Partners in UK offshore wind

MONA OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Response to October Hearing Action Points

Deadline: 4

Application Reference: EN010137

Document Reference: S_D4_6

Document Number: MOCNS-J3303-JVW-10366

4 November 2024

F01

Image of an offshore wind farm

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Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
F01	Submission at D4	Mona Offshore Wind Ltd	Mona Offshore Wind Ltd	Mona Offshore Wind Ltd	4 Nov 2024

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Applicant	Mona Offshore Wind Limited.
Bodelwyddan National Grid Substation	This is the Point of Interconnection (POI) selected by the National Grid for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Development Consent Order (DCO)	An order made under the Planning Act 2008 granting development consent for one or more Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).
Environmental Statement	The document presenting the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Evidence Plan Process	The Evidence Plan process is a mechanism to agree upfront what information the Applicant needs to supply to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) applications for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Expert Working Group (EWG)	Expert working groups set up with relevant stakeholders as part of the Evidence Plan process.
Inter-array cables	Cables which connect the wind turbines to each other and to the offshore substation platforms. Inter-array cables will carry the electrical current produced by the wind turbines to the offshore substation platforms.
Interconnector cables	Cables that may be required to interconnect the Offshore Substation Platforms in order to provide redundancy in the case of cable failure elsewhere.
Intertidal access areas	The area from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) to Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) which will be used for access to the beach and construction related activities.
Intertidal area	The area between MHWS and MLWS.
Landfall	The area in which the offshore export cables make contact with land and the transitional area where the offshore cabling connects to the onshore cabling.
Local Authority	A body empowered by law to exercise various statutory functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom. This includes County Councils, District Councils and County Borough Councils.
Local Highway Authority	A body responsible for the public highways in a particular area of England and Wales, as defined in the Highways Act 1980.
Marine licence	The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires a marine licence to be obtained for licensable marine activities. Section 149A of the Planning Act 2008 allows an applicant for a DCO to apply for a 'deemed' marine licence as part of the DCO process. In addition, licensable activities within 12nm of the Welsh coast require a separate marine licence from Natural Resource Wales (NRW).
Maximum Design Scenario (MDS)	The scenario within the design envelope with the potential to result in the greatest impact on a particular topic receptor, and therefore the one that should be assessed for that topic receptor.
Mona 400kV Grid Connection Cable Corridor	The corridor from the Mona onshore substation to the National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan.
Mona Array Area	The area within which the wind turbines, foundations, inter-array cables, interconnector cables, offshore export cables and offshore

Term	Meaning
	substation platforms (OSPs) forming part of the Mona Offshore Wind Project will be located.
Mona Array Scoping Boundary	The Preferred Bidding Area that the Applicant was awarded by The Crown Estate as part of Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4.
Mona Offshore Cable Corridor	The corridor located between the Mona Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables will be located.
Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Areas	The corridor located between the Mona Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables will be located and in which the intertidal access areas are located.
Mona Offshore Transmission Infrastructure Scoping Search Area	The area that was presented in the Mona Scoping Report as the area encompassing and located between the Mona Potential Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables will be located.
Mona Offshore Wind Project	The Mona Offshore Wind Project is comprised of both the generation assets, offshore and onshore transmission assets, and associated activities.
Mona Offshore Wind Project Boundary	The area containing all aspects of the Mona Offshore Wind Project, both offshore and onshore.
Mona Offshore Wind Project PEIR	The Mona Offshore Wind Project Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) that was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and NRW for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Mona Offshore Wind Project Scoping Report	The Mona Scoping Report that was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and NRW for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Mona Onshore Cable Corridor	The corridor between MHWS at the landfall and the Mona onshore substation, in which the onshore export cables will be located.
Mona Onshore Development Area	The area in which the landfall, onshore cable corridor, onshore substation, mitigation areas, temporary construction facilities (such as access roads and construction compounds), and the connection to National Grid substation will be located
Mona Onshore Transmission Infrastructure Scoping Search Area	The area that was presented in the Mona Scoping Report as the area located between MHWS at the landfall and the onshore National Grid substation, in which the onshore export cables, onshore substation and other associated onshore transmission infrastructure will be located.
Mona PEIR Offshore Cable Corridor	The corridor presented at PEIR that was consulted on during statutory consultation and has subsequently been refined for the application for Development Consent. It is located between the Mona Array Area and the landfall up to MHWS, in which the offshore export cables and the offshore booster substation will be located.
Mona PEIR Offshore Wind Project Boundary	The area presented at PEIR containing all aspects of the Mona Offshore Wind Project, both offshore and onshore. This area was the boundary consulted on during statutory consultation and subsequently refined for the application for Development Consent.
Mona Potential Array Area	The area that was presented in the Mona Scoping Report and in the PEIR as the area within which the wind turbines, foundations, meteorological mast, inter-array cables, interconnector cables, offshore export cables and OSPs forming part of the Mona Offshore Wind Project were likely to be located. This area was the boundary consulted

