.	Mr Sweeney confirmed by reference to Natural England's additional submission [AS-048], that it is understood that Natural England now considers that the potential for barrier effects is incorporated in the HRA for the required species. The Applicant and Natural England's positions are therefore now aligned.
The ExA asked the Applicant to summarise its position in relation to seabird assemblage following the ExA's question HRA2.7 and Natural England's request for further consideration.	Mr Sweeney advised the Applicant understood the matter to be closed. For the project alone, concluded that an AEoI on the seabird assemblage feature of the FFC SPA could be ruled out from Hornsea Four alone, as there were no significant adverse effects predicted to be on the individual components of the seabird assemblage, meaning that the population of each of the qualifying features would be maintained. The Applicant also concluded that the FFC SPA would maintain the overall abundance of the assemblage at the level as specified within the conservation objectives (which is above 216,730 individuals), whilst also avoiding deterioration from its current level as indicated by the latest peak mean count or equivalent. With regard to in combination effects, the Applicant's position was that there is no AEoI for all species, except in relation to kittiwake. Though, even for kittiwake, the effect would not lead to the FFC SPA losing that species. The Applicant noted that both the overall combined species abundance and diversity are included in the conservation objectives for FFC SPA and are considered when assessing the impacts on the seabird assemblage. The Applicant concluded that the impacts on abundance, across the suite of species, would not result in a significant reduction of the overall number of seabirds in the assemblage given that the populations of the majority of the component species are increasing. The Applicant also concluded that Hornsea Four alone and in combination with other projects is unlikely to result in a significant risk to the species assemblage, as no one species is likely to be lost as a consequence. Therefore, the Applicant is confident that an AEoI can be excluded with regards to the seabird assemblage feature of the FFC SPA from Hornsea Four alone and in combination with other projects.
	AOB The ExA asked the Applicant whether it had anything further to add in relation to the HRA for marine mammals and disturbance noise as discussed in ISH10. Reminder to the Applicant to update European site citations. The ExA asked the Applicant to summarise its position in relation to barrier effects and the way they are dealt with in the HRA. The ExA asked the Applicant to summarise its position in relation to seabird assemblage following the ExA's question HRA2.7 and Natural England's request for



ltem	ExA Question/Context for discussion	Applicant's Response
8	The ExA noted that the Applicant was now to submit	
	the amended DCO and schedule of change at Deadline	
	7 as opposed to Deadline 6.	
	The ExA also noted that a Rule 17 letter would be	
	published early in the week following ISH12.	
	Responses would be needed at Deadline 6.	
	The ExA asked all parties to work with the Applicant on	
	updated joint position statements and statements of	
	common ground. The Applicant was to submit	
	updated versions of these documents along with an	
	updated statement of commonality at Deadline 7.	
	The ExA also asked the Applicant to submit an index of	
	documents with Examination library references at	
	Deadline 8. The latest update of each document was	
	to be put in bold.	
Agenda Item	9 – Action Points	
		See Table 2.

	See Table 2.			
Agenda Item 10 – Close of Hearing				
11 57				
11:53				

Table 2: Summary of the Issue Specific Hearing 12

Action	Description	Action by	Deadline	Applicant's Comments/where has the action been answered
1	Natural England (NE) to confirm if the Marine Processes Supplementary Report [REP4-043] now satisfies its concerns in relation to the identification of receptors for the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).	NE	6	
2	NE and the RSPB to provide comment on the adequacy of the revised ornithological baseline and any need for further assessment, mitigation and compensation considerations in relation to the HRA	NE and RSPB	6	



