NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm

Outline Vessel Traffic Monitoring Plan

Document Reference:	7.21
Volume:	7
APFP Regulation:	5(2)(q)
Date:	July 2024
Revision:	0

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Project	North Falls Offshore Wind Farm
Document Title	Outline Vessel Traffic Monitoring Plan
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Supplier	Royal HaskoningDHV
Supplier Document ID	PB9244-RHD-ZZ-OF-RP-YE-0292

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Revision	Date	Status/Reason for Issue	Originator	Checked	Approved
0	July 2024	Submission	RHDHV	NFOW	NFOW

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Glossary of Acronyms

AIS	Automatic Identification System
CPA	Closest Point of Approach
DML	Deemed Marine Licence
MAIB	Maritime Accident Investigation Branch
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MGN	Marine Guidance Note
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
nm	Nautical mile
NRA	Navigational Risk Assessment
OREI	Offshore Renewable Energy Installations
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Document

1. As conditioned in the draft Deemed Marine Licences (DMLs) (Document Reference: 6.1) for the North Falls Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter 'the Project'), vessel traffic monitoring is required to ensure that the Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA) remains accurate through both the construction and operational phases of the Project. The results of the vessel traffic monitoring will be reviewed against the predictions made in the NRA for the Project with respect to anticipated changes in traffic patterns, as well as the effectiveness of the mitigation measures implemented (see Environment Statement Chapter 15 Shipping and Navigation (Document Reference: 3.1.17)). This document has been prepared to outline the methodology by which vessel traffic monitoring will be undertaken.

1.2 Deemed marine licence details

2. The DML text for the construction and post construction monitoring plans states they must include the following (in outline):

   - vessel traffic monitoring by automatic identification system for the duration of the construction period, with provision for a report to be submitted to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Trinity House, and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) annually during the construction period for the authorised development; and
   - vessel traffic monitoring by automatic identification system for a duration of three consecutive years following the completion of construction of the authorised development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the MMO, with provision for a report to be submitted annually to the MMO, Trinity House, and the MCA

1.3 MCA

3. Current UK guidance on vessel traffic monitoring is contained within *Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 654 (Merchant and Fishing) Safety of Navigation: Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREI) – Guidance on UK Navigational Practice, Safety and Emergency Response* (MCA, 2021).
4. Specifically, Section 6.6 of MGN 654 discusses the purpose of vessel traffic monitoring as to ensure the NRA is accurate for the construction and operation and maintenance phases and that mitigation measures are effective and remain fit for purpose.

2 Agreed control mechanism

2.1 Scope

5. The planned type, duration, area, and frequency of vessel traffic monitoring is detailed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Scope of Vessel Traffic Monitoring

	Detail
Type	Automatic Identification System (AIS) only.
Duration	Minimum of 28 days covering seasonal variations in traffic patterns and fishing operations (i.e., 2 x 14 days).
Area	Within a 10 nautical mile (nm) buffer of the 'as built' array area.
Frequency	Annually throughout the construction phase (construction traffic monitoring surveys) and the first three years post-construction (post-construction traffic monitoring surveys).
Reporting	A report will be submitted to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Trinity House, and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) following each year of the construction period (next quarter following the completion of the construction year) and after the end of the first, second, and third years of operation (next quarter following completion of the operational year).

6. The source of AIS data used to capture vessel traffic movements will be determined at the time of undertaking each of the vessel traffic monitoring reports. This may include offshore AIS recording equipment installed on offshore infrastructure within or in proximity to the array area, on project vessels undertaking activities at the array area, shore-based receivers, and/or satellite-based receivers. It is noted that based on vessel traffic data collection to date as part of the NRA process, shore based receivers are likely to provide good coverage of the array area. However, if applicable, the location of any equipment at the array area shall be chosen to ensure that a high level of coverage is obtained for the array area and the adjacent sea area (within 10nm of the array area).

7. Any AIS recording equipment used shall not transmit any information and is not considered to be an Aid to Navigation. The AIS will not be actively monitored and shall not be transmitted directly to shore; instead, it shall be recovered periodically for both storage and use within the assessment as required.

2.2 Assessment

7. The AIS data shall be processed and assessed by an experienced navigation consultant based upon the traffic survey methodology outlined in Annex 1 of MGN 654 and shall be reviewed against the conclusions of the NRA. This may include, but not be limited to, the following information included within the NRA:

   - Main route 90th percentiles;
   - Main route Closest Point of Approach (CPA);
   - Maritime Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) incident data; and
   - Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) incident data.

8. Additionally, each report shall analyse the navigational features found in proximity to the array area, noting any changes to the features.

2.3 Submission

9. Upon completion should there be any notable changes noted since the submission of the NRA, the MCA and/or Trinity House will be consulted to discuss the results in further detail and whether any additional mitigation measures are required.

3 References

MCA (2021). Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 654 (Merchant and Fishing) Safety of Navigation: Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREI) – Guidance on UK Navigational Practice, Safety and Emergency Response. Southampton: MCA.

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To contact please email contact@northfallsoffshore.com

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