

SEP DEP ExQ 3

Application by Equinor New Energy Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm Extension Project and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm Extension Project

The Examining Authority’s Third Written Questions and requests for information. Issued on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for response by Deadline 5 on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Question Number	Question	Historic England Response
<p><b>Offshore matters</b> <b>Q2.15.1.1</b></p>	<p><b>Geotechnical Work</b> Is the extent of geotechnical material that the Applicant has obtained and is obtaining pre consent and proposes to obtain post consent, if consent is granted, sufficiently clear at this stage?</p>	<p>We have reviewed <i>Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Offshore Wind Farm Extension Projects Geoarchaeological Method Statement</i> (Revision A; Deadline 3; May 2023; Document Reference: 16.29; APFP Regulation: 5(2)(q)) – PINs Examination Ref: REP3-119, which was produced by the Applicant in response to the submission we made at Second Questions to Q2.15.1.2.</p> <p>The above referenced document provides helpful clarity regarding the acquisition of geotechnical material to date and the commissioning of geotechnical survey campaigns to occur pre-consent, post-consent (subject to securing the required Development Consents) and before start of construction. We welcome the attention given to building on work conducted and completed in support of the EIA exercise required for this proposed project.</p> <p>The Geoarchaeological Method Statement helpfully describes completion of a “Stage 1” assessment on vibro-cores recovered in 2021, which identified “high potential status” and which merit on-going archaeological advice as necessary to complete geoarchaeological analysis and modelling as a viable mitigation strategy.</p> <p>We also acknowledge the attention given to the avoidance of presently identified Archaeological Exclusion Zones (AEZs), as it is important to distinguish between anomalies of known or possible archaeological/historic interest which relate to vessels, boats or aircraft for which mutual avoidance is accepted practice. However, the focus for palaeo-environmental analysis, should actively direct geotechnical survey to locations of interest to corroborate already acquired sub-bottom/seismic geophysical data. In doing so, good practice is followed to support sedimentary deposit modelling which is sufficient to complete geoarchaeological characterisation of the development area.</p> <p>We therefore confirm that through completion to the requisite professional standards the resulting technical reporting can make a positive contribution to our knowledge about changing prehistoric environmental conditions as essential context for</p>

		<p>understanding early human activity in now submerged and buried former riverine/estuarine areas as are known to have existed (see Section 2.4, paragraph 22).</p> <p>We agree with the recommendation that a “Stage 1” assessment on boreholes recovered in 2022 will be conducted. These data should then be integrated into a programme of assessment using a phased assessment programme of analysis through to eventual publication. In addition, we agree that vibro-cores to be collected during the 2023 geotechnical campaign, specifically for geoarchaeological work, should target deposits of interest as identified through the previous rounds of geotechnical and geophysical survey work, as described in Section 2.4. These cores will also be assessed using a defined staged programme of analysis, as described in Table 2 (<i>we note a typo in the text which refers to a non-existent Table 3.1</i>). We agree with this methodological approach.</p> <p>It is important to explain that the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (Offshore) (PINs Examination Ref: APP-298) provides the overall framework for guiding all relevant techniques of marine survey work to assist archaeological analysis and interpretation. It is therefore a crucial means to ensure early stage planning and objective setting for survey work, as required to assist engineering design, is programmed to be inclusive of archaeology, for example as stated in Section 2.2, paragraph 10. This approach is necessary to ensure continuity and consistent advice in consideration of changes in geotechnical contractor, retained Archaeological Advice Services and geoarchaeological contractor(s) as may occur throughout the project.</p> <p>The above referenced Geoarchaeological Method Statement is described as an “addendum” to the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and we have confirmed our agreement with the methodological approach presented in the Outline WSI during examination, see our Written Representation (PINs Examination Ref: REP1-112) and our response to Second Written Questions (PINs Examination Ref: REP3-130).</p>
<p><b>Offshore matters</b> <b>Q2.15.1.2</b></p>	<p><b>Statement of Common Ground</b> Explain what factors are preventing the progress of a SoCG with the Applicant? In addition, set out how these factors will be resolved and provide a timeframe for the submission of a SoCG to the Examination.</p>	<p>Historic England is in discussion with the Applicant regarding the SoCG. We have provided the Applicant with comments on a draft SoCG for Onshore matters but have not, as far as we are aware, seen a draft of the a SoCG for Offshore matters. HE would prefer that Onshore and Offshore matters were combined into a single SoCG. It is unlikely at this stage that a combined SoCG can be produced and reviewed by Deadline 6 (20<sup>th</sup> June 2023), so submission would be of a final SoCG as soon as possible before Deadline 7 (10<sup>th</sup> July 2023).</p>