

Date: 17 March 2021
Our ref: 346165 (SHBE-001)
Your ref: EN010107



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BY EMAIL ONLY



Dear Sir/Madam

NSIP Reference Name: SOUTH HUMBER BANK ENERGY CENTRE PROJECT - PROPOSED APPLICATION FOR AN ENERGY FROM WASTE POWER STATION AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT ON LAND

Location: THE SOUTH HUMBER BANK POWER STATION SITE, SOUTH MARSH ROAD, NEAR STALLINGBOROUGH, NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE, DN41 8BZ

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 05 March 2021. As requested, please find our response to the Examining Authority's written questions (ExQ2) on the above proposal, in particular, for QB.10.3.

QB.10.3. *"The ExA would draw Natural England's attention to the Applicant's response to ExQ1 Question Q10.0.6, which can be found in the Applicant's document entitled "Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions" [REP2-008] submitted at Deadline 2. Please confirm whether Natural England consider that all of the correct site features are represented in Table 4.1 of the HRAR [REP2-001]."*

Natural England confirms that the qualifying site features are correct for the Humber Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC), however, we highlight that both the Estuaries and the Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide are also qualifying features, which could have been more clearly presented in Table 4.1 of the HRAR dated December 2020. We note that these features are included as qualifying features in the screening matrix (Table 1A.2). Natural England received an updated version of Table 4.1 on 16 March 2021, which more clearly lists the designated features. For ease of reference, we have included this in Appendix A.

For the Humber Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA), the summary of the primary reasons for site selection is correct, however, the qualifying features have not been listed. These have now been listed in the most recent version of Table 4.1 (Appendix A).

For the Humber Estuary Ramsar site, the summary of the primary reasons for site selection is partly correct as it refers to estuary habitat, grey seal and passage wildfowl and waders, however, it does not reference natterjack toad, wintering birds or river and sea lamprey. We note that these features are included as qualifying features in the screening matrix (Table 1A.4). These have now been listed in the most recent version of Table 4.1 (Appendix A).

Natural England notes that the ExA has requested that the screening matrices in the HRAR (dated December 2020) are updated. We would like to take the opportunity to comment on Table 1A.2: Screening Matrix for Humber Estuary SAC. However, we appreciate that this may have been updated in a more recent version of the document.

We note in Table 1A.2 of HRAR (dated December 2020), that the SAC saltmarsh habitat feature "Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)" have been marked with an NA (feature not susceptible to potential effect OR is outside the zone of influence) for potential impacts from deterioration in air quality during operation both alone and in-combination with other plans and projects. This appears to be contradictory to Table 5.2 of the HRAR. Natural England advised at 3.2.3 and 3.3.1 of our relevant representations letter (dated 16 July 2020) that a likely significant effect cannot be ruled out either alone or in-combination for this habitat type. However, overall Natural England remains satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on integrity for the reasons listed in either our relevant representations (dated 16 July 2020) or our response to ExQ1 (dated 18 December 2020).

We trust this answers your questions sufficiently. However, please contact me on the details below if I can be of any further assistance in these matters.

Yours faithfully

Hannah Gooch
Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Area Team
Natural England

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Table 4.1: International Designated sites scoped into HRA screening

SITE	APPROX. DISTANCE FROM SITE	TOTAL AREA (HA)	DESIGNATED FEATURES
Humber Estuary SAC	175 m east	36,657.15	<p>Annex I Habitats primary reason for site selection:</p> <p>Estuaries</p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</p> <p>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:</p> <p>Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time</p> <p>Coastal lagoons</p> <p><i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand</p> <p>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>)</p> <p>Embryonic shifting dunes</p> <p>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with European marram grass (<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>) (white dunes)</p> <p>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)</p> <p>Dunes with common sea buckthorn (<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>)</p> <p>Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection</p> <p>River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)</p> <p>Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)</p> <p>Grey seal (<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>)</p>
Humber Estuary SPA	175 m east	37,630.24	<p>Populations of European importance of breeding, passage and over-wintering birds:</p> <p><i>Botaurus stellaris</i>; great bittern (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Botaurus stellaris</i>; great bittern (breeding)</p> <p><i>Tadorna tadorna</i>; common shelduck (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Circus aeruginosus</i>; Eurasian marsh harrier (breeding)</p> <p><i>Circus cyaneus</i>; hen harrier (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; pied avocet (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>; pied avocet (breeding)</p> <p><i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>; European golden plover (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Calidris canutus</i>; red knot (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>; dunlin (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Philomachus pugnax</i>; ruff (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>; black-tailed godwit (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Limosa lapponica</i>; bar-tailed godwit (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Tringa totanus</i>; common redshank (non-breeding)</p> <p><i>Sterna albifrons</i>; little tern (breeding)</p> <p>Waterbird assemblage</p>
Humber Estuary Ramsar site	175 m east	37,987.8	<p>Ramsar criterion 1:</p> <p>The site is a representative example of a near-natural estuary with the following component habitats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dune systems • humid dune slacks • estuarine waters

SITE	APPROX. DISTANCE FROM SITE	TOTAL AREA (HA)	DESIGNATED FEATURES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intertidal mud and sand flats • saltmarshes, and • coastal brackish/ saline lagoons.
			<p>Ramsar criterion 3: Grey seal: breeding colony of grey seals at Donna Nook is the second largest grey seal colony in England and the furthest south regular breeding site on the east coast. Natterjack toad (<i>Bufo calamita</i>): the dune slacks at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe on the southern extremity of the Ramsar site are the most north-easterly breeding site in GB of the natterjack toad.</p>
			<p>Ramsar criterion 5: Internationally important assemblage of wintering waterfowl: 153,934 waterfowl, non-breeding season</p>
			<p>Ramsar criterion 6: Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance over winter: Bar-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa lapponica</i> - Wintering Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa</i> - Passage and Wintering Dunlin, <i>Calidris alpina</i> – Passage and Wintering Golden plover, <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> – Passage and Wintering Knot, <i>Calidris canutus</i> – Passage and Wintering Redshank, <i>Tringa totanus</i> – Passage and Wintering Shelduck, <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> - Wintering</p>
			<p>Ramsar criterion 8: The Humber Estuary acts as an important migration route for both river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> and sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> between coastal waters and their spawning areas.</p>