



THE PLANNING ACT 2008

THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES
2010

Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm

Appendix H2 to the Natural England Deadline 3 Submission
Natural England's Updated Advice on Onshore Ecology - Noise and Vibration
Management Plan [REP2-032]

For:

The construction and operation of Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm located
approximately 54 km from the Lincolnshire Coast in the Southern North Sea.

Planning Inspectorate Reference EN010130

13th December 2024

Appendix H2 - Natural England's Advice on Onshore Ecology - Noise and Vibration Management Plan [REP2-032]

In formulating these comments, the following document has been considered:

- [REP2-032] 8.1.1 Outline Noise and Vibration Management Plan (Tracked)

Introduction

1. A summary of our overarching concerns regarding the Noise and Vibration Management Plan (Tracked) [REP2-032] is provided below followed by detailed advice in Table 1.

Summary of Advice - Outline Noise and Vibration Management Plan [REP2-032]

2. The Noise and Vibration Management Plan (NVMP) [REP2-032] has assigned flat indicative noise parameters for all Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs). In our Relevant Representations [RR-045], Natural England advised a further assessment of noise sensitive receptor characterisation data is required to ensure any identified impacts had appropriate and targeted avoidance and mitigation measures in place, based on indicative noise parameters for each noise sensitive designated feature.
3. To address this Natural England advises all noise sensitive designated features of designated sites should be included for assessment. With behaviours of designated features being considered within functional habitats or at different times of year.
4. Natural England suggests all noise sensitive designated features of impacted Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Ramsar sites and associated functionally linked land are clearly identified and their supporting habitats located for monitoring. The identified NSRs have defined noise level parameters and where modelling identifies these parameters are exceeded, monitoring is necessary to ensure effective avoidance and mitigation is implemented. Avoidance and mitigation measures are clearly defined and secured within the plan, with the indicative noise level reduction so it is clear what the appropriate course of action is should an impact be identified.

Table 1: Natural England’s Detailed Advice On– Noise and Vibration Management Plan [REP2-032]

NE Ref	Section	Key Concern and/or Update	Natural England’s Advice to Resolve Issue
1	Section 3.3, Paragraphs 20 and 21, Table 3.3	Natural England notes that the Noise and Vibration Management Plan (NVMP) utilises flat noise level parameters, taken from Air Quality Technical Advisory Group 09, to assess adverse impacts of noise on wildlife. Natural England advises that it is not clear from the data gathered if the noise parameters are suitable to the designated features of the relevant nationally and internationally designated sites. In addition, it is not in line with Natural England’s advice given at Relevant Representations [RR-045], where we requested species specific characterisation data to inform any noise level parameters and any proposed avoidance and mitigation be targeted to the type of Noise Sensitive Receptor (NSR) in the wider spatial and temporal context.	Natural England advises that justification is included as to why these parameters are suitable for the noise sensitive designated features and how they are impacted by noise as designated at the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. This includes any SPA functionally linked land.
2	Section 3.3, Paragraphs 20 and 21, Table 3.3	Natural England highlights that the Designated sites and their features have not been outlined and noted as NSRs in the NVMP. There is also no analysis on the behaviour of these NSRs and how noise may impact them in different places and at different times of year, including at land functionally linked outside of designated sites. As such avoidance and mitigation measures cannot be targeted and may not be effective.	Natural England advises the Applicant ensures NSRs are clearly defined and understood in the analyses to guarantee any avoidance and mitigation is effective and targeted.
3	Section 5.8.1, Paragraph 47	Natural England notes that it is stated in the NVMP that the “ <i>most sensitive receptors</i> ” will be identified in relation to their proximity to construction operations and the associated predicted noise levels. However, we advise that no indication has been given as to what qualifies as the most sensitive receptors.	Natural England advises all noise sensitive designated features of nationally and internationally designated sites should be included for consideration in the identification of the most sensitive receptors. Including mobile species, where they are shown to use functionally linked land outside of the designated site. Where a noise sensitive designated feature is excluded, this should be clearly justified.

NE Ref	Section	Key Concern and/or Update	Natural England's Advice to Resolve Issue
4	Section 5.8.1, Paragraph 48 and 49	Natural England notes that it is stated in the NVMP that it <i>may be necessary</i> to monitor noise levels " <i>at these locations</i> ". It is not clear what locations are being referenced and under what circumstances. Natural England notes that the exact monitoring procedure and subsequent actions will be included in the final NVMP.	Natural England advises all noise sensitive designated features of impacted SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites and associated functionally linked land are clearly identified and their supporting habitats located for monitoring. The identified NSRs have defined noise level parameters and where modelling identifies these parameters are exceeded, monitoring is necessary to ensure effective avoidance and mitigation is implemented.