

From: Mann, Helen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, December 17, 2024 11:50 AM
To: Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind <OuterDowsingOffshoreWind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc: Casey, Ellie <[REDACTED]>; Mills, Polly <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind February 2025 Hearings

Good morning, Louise

Thank you for your e-mail regarding Natural England's attendance at the February ISHs.

Currently we do not consider that anything has changed our position as set out in the Rule 6 letter on attending the ISHs. However, we wish to note to the Examining Authority the following:

- We understand from the Applicant there is an action from the December hearing for the Applicant to work with Natural England to resolve outstanding onshore issues. As reiterated within our D3 cover letter, while we are willing to work with the Applicant, it is for the Applicant to set out how they plan to address our concerns through submission of updated plans and documents, that are secured by the DCO and can be relied upon post consent.
- In this regard we consider it would be beneficial to all parties if the Applicant could consider and set out the documents they intend to produce for all thematic areas as a road map towards issue resolution.
- For offshore matters, we consider the examination is still at an early stage, with the acceptance of the ORBA delaying our advice particularly for offshore ornithology to Deadline 3. Noting there are some outstanding methodological concerns for offshore ornithology.
- We therefore recognise that the Applicant, having received our advice regarding benthic, offshore ornithology and marine mammals at Deadline 3, will seek to address our concerns. Our earliest opportunity to receive a response will be at Deadline 4 on February 3rd. We are unlikely to be in a position where we have received and reviewed the documents to inform the ISHs the following week.
- For the Examining Authority's awareness, we have agreed to engage with the Applicant on matters relating to Auks compensation, ORCP impacts re RTD and IPCoD in-combination modelling for marine mammals. We consider this to be a good focus of our time during January as currently proposed by the Applicant.
- We note that the Applicant intends to submit a Final SoCG at Deadline 4 with publication of the RIES expected on February 17th.

Of additional consideration is the congestion around the other OWF examinations during this week, which will significantly impact our resource capacity for ISH attendance.

As Set out in our Rule 6 letter response, Natural England would be pleased to respond to any questions from the ExA that arise from the hearings at a subsequent deadline.

Best wishes
Helen

Helen Mann
Senior Officer – Marine Major Casework

Norfolk and Suffolk Area Team
Natural England - www.gov.uk/natural-england

Email: [REDACTED]
Mobile no: [REDACTED]

From: Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind <OuterDowsingOffshoreWind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 December 2024 14:33
To: Mann, Helen <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Casey, Ellie <[REDACTED]>; Mills, Polly <[REDACTED]>; Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind <OuterDowsingOffshoreWind@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Subject: Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind February 2025 Hearings

Good afternoon Helen

I hope you are well. I am writing with regard to the upcoming hearings for the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind project, which are scheduled to take place during the week commencing 10 February 2025.

We acknowledge Natural England (NE)'s response to the Rule 6 Letter on 19 September 2024 which set out their position that they would only attend Issue Specific Hearings (ISH) by exception; with this in mind, the Examining Authority (ExA) is of the opinion that NE's presence would be beneficial at the February hearings, and we ask that NE considers if they would be available to attend an ISH that week for the reasons set out below.

Having progressed two months into the Examination and with a first round of written questions and hearings undertaken, there still remains significant areas of disagreement between NE and the Applicant, particularly over offshore and benthic ecology; in addition, there remain around 50 amber and red onshore ecology items on NE's risk and issues log (this figure excludes a further 20 items relating to land use and soils). The ExA wishes to see evidence that progress towards agreement on currently unresolved issues continues to be made. The ExA therefore requests NE's attendance at a hearing in order to test the evidence in the most time-efficient manner available to it. We will also be requesting the same level of attendance from the Marine Management Organisation, for broadly the same reasons as above.

Please note that the ExA would require NE to be present (if they are available) for no more than one day of hearings, which can be attended either in-person or virtually via Teams. Since the hearing agendas have not yet been finalised, there remains flexibility as to which day of the week that could be.

We look forward to NE's response on the above, please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards



Louise Harraway

Case Manager- National Infrastructure (Transport)
Planning Inspectorate

Direct Line [REDACTED] **Helpline** 0303 444 5000

Email [REDACTED]



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