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Natural England and
Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
Limited

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010115

Date: 16 December 2024

Dear Sirs

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 17

Application by Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm project

Request for further information

We are writing under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended).

In responding to the Examining Authority's (ExA) second written questions (ExQ2) ME.2.10, Natural England (NE) has raised concern regarding the impacts of the Proposed Development on migrating and foraging bats [REP4-063]. This now reflects similar concerns raised by the German Government at [RR-035].

In the absence of survey work associated with migrating bats, NE has stated it currently has insufficient information to assess the impacts of the Proposed Development in this regard. The ExA notes from NE's response to ExQ2 ME.2.10 that it advised the Applicant of the need to undertake migratory bat surveys during the pre-application stage for the Proposed Development.

For Natural England

Notwithstanding the absence of species surveys, in [REP4-063] NE has advised that "... *the only long-term mitigation at present known to reduce fatalities from collision is curtailing (slowing) blade rotation speed or further still stopping the blades all together*". That said, given the presence of other nearby operational windfarms, NE has gone onto to advise that such mitigation would be unlikely to be effective. Can NE clarify why it considers curtailing turbine speed or stopping rotation altogether would be unlikely to be effective?

For the Applicant

Can the Applicant clarify whether or not it intends to carry out any further survey work relating to migratory bat species? If so, when would that survey work be conducted? Additionally, can the Applicant comment on the possibility of reducing turbine rotation speed as a mechanism for mitigating any harm to migratory bats. What would be the implications of that type of mitigation for the operation of the Proposed Development and how effective do you consider it might be? If the Applicant considers that form of mitigation would be ineffective, explain: 1) why that would be the case; and 2) how it is intended the potential for harm to migratory bats could be addressed.

Responses should be submitted by **Deadline 5 (10 January 2025)**.

Both NE and the Applicant may find it useful to continue engage on this matter in order to be able respond to these requests for further information.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Gould

Grahame Gould
Lead Member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors

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