

Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind

Letter of No Impediment received
from Natural England- Great
Crested Newt

Date: December 2024

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Date: 08 October 2024
Our ref: 2024-69011-EPS-NSIP
(NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECT)



[REDACTED]
GT R4 Ltd
C/O Johnston Carmichael Llp Birchin Court

Wildlife Licensing Natural
England
Horizon House
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AH
Email:
eps. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Tel: 020 [REDACTED]

Sent by e-mail only

Dear Sophie Brown,

Draft Mitigation Licence Application Status: Initial Draft Application
Legislation: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
NSIP: Outer Dowsing Wind Farm
Species: Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*

Thank you for your draft Great Crested Newt mitigation licence application in association with the above NSIP site, received in this office on the 18 September 2024. As stated in our published guidance, once Natural England is content that the draft licence application is of the required standard, we will issue a 'letter of no impediment'. This is designed to provide the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State with confidence that the competent licensing authority sees no impediment to issuing a licence in future, subject to a Development Consent Order being granted, based on information assessed to date in respect of these proposals.

This advice is provided in accordance with the PSS Quotation and Agreement A015496 dated 05 September 2024. The advice detailed in this response letter is based upon the information within the following documents:

- Application Form, signed 23rd and 29th August 2024
- Method Statement, received by Natural England 18th September 2024
- Figure C3.2a, dated 27th August 2024
- Figure C3.2b, dated 27th August 2024
- Figure D, dated 28th August 2024
- Figure E2, dated 28th August 2024
- Figure E3.1, dated 28th August 2024
- Figure E4a, dated 28th August 2024
- Figure F1, dated 27th August 2024
- Work Schedule, dated August 2024

Assessment

Following assessment and review of the draft licence application documents, I write to confirm that, on the basis of the information and proposals provided, Natural England sees no

impediment to a licence being issued, should the DCO be granted. However, the following points should be addressed fully as part of that formal licence application submission:

Survey

- All survey data must be included within section C4.2.C of the Method Statement, including results for waterbodies 20262, 20265 and 20279 in line with section C3.3.ii.
- If further surveys are to be undertaken prior to the formal application, it is advised to survey 20262, 20265, 20279, Decoy Wood Pond and any ditches that were dry during the initial surveys. This may also eliminate the need for Licensing Policy 4.
- Please provide additional evidence of the source GCN population to support the outlined approach.

Method Statement

- Ensure waterbodies are inputted under the correct classification within the Method Statement sections D1.3 and E3.
- Please provide further clarification around working methods and timings of vegetation clearance, hand searches and destructive searches, as these methods are proposed over a large area.
- Terrestrial habitat reinstatement should be listed in section E3.2, if applicable.
- The decommissioning of the haul road/reinstatement of habitat and mitigation methods should be outlined within the method statement.

Compensation

- As the draft application is proposing to implement two Licensing Policies, Natural England would require further compensation to meet the licensing tests. A potential compensation option for consideration may be to carry out enhancements and management of Decoy Wood Pond to make it more suitable for GCN.

Work Schedule

- Details and timings of the decommissioning of the haul road/reinstatement of habitat should be included, inline with the Method Statement.

Additional Documents

- If Licensing Policy 1 (LP1) is to be used in the formal application, a Figure D.1 and additional work schedule will be required for any areas where LP1 will be implemented.

Reasoned Statement

- Please note that the Reasoned Statement has not been assessed. Therefore, the Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest Test & No Satisfactory Alternative Test cannot be confirmed as satisfied.

Next Steps

Should the DCO be granted then the mitigation licence application must be formally submitted to Natural England. At this stage any modifications to the timings of the proposed works, e.g. due to ecological requirements of the species concerned, must be made and agreed before a licence is issued; likewise if further survey is required this must also be undertaken and the method statement re-submitted for further assessment, and the tests met, prior to the granting of any licence.

Full details of Natural England's licensing process with regards to NSIP's can be found at the following link:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/images/wml-q36_tcm6-28566.pdf

I hope that the information detailed within this letter and its enclosures have been helpful. However, should you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Claudia Sephton
Higher Wildlife Licensing Officer
Chargeable Advice and Strategic Casework

E: [REDACTED]@naturalengland.org.uk

Annex - Guidance for providing further information or formally submitting the licence application.

Important note: when submitting your formal application please mark all correspondence 'For the attention of Claudia Sephton'.

Submitting Documents.

Documents must be sent to the Natural England Wildlife Licensing Service (postal and email address at the top of this letter).

Changes to Documents –Reasoned Statement/Method Statement.

Changes must be identified using one or more of the following methods:

- underline new text/strikeout deleted text;
- use different font colour;
- block-coloured text, or all the above.

Method Statement

When submitting a revised Method Statement please send us one copy on CD, or by e-mail if less than 5MB in size, or alternatively three paper copies. The method statement should be submitted in its entirety including all figures, appendices, supporting documents. Sections of this document form part of the licence; please do not send the amended sections in isolation.

Reasoned Statement

When submitting a revised Reasoned Statement please send us one copy on CD, or by e-mail if less than 5MB in size, or alternatively one paper copy of the complete, revised document. Please do not send the amended sections in isolation.