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03 July 2024

Dear Simon,

**Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms Project**  
**Request for signposting information**  
**PINS Reference: EN010125**

I write in response to your letter dated 1st July 2024 in relation to the above application for Development Consent submitted on the 12th June 2024 for the Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms Project requesting signposting information within the application documents. For ease of reference, I have responded to each request for signposting information raised in the letter in the table below.

Signposting request	Response
<p><b>1. Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) (Doc 6.1)</b></p> <p>The RIAA (Doc 6.1), Part 1 describes the proposed offshore development in Section 2 but does not include a description of the proposed onshore development. The Applicant is requested to signpost to the description of the onshore works that</p>	<p><b><u>Humber Estuary SPA/Ramsar</u></b></p> <p>The terrestrial ecology assessment in <b>Volume 6, RIAA (application ref: 6.1)</b> was focused on the potential impacts from construction activities associated with the onward cable routing to the proposed Birkhill Wood National Grid Substation on functionally linked land (FLL) for bird species from the Humber Estuary SPA/Ramsar. These works are included within the Onshore Development Area presented in Figure</p>

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Signposting request	Response
<p>were assessed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</p>	<p>4-1 of the RIAA. In their response to the Section 42 (including preliminary HRA) consultation, Natural England noted that no assessment had been provided of potential loss of FLL associated with the Humber Estuary SPA/Ramsar. Potential impacts to birds using FLL were therefore screened into the HRA for further assessment with a desk-based assessment to determine if there were potential impacts. As stated in section 5.4.2.1 of the RIAA, it was agreed with Natural England (on the basis of the Applicants' survey information and other publicly available data) that the land overlapped by the Onshore Development Area that falls within 10km of the Humber Estuary SPA/Ramsar is not considered to be functionally linked to the designated site. Therefore, given there was no impact pathway, no further assessment was undertaken. Therefore, detailed information on the works for the onward cable routing to the proposed Birkhill Wood National Grid Substation were not deemed relevant to be included within the RIAA.</p> <p>For information, the onshore works are detailed in Section 5.7.3 - Onward Cable Connection to the proposed Birkhill Wood National Grid Substation of <b>Volume 7, Environmental Statement, Chapter 5 (application ref: 7.5)</b>.</p> <p><b><u>Humber Estuary SAC</u></b></p> <p>Relatively small areas of the Humber Estuary SAC, have been screened in for potential changes to air quality based on proximity to the road network links</p>

Signposting request	Response
	<p>carrying construction traffic. The area, relates to 22.9ha of mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide along the River Hull, 200m either side of the A63 trunk road and A15 Humber Bridge as seen on <b>Volume 7, Figure 18-6 (application ref: 7.18.1)</b> and <b>Volume 7, Figure 26-4a (application ref: 7.26.1)</b>. The changes in air quality relate to vehicle movements (i.e. 24-hour Annual Average Daily Traffic flows and HGV percentages) which are not detailed in the Project Description but those used in the air quality assessment which are detailed in <b>Volume 7, Appendix 26-3 (application ref: 7.26.26.3)</b>.</p>
<p><b>2. Offshore Statutory and Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites Plan (Doc 2.13)</b></p> <p>The Offshore Statutory and Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites Plan (Doc 2.13) identifies the relevant sites considered in the ES (Doc 7.12) and RIAA (Doc 6.1), with the exception of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) beyond 10km from the Proposed Development (eg Farne Islands SPA or SPAs in Scotland). The Applicant is requested to signpost the Planning Inspectorate to where these SPAs have been illustrated in the application.</p>	<p>It was decided not to illustrate the locations of the SPAs assessed in the RIAA due to the wide geographical range of the SPAs screened in which are located as far north as Shetland. Such sites were not initially screened in for assessment, but were included following a Natural England request for sites with non-breeding connectivity to also be assessed in the RIAA. Given the geographic range of sites, and numbers included, it was not considered to add value. The Applicants can produce such figures for submission during the post-acceptance period should this be requested by PINS.</p>

Signposting request	Response
<p><b>3. Geophysical Survey Data and Archaeological Evaluation</b></p> <p>The Environmental Statement (ES) highlights that geophysical survey is ongoing for certain Priority Areas (ES Appendix 22-7, Part 1 (Doc 7.22.22.7)). In addition, the Interim Archaeological Evaluation Report (ES Appendix 22-8 (Doc. 7.22.22.8)), which summarises the results from the trenching completed during Phase 1, states that “a post-excavation report for the Phase 1 trenching will be produced in due course which will contain a full methodology, the archaeological and historical background to the sites, stratigraphic narratives for each trench, a discussion placing the results of the trenching in a broader regional context, a full suite of site plans and sections, and finds and environmental assessment reports”. The Applicant is requested to signpost the Planning Inspectorate to information within the submission confirming the proposed timescales for submission of the outstanding information. In addition, the Applicant should also signpost to any agreement regarding this</p>	<p>The Applicants agreed the scope and programme for the ongoing archaeological evaluation programme, including Geophysical Survey and Archaeological Trial Trenching with Heritage Stakeholders through the Evidence Plan Process (EPP).</p> <p><b>Volume 7 ES Appendix 22-1 Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Consultation Responses (application ref: 7.22.22.1)</b> summarises the Applicants’ consultation with the members of the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Expert Topic Group (ETG) which includes Humber Archaeological Partnership (HAP), Historic England (HE) and East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) Conservation Officer. Page 14/15 of Appendix 22-1 references an ETG Meeting held on 25/05/23 in which the Projects’ EIA Strategy, including strategy for geophysical surveys and trial trenching was discussed. It was agreed with the ETG stakeholders that the ES and DCO submission would include a Geophysical Survey Report including data collected (to date) and an Interim Trial Trenching Report for the Phase 1 areas. No specific dates were agreed with the ETG for providing the remaining Geophysical Survey Data/Report or the Final Post-Excavation Phase 1 Trial Trenching Report, as the timeline for this was still to be determined. It was agreed with ETG Stakeholders that it was acceptable for this further information to be provided to the ETG once completed during the pre-Examination or Examination period, as evidenced on page 15 of <b>Volume 7 ES Appendix 22-1 (application ref 7.22.22.1)</b>.</p>

Signposting request	Response
<p>submission approach obtained from relevant consultation bodies (eg through the evidence plan process).</p>	<p>The notes of this meeting are also provided in <b>Volume 5 Consultation Report Appendix F1 Minutes of Meetings - ETG (application ref: 5.7)</b>.</p> <p>It is currently expected that the outstanding geophysical survey information for priority areas and the post excavation phase 1 trial trenching report will be finalised by November 2024 and can be submitted for consideration in the DCO examination process at this point.</p>

I trust that the responses above are helpful, but please let me know if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



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Senior Consents Manager

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