



# **Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm**

## **Statement of Common Ground 9 – National Trust**

### **Deadline 8**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

- 1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared between Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') and National Trust (NT) to set out the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two parties in relation to the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as 'AyM').
- 2 This SoCG covers the topics of:
  - ▲ Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment (SLVIA); and
  - ▲ Tourism and Recreation.
- 3 The need for a SoCG between the Applicant and NT was set out within Rule 6 letter issued by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 23 August 2022.
- 4 Following detailed discussions undertaken through pre-application consultation, the Applicant and NT have sought to progress a SoCG. It is the intention that this document provides PINS with a clear overview of the level of common ground between both parties. This document will facilitate further discussions between the Applicant and NT and will be updated as discussions progress prior to and during the Examination.

## 1.2 Approach to SoCG

- 5 This SoCG has been developed during the pre-examination phase of AyM. In accordance with discussions between the Applicant and NT, the SoCG is focused on issues raised in NT's Relevant Representation.
- 6 The SoCG is structured as follows:
  - ▲ **Introduction:** Outlining the background to the development of the SoCG;
  - ▲ **NT's remit:** Describing the remit of NT, the relevance of their interest in the Application, the main areas of discussion within the SoCG and a summary of consultation to date; and

- ▲ **Agreements Log:** A record of the positions of the Applicant alongside those of NT as related to the topics of discussion and the status of agreement on those positions.

## 1.3 The Development

- 7 The Application is for development consent for the Applicant to construct and operate the proposed Awel y Môr project under the Planning Act 2008.
- 8 AyM will comprise up to 50 Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) and will include infrastructure that is required to transmit the power generated by the turbines to the offshore substation via inter-array cables, before being transmitted via export cables to the proposed onshore substation located to the west of St Asaph Business Park (SABP) and then to the existing National Grid Bodelwyddan substation.
- 9 The key components of AyM will include:
  - ▲ WTGs with associated foundations and scour protection;
  - ▲ Inter-array cables and associated cable protection;
  - ▲ Up to two Offshore Substation Platforms (OSPs) with associated foundations and scour protection;
  - ▲ Up to two offshore export cable circuits and associated cable protection;
  - ▲ A meteorological mast (met mast);
  - ▲ Permanent Vessel Moorings (PVMs);
  - ▲ Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) connecting the offshore export cables to the onshore export cables;
  - ▲ Up to two onshore cable circuits;
  - ▲ An onshore substation; and
  - ▲ Onward connection to the National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan.
- 10 More details on the offshore aspects of the proposed development are described in the Environmental Statement (ES) chapters: Offshore Project Description (APP-047) and Onshore Project Description (APP-062).

## 2 NT's remit

### 2.1 Introduction

- 11 The National Trust owns a diverse range of property along the North Wales coast that will have views to the proposed wind farm. This includes coastal property in North Anglesey to the west, Penrhyn Castle, the Carneddau in Snowdonia, and Graig Fawr in the east. National Trust also owns Parc Farm near the summit of Pen y Gogarth/the Great Orme. The Trust has a statutory duty to promote the permanent preservation of these properties.
- 12 The SoCG covers technical topics of the DCO application of relevance to NT, comprising:
- ▲ Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment (SLVIA); and
  - ▲ Tourism and Recreation.
- 13 Table 1 This section briefly summarises the consultation that the Applicant has undertaken with NT including both statutory and non-statutory engagement during the pre-application and post-application phases.

Table 1: Consultation undertaken with NT pre-application.

DATE AND TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION
10/12/2019 (Meeting)	Pre-Scoping Phase ETG Meeting  Kick-off meeting introducing the SLVIA and LVIA ETG to the AyM project, the Applicant and the Evidence Plan process. An introduction was given to the Planning Act process, the purpose of the Scoping Report and the ongoing site selection process. Key discussion points on the SLVIA and LVIA topics were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▲ The study area;</li><li>▲ The baseline data sources that would be used to characterise the receiving environment;</li></ul>

DATE AND TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The proposed methodology, including the use of photography from representative viewpoints to be agreed; and</li> <li>▲ The appointment of an independent consultancy to advise the local authorities on LVIA and SLVA matters.</li> </ul>
<p>25/01/2021 (Meeting)</p>	<p>SLVA and cultural heritage ETG meeting.</p> <p>Meeting with the aim of providing a project update in the site selection,</p> <p>with a focus on the offshore array area and gaining feedback on the refinement options available. Key discussion points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ The refinement off the array area from the initial Area of Search identified at the Crown Estate extensions leasing round stage;</li> <li>▲ The options available for reduction of the array area;</li> <li>▲ Development of MDS layouts for consideration in the SLVA;</li> <li>▲ The proposed viewpoint locations; and</li> <li>▲ Presentation of comparative wirelines from selected viewpoints</li> </ul>
<p>10/02/2021 (Meeting)</p>	<p>SLVA and cultural heritage ETG meeting.</p> <p>Follow up with the SLVA ETG on the comparative wireline images circulated previously. The aim of the meeting was to present and discuss the alternative MDSs identified for assessment and to gain ETG feedback on these alternatives in terms of which comprises the worst-case for SLVA.</p>
<p>August – October 2021 (statutory consultation)</p>	<p>Statutory consultation under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.</p>

