



THE PLANNING ACT 2008

THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES  
2010

Rampion Two Offshore Wind Farm

**Appendix J4c to the Natural England Deadline 4 Submission**  
**Natural England's advice on Soils**

For:

The construction and operation of the Rampion 2 Offshore Windfarm located approximately 13km off the Sussex coast in the English Channel.

Planning Inspectorate Reference EN010117

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3 June 2024

## **Natural England's advice on Soils**

In formulating these comments, the following documents have been considered:

- [APP-224] 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice Rev C (tracked)
- [APP-226] 7.4 Category 7: Other Documents Outline Soils Management Plan (OSMP) (tracked changes) Revision B

### **1. Summary**

Natural England welcomes updated documents regarding management of soils. The Applicant has addressed several of our earlier comments. However, we advise several additional minor amendments required. Natural England advise that additional surveys will be required post consent to inform the final Soils Management Plan.

### **2. Main Comments**

#### ***[APP-224] 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice Rev C (tracked)***

##### **Section 2.6**

Natural England welcomes the inclusion of supervisory inspection and ongoing engagement between landowners and farmers. However, from the list of duties in this section it is unclear whether the day-to-day requirements of carrying out soil tests will be met. We advise that Soil examination tests undertaken in the field to differentiate between varying soil moisture states will require the presence of a suitably qualified and experienced soil scientist. When dealing with best and most versatile (BMV) soils the Applicant should ensure the soil scientist used has enough experience to make the correct judgements when handling highly sensitive soils. We advise that the document is updated to provide clarity on this point.

##### **Section 4.4**

Natural England advises that an assessment of whether soils are sufficiently dry to be handled (paragraph 5.2 Soil Stripping in the OSMP) should be carried out during the 'shoulder hour'. It is the responsibility of the appointed qualified soil scientist to make the level of check needed to ensure soils are handled according to Defra Construction Code of Practice. We advise that the documents are updated to provide clarity on this point.

##### **Table 4-8 – Commitment - 7**

Natural England acknowledges and welcomes commitment 7. We advise that stage specific surveys should be in accordance with the OSMP (para 1.2.5).

#### ***[APP-226] 7.4 Other Documents Outline Soils Management Plan (tracked changes) Revision B***

##### **Section 1.2 Paragraph 1.2.5**

Natural England advises that the final sign off of the soil management plans should be based on detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys post consent.

We advise that a detailed ALC and agricultural land soil survey should be undertaken across the full Study Area. As a minimum we would expect these surveys to included one auger boring per hectare, supported by pits dug in each main soil types to confirm the physical characteristics of the full depth of the soil resource, i.e. 1.2 metres. We advise that soil data collected as part of an ALC survey should also be used to inform the soil resource plan and

soil management plan as set out in the Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#).

**Section 3 Paragraph 3.1.4**

We advise that in the absence of detailed characterisation surveys for large areas of the site at the consenting phase, it is not possible to provide an accurate baseline and demonstrate the likely potential impacts. We acknowledge that the mitigation measures may therefore be considered by the Applicant as overly precautionary, but without this data we advise that the Applicant is currently unable to demonstrate that significant impacts to BMV will be avoided, or that the design of potential mitigation will safeguard the soil resources. We understand that these detailed surveys will be undertaken post consent, and the Local Planning Authority will need to ensure that the mitigation measures remain fit for purpose.