Action	Description	Action by	Deadline	Applicant's Comments/where has the action been answered
3	Applicant to submit document entitled 'Offshore round 4 leasing plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment' published by the Crown Estates (and referred to under agenda item 4.1) into the Examination at D6 and to follow up at D7 with a summary of the areas where the Applicant believes its case aligns with that set out in this document.	Applicant	6 and 7	The Secretary of States letter of approval, The Crown Estate's Report and relevant appendix have been submitted at Deadline 6. The summary of alignment between the Applicant and The Crown Estate's Report will be submitted at Deadline 7.
4	In relation to NE's advocated approach to apportioning seabirds to the Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protection Area, and having seen the Applicant's report and calculations, do NE and the RSPB have any further views on the approach that has been taken? Do they have any concerns around the quantum of compensation that NE's advocated approach appears to generate for guillemot in this case?	NE and RSPB	6	
5	RSPB and NE to comment on any implications that come out of the report into Indirect Effects of Forage Fish and Ornithology [REP5-085] for the HRA.	NE and RSPB	6	
6	NE and the RSPB to respond to the principles of the Applicant's suggested approach to strategic compensation. Also, to comment firstly on whether the Applicant's HRA compensation documentation provides a robust rationale and justification for the alternative strategic approach to compensation, and secondly, on whether the Applicant has demonstrated that the strategic approach could fully address the type and quantum of compensation that is required.	NE and RSPB	6	
7	Applicant to further clarify the level and extent of protection given to Ramsar sites and cliffs outside Ramsar sites in the Bailiwick of Guernsey, including the effect of The Land Planning and Development (General Provisions) Ordinance, 2007.	Applicant	6	Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance listed under the Ramsar convention. It is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is a global treaty and the UK ratified the treaty on behalf of Guernsey in 1998 and it took effect on 8 January 1999. Appendix A taken from the United



Action	Description	Action by	Deadline	Applicant's Comments/where has the action been answered
				Nations Treaty Collection confirms the treaty ratification by the UK on behalf of Guernsey.
				Herm, Jethou and the Humps are all listed as Ramsar Sites.
				The relevant protection is contained in the Land Planning and Development (Environmental Impace Assessment) Ordinance, 2007. Schedule 2 sets out development requiring a screening opinion as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required and paragraph (e) includes <i>any project or</i> <i>or which may affect</i> , a Ramsar site. <u>The States of Guernsey Government</u> has confirmed <u>to the Applicant</u> that no EIA developments have been approved which have demonstrated a negative impact on any Ramsar Site.
				The ExA is referred to paragraph 4.6 of the written summary of the Applicant's oral case at ISH6 (Rep4- 040)
3	RSPB and NE to respond to the updated predator eradication studies and compensation proposals, including the Applicant's further submissions about the future protection of any sites that could be utilised.	NE and RSPB	6	



Action	Description	Action by	Deadline	Applicant's Comments/where has the action been answered
9	NE and RSPB to summarise their current positions in relation to project and in-combination HRA effects.	NE and RSPB	6	
10	Applicant to provide an updated Examination Deliverables Summary document to detail the documents that have been submitted ahead of schedule and to signpost those that are still to be submitted, noting their content and purpose (where not clear from the title).	Applicant	6	Submitted at Deadline 6.
11	Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to ensure that it submits its position on whether the SELcum impact range should be considered in addition to the instantaneous SPLpeak PTS-onset impact range for marine mammals and the agreement reached by the Applicant and NE on this agreement at Deadline 6, especially relating to any implications for the HRA.	MMO	6	
12	The Applicant to provide the Examination with a summary of any changes to the formal citations and conservation objectives for European sites before the Report into the Implications for European Sites (RIES) is issued.	Applicant	6	The Applicant can confirm that there have been no changes to the formal citations or conservation objectives for relevant European sites, since the original RIAA version 1 as submitted with the DCO application.
13	NE to confirm that it is now content in relation to barrier effects in the HRA process (following on from [REP5-111] and the Applicant's Deadline 5 submissions).	NE	6	
14	Following submission of the Ornithology EIA and HRA Annex [REP5-078] by the Applicant, NE to review its position on the Applicant's assessment of the seabird assemblage feature of Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protection Area. Does this provide the information and assessment that NE requested in relation to the HRA process, or is further work required?	NE	6	





Appendix A

Treaty Registration Number	14583
Agreement Title	Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat
Participant(s)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Type of Action	Territorial application
Action Title	Territorial application to the Convention, as amended by the Protocol of 3 December 1982
Submitter	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Depositary	Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Registration Date	26/10/1998
Attachments	
Territorial Applications	Guernsey British Indian Ocean Territory
Territorial Exclusions	
Volume Number for Action	2040
Volume In Pdf	<u>v2040.pdf</u>
UNTS Document	
Corrigendum/Addendum	l