Term	Meaning
	on during statutory consultation and subsequently refined for the application for Development Consent.
Mona Proposed Onshore Development Area	The area presented at PEIR in which the landfall, onshore cable corridor, onshore substation, mitigation areas, temporary construction facilities (such as access roads and construction compounds), and the connection to National Grid infrastructure will be located. This area was the boundary consulted on during statutory consultation and subsequently refined for the application for Development Consent.
Mona Scoping Report	The Mona Scoping Report that was submitted to The Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and NRW for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
National Policy Statement (NPS)	The current national policy statements published by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero in 2024.
Non-statutory consultee	Organisations that an applicant may choose to consult in relation to a project who are not designated in law but are likely to have an interest in the project.
Offshore Substation Platform (OSP)	The offshore substation platforms located within the Mona Array Area will transform the electricity generated by the wind turbines to a higher voltage allowing the power to be efficiently transmitted to shore.
Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4	The Crown Estate auction process which allocated developers preferred bidder status on areas of the seabed within Welsh and English waters and ends when the Agreements for Lease (AfLs) are signed.
Pre-construction site investigation surveys	Pre-construction geophysical and/or geotechnical surveys undertaken offshore and, or onshore to inform, amongst other things, the final design of the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Point of Interconnection	The point of connection at which a project is connected to the grid. For the Mona Offshore Wind Project, this is the Bodelwyddan National Grid Substation.
Relevant Local Planning Authority	The Relevant Local Planning Authority is the Local Authority in respect of an area within which a project is situated, as set out in Section 173 of the Planning Act 2008. Relevant Local Planning Authorities may have responsibility for discharging requirements and some functions pursuant to the DCO, once made.
the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	The decision maker with regards to the application for development consent for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Statutory consultee	Organisations that are required to be consulted by an applicant pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 in relation to an application for development consent. Not all consultees will be statutory consultees (see non-statutory consultee definition).
Wind turbines	The wind turbine generators, including the tower, nacelle and rotor.
The Planning Inspectorate	The agency responsible for operating the planning process for NSIPs.

Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AfL	Agreement for Lease
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EnBW	Energie Baden-Württemberg AG
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current
IEMA	Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment
ISAA	Information to support the Appropriate Assessment
MDS	Maximum Design Scenario
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
OSP	Offshore Substation Platform
PDE	Project Design Envelope
PEI	Preliminary Environmental Information
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
POI	Point of Interconnection
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
TCE	The Crown Estate
TJB	Transition Joint Bay

Units

Unit	Description
GW	Gigawatt
km	Kilometres
km^2	Kilometres squared
kV	Kilovolt
MW	Megawatt
nm	Nautical miles

1 Applicant's response to October Hearing Actions Points

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 This document addresses the Hearing Action Points raised by the Examining Authority at Issue Specific Hearing 3 on 16 October, Issue Specific Hearing 4 on 23 October and Issue Specific Hearing 5 on 24 October 2024.

1.1.1.2 All Hearing Action Points that will be addressed at Deadline 4 are in section 2 and broken down by specific hearing.

1.1.1.3 The Hearing Action Points that have been designated as delivery at Deadline 5 or later are listed in Table 1.1, Table 1.2 and Table 1.3.