DATE AND TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF CONSULTATION
27/01/2022 (Meeting)	<p>SLVIA ETG Meeting</p> <p>Meeting to discuss stakeholder feedback in terms of further mitigation for SLVIA effects. Key points discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Summary of the design rationale for the application;</li> <li>▲ Presentation, discussion and feedback on proposed mitigation measures;</li> <li>▲ Adaptive lighting to mitigate night-time effects; and;</li> <li>▲ Stakeholder suggestions of further mitigation and compensation measures.</li> </ul> <p>At the meeting, it was agreed that ETG members would provide written feedback on proposals for further mitigation and compensation at a further ETG in February 2022.</p>
19/01/2023	<p>Microsoft Teams meeting in which the Applicant provided an update to NT on the status and progress of discussions relating to the potential provision of a Landscape Enhancement Fund and Tourism Fund.</p>

### 3 Agreements Log

- 14 The following sections of this SoCG set out the level of agreement between the Applicant and NT for each relevant component of the Application identified in paragraph 12. The tables below detail the positions of the Applicant alongside those of NT and whether the matter is agreed or not agreed.
- 15 In order to easily identify whether a matter is 'agreed', 'not agreed' or an 'ongoing point of discussion, the agreements logs in the tables below are colour coded to represent the status of the position according to the criteria in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Position status key.

POSITION STATUS	COLOUR CODE
The matter is considered to be agreed between the parties	Agreed
The matter is neither 'agreed' or 'not agreed' and is a matter where further discussion is required between the parties, for example where relevant documents are being prepared or reviewed.	Ongoing point of discussion
The matter is not agreed between the parties, however the outcome of the approach taken by either the Applicant or NT is not considered to result in a material outcome on the assessment conclusions.	Not agreed – No material impact
The matter is not agreed between the parties and the outcome of the approach taken by either the Applicant or NT is considered to result in a materially different outcome on the assessment conclusions.	Not agreed – material impact

### 3.1 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA)

Table 3: Status of discussions relating to Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment (SLVIA).

DISCUSSION POINT	APPLICANT'S POSITION	NT POSITION	POSITION STATUS
Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives	The Site Selection and Alternatives Chapter of the ES (APP-044) provides a full and detailed account of the considerations and decision-making process undertaken to develop and refine the project boundary and design envelope. Refinements to the project boundary and design envelope made during pre-application consultation have reduced and minimised the potential significance of effects.	NT supports the refinement to project boundary and design envelope made during pre-application consultation and agrees the changes have reduced and minimized the potential significance of effects.	Agreed
Consultation	The EIA has had regard to matters raised by NT via statutory and non-statutory consultation activities in relation to SLVIA.	NT is satisfied the issues it has raised via statutory and non-statutory consultation are addressed in the SLVIA.	Agreed
Assessment scope and methodology	The EIA has identified and assessed all likely significant effects relevant to SLVIA as identified within the Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion. The study area defined for the assessment is appropriate for the impacts, pathways and receptors considered. The assessment has appropriately defined the Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for the purposes of assessment. The viewpoints chosen for visualisations are appropriate for assessing impacts to National Trust assets.	NT agrees that the scope and methodology of the assessment is appropriate. NT is satisfied that appropriate viewpoints for visualizations have been chosen for assessing impacts to NT assets.	Agreed
Baseline characterisation	The baseline environment has been adequately characterised for the purposes of SLVIA.	NT supports the inclusion of the terrace viewpoint from Penrhyn Castle [APP-246] but would note this is illustrative and partially screened by existing vegetation. It is only partially correct to state that the view is glimpsed from the fixed viewpoint due to intervening vegetation. Visitor views are not fixed and will encompass a variety of views out to the proposed array including those from various points around the Castle and from a large number of points within the adjoining Grade II* registered park and garden.	Not agreed
		Notwithstanding this comment, NT agrees that the baseline characterisation is otherwise adequately characterised for the purposes of SLVIA	Agreed

