

Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind

Letter of No Impediment received from Natural England- Water Vole

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Date: 08 October 2024
Our ref: 2024-69012-SPM-NSIP
(NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECT)



Sophie Brown
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Sent by e-mail only

Dear Sophie Brown,

Draft Mitigation Licence Application Status: Initial Draft Application
Legislation: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
NSIP: Outer Dowsing Wind Farm
Species: Water vole *Arvicola amphibius*.

Thank you for your draft water vole displacement licence application in association with the above NSIP site, received in this office on 24 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, 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 document:

- Water Vole Mitigation Plan and Method Statement, dated 11 September 2024

Assessment

Following our assessment of the draft application documents, I can now 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.

Next Steps

Should the DCO be granted then you can register with Natural England for a licence to displace water voles using Class Licence 31 (CL31).

If site conditions or methodologies change prior to submitting the site registration and CL31 conditions can no longer be met, then a formal licence application will be required. 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 with Natural England before a licence is granted. If other minor changes to the application are subsequently necessary, e.g.

amendments to the work schedule/s then these should be outlined in a covering letter and must be reflected in the formal submission of the licence application. These changes must be agreed by Natural England before a licence can be granted. If changes are made to proposals or timings which do not enable us to meet reach a 'satisfied' decision, we will issue correspondence outlining why the proposals are not acceptable and what further information is required. These issues will need to be addressed before any licence can be granted.

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-g36_tcm6-28566.pdf

As stated in the above guidance note, I should also be grateful if an open dialogue can be maintained with yourselves regarding the progression of the DCO application so that, should the Order be granted, we will be in a position to assess the final submission of the application in a timely fashion and avoid any unnecessary delay in issuing the licence.

I hope the above has 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.