

Date: 18 July 2024
Our ref: Case: 15576 Consultation: 482374
Your ref: EN010117



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Richard Allen,

Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm – Rule 17 Letter

Thank you for your letter received on Friday 12th July. As discussed with the PINS case manager in advance of Deadline 5 [24th June 2024], Natural England had to prioritise which matters to respond to due to the volume and complexity of new material submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 4 and the requirement for a Statement of Common Ground, a draft of which we first received from the Applicant on the 21st June 2024. This prioritisation was necessary to protect staff well-being.

We had understood from this discussion that delaying our response on a limited number of matters until Deadline 6 was an acceptable approach. Natural England was therefore disappointed to receive the Rule 17 letter stating that if these responses were received after 18th July they would be refused.

Comments on the Report on the Implications for the European Sites (RIES)

Please find these enclosed in Appendix O5.5.

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

Please find our advice in Appendix H5.5.

All aspects relating to the DCO

Natural England will not be responding to these matters by the 18th July. We note that updated versions of many of the Applicant's Deadline 4 submissions have been provided at Deadline 5. We will respond to any DCO-related submissions at Deadline 6.

Benthic Ecology

Natural England will not be responding to the benthic submissions made at Deadline 4 by the 18th July. We note that updated versions of the Applicant's Deadline 4 submissions have been submitted at Deadline 5. We highlight that a principal outstanding matter regarding benthic ecology was the absence of a Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) and an Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan, which Natural England requested in our Relevant Representations. These were not submitted at Deadline 4, meaning that progress on resolving issues was unlikely. However, these have been submitted at Deadline 5 and we will respond to them at Deadline 6.

Risk and Issues Log

The letter states that one of the documents that the ExA will not accept beyond 18th July is Natural England's final risk and issues log. We highlight that were a log to have been submitted at Deadline 5 it would not have been the final one.

With that in mind, we hope that the ExA will accept our final risk & issues log at Deadline 6, as this will set out our closing positions on all matters raised in our relevant/written representations.

Responses to Deadline 6 submissions

We note from the Applicant's Responses to Examining Authority's Second Written Questions (ExQ2) that the Applicant intends to submit an updated cumulative impact assessment for great black-backed gull at Deadline 6 (as sought by Natural England at Deadline 3).

As the ExA's letter notes, Deadline 6 is just three working days before the close of the Examination, and we agree with the ExA that there would not be sufficient time to respond. Therefore, Natural England will not be able to provide advice on this or any other material that the Applicant submits pertaining to any thematic area at Deadline 6.

If you have any queries or require any further information do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Emma Preston

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