DISCUSSION POINT	APPLICANT'S POSITION	NT POSITION	POSITION STATUS
		NT has supported the inclusion of viewpoints from GO and additional viewpoints that show the view towards the Orme. The totality of viewpoints includes 13, 15, 52 and 62 which demonstrate the scale of change that will be brought forward by AyM.	Agreed
Mitigation measures	The iterative design process has resulted in a reduction in the extent of the project since the EIA Scoping stage and an associated reduction in the significance of predicted effects. The Applicant considers that the reduction through the iterative design process should be considered as embedded (designed-in) mitigation.	NT recognises the change made to the application at pre-application in reducing the westerly extent of the array. NT supported the reduced scale of development brought forward prior to the submission of the subject application.	Agreed
		We would, however, question whether this is considered as mitigation for the submitted scheme. NT consider that further mitigation from the scheme can be achieved to reduce the identified harm.	Not agreed
	As noted in the Planning Balance conclusions [APP-298], all predicted significant effects on landscape and seascape have been mitigated as far as practicable. The Applicant is therefore engaging with relevant interested parties, including North Wales Local Authorities, to understand the basis for and structure of a possible landscape enhancement scheme and negotiations are ongoing. Commercial discussions on this matter are ongoing and the Applicant provided an update at Deadline 6 (REP6-022) which confirms that other parties (including National Trust) will be consulted by the Steering Group where relevant.	NT consider that the Planning Balance needs the further consideration of offshore landscape with a redefined Landscape Management Plan including a wider and specific package of offset mitigation and enhancement measures. A Section 106 Agreement to secure the wider landscape enhancement alongside the management of tourism risk should be brought forward. NT has been updated by the Applicant in a meeting on 19 January 2023 on the status of negotiations relating to the potential provision of a Landscape Enhancement Fund and separate Tourism Fund. NT was also made aware of the ongoing nature of discussions in the Applicant's update at Deadline 6 (REP6-022) and consider this issue to be in the public interest. NT understands it will be consulted by the Steering Group of North Wales LPAs where relevant as discussions continue.	Ongoing point of discussion
	The lighting mitigation proposed in the SLVIA chapter of the ES (AS-027) adequately mitigates night-time effects, which includes reducing aviation lights to 200 candela when visibility is greater than 5km. The lighting mitigation would be secured	Lighting remains a concern of NT in the context of the totality of landscape and visual harm. NT acknowledges the mitigation proposed by the Applicant, but concerns still remain, as outlined in its Written Representation (REP1-075).	Not agreed

DISCUSSION POINT	APPLICANT'S POSITION	NT POSITION	POSITION STATUS
	via the lighting and marking plan which will be a condition of the marine licence for the generation assets as set out in the Marine Licence Principles document (REP4-023). In addition, Requirement 3 of the draft DCO (REP3a-016) means that aviation lighting will be operated at the lowest permissible lighting intensity level.		
Outcomes of the EIA	The conclusions of the SLVIA in relation to North Anglesey, Penrhyn Castle, Snowdonia, and the Great Orme are appropriate.	With regard to Penrhyn Castle, the overall conclusions in the context of the totality of landscape and visual harm remain of concern to NT, as outlined in its Written Representation (REP1-075).	Not agreed
	The conclusions of the SLVIA in relation to night-time visual effects are appropriate.	Lighting remains a concern for NT in the context of the totality of landscape and visual harm, and therefore this remains an ongoing consideration for NT, as outlined in its Written Representation (REP1-075).	Not agreed

## 3.2 Tourism and Recreation

Table 4: Status of discussions relating to Tourism and Recreation.

DISCUSSION POINT	APPLICANT'S POSITION	NT POSITION	POSITION STATUS
Consultation	The EIA has had regard to matters raised by NT via statutory and non-statutory consultation activities in relation to tourism and recreation.	NT is satisfied with the approach and matters raised	Agreed
Assessment scope and methodology	The EIA has identified and assessed all likely significant effects relevant to tourism and recreation as identified within the Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion. The study area defined for the assessment is appropriate for the impacts, pathways and receptors considered. The assessment has appropriately defined the Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for the purposes of assessment.	NT is satisfied with the assessment.	Agreed
Baseline characterisation	The baseline environment in terms of tourism and recreation has been adequately characterised for the purposes of EIA.	NT is satisfied with the assessment.	Agreed
Mitigation measures	The mitigation measures identified within the EIA are considered appropriate and adequate in relation to tourism and recreation. In recognition of the risk of short-term significant impacts to tourism during the latter stages of offshore construction, and the early stages of operation, the Applicant is pursuing the provision of a tourism fund via a direct agreement with Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC). An update on these negotiations was given in REP6-022 and the Applicant understands CCBC will consult with National Trust as relevant as discussions continue.	NT is satisfied with the approach and assessment. NT has been updated by the Applicant in a meeting on 19 January 2023 on the status of negotiations relating to the potential provision of a Tourism Fund, and understands that negotiations are ongoing. NT was also made aware of the ongoing nature of discussions in the Applicant's update at Deadline 6 (REP6-022). NT understands it will be consulted by Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) where relevant as discussions continue.	Ongoing point of discussion
Outcomes of the EIA	The conclusions of the assessment appropriately reflect the potential effects on tourism and recreation within the study area during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of AyM. The cumulative effects have been adequately described and the conclusions of the cumulative effects assessment are appropriate in relation to tourism and recreation.	NT is satisfied with the approach and conclusions.	Agreed



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