Table 1.1: Hearing Action Points from ISH3 that will be addressed at Deadline 5 or later.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Deadline
10	Applicant	Update design principles document – review list at Appendix A and explain how these matters will be addressed through the design process for the onshore substation.	Deadline 5
15	Applicant and all Interested Parties	With reference to NPS EN-1 para 4.3.19, is it possible that even if considered acceptable in their own right with mitigation measures in place, the various effects arising as a result of the onshore substation could add up to have a significant effect on the community or the environment either as a result of the project alone or cumulatively with other proposed developments?	Deadline 4 (and Deadline 5 to comment on the responses of others)

Table 1.2: Hearing Action Points from ISH4 that will be addressed at Deadline 5 or later.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Deadline
13	Applicant and Stena Line	Prepare SoCG between Applicant and Stena Line (subject to Stena Line Agreement).	D5
25	Applicant	In the next update of the Commercial Side Agreements Tracker, explain the reason for including both NATS (Services) Limited and NATS (En Route) Plc.	D7 (or when the tracker is next updated)

Table 1.3: Hearing Action Points from ISH5 that will be addressed at Deadline 5 or later.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Deadline
25	Applicant	Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan: update penultimate columns of Tables 1.2 to 1.5 to specify for each row which DML condition secures the monitoring.	D5
27	Applicant	Submit an updated dDCO at D6 (and D5 if required).	D6 (D5)

2 Responses to October Hearing Action Points

2.1 Applicant's response to Hearing Action Points from ISH3: Environmental Matters due at Deadline 4

Table 2.1: Hearing Action Points from ISH3.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH3_01	Applicant	Refine the wording of Requirement 9 of the dDCO to ensure the final plans accord with the outline plans as appendices of the CoCP.	Requirement 9 of the draft development consent order (Document Reference C1 F05) (Draft DCO) has been updated to include reference to each of the outline management plans.
HAP_ISH3_02	Applicant	Check internal consistency within the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), most notably sections 1.8 and 1.10, to ensure there is clear referencing to the outline plans with which the final plans must accord and Requirement 9	The Outline Code of Construction Practice (J26 F03) has been updated to ensure consistency, with a focus on sections 1.8 to 1.10.
HAP_ISH3_04	Applicant	Table 4.21 of ES Chapter 4 [AS-016] – Option 1 is rated low on negative aspects identified by residents – expand on this. If rated low on negative aspects, why was it discounted?	The Applicant notes that Table 4.21 of AS-016 incorrectly states that Option 1 is rated low on negative aspects identified by residents. Table 4.21 has confused statements of 'positive comments' and having 'minimal positive impact'. The Consultation Report [APP-037] states in Section 4.7.2 that "Despite some positive comments noting Option 1's substation location, including its proximity to homes, roads and environmental impact, it was rated poorly (scoring 1 or 2) on all criteria by the majority of residents. Option 1's impact on the environment, visual landscape, and cultural heritage are each highlighted as having a minimal positive impact." The Applicant notes within AS-016 that all sites in proximity to residents score poorly on the identified criteria, concluding that they cannot be used as a primary determinant for the onshore substation siting. Other constraints were more influential for this reason. Option 1 was primarily discounted because it is located on the site of the proposed St Asaph Solar Farm as identified in the EIA Screening Report submitted by the developer Anesco in May 2022. The full application can be found under case reference CAS-01392-D2T3F3 on the Welsh Government planning site. The landowner had indicated in consultation responses dated December 2022 that the onshore substation should not be located over the site of the proposed solar farm.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH3_05	Applicant	Update Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (OLEMP) to clarify that the 5- year landscape maintenance provision in Requirement 8 applies in perpetuity (ie that any replanted tree or shrub would benefit from the 5 year maintenance provision from the date of replanting).	The Applicant is exploring the options for including long-term monitoring and maintenance in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan and will provide an update at Deadline 5. The Deadline 5 update will include clarification on the 5-year establishment/replanting period.
HAP_ISH3_06	Applicant	Respond to the Councils' request for a commitment in the dDCO to an appropriate timescale for a landscape management and maintenance scheme for the onshore substation.	The Applicant is exploring the options for including long-term monitoring and maintenance in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan and will provide an update at Deadline 5. The Deadline 5 update will include clarification on the 5-year establishment/replanting period.
HAP_ISH3_07	Applicant	Submit supplementary information (e.g assessment completed by the Applicant) in relation to requests by the Councils for an assessment of visual effects on crematorium users.	The Applicant has provided additional information on the assessment of the Denbighshire Memorial Park and Crematorium at Deadline 4 (S_D4_13).
HAP_ISH3_08	Applicant	Check whether the complete set of visualisations submitted at D3 is available through the Examination Library.	The full set of substation Landscape and Visual Resources – Cumulative Visualisations are included in the Examination Library at the following references: • Part 1 – REP3-047 • Part 2 – REP3-048 • Part 3 – AS-027
HAP_ISH3_09	Applicant	Provide worst case cross sections across the onshore substation site showing existing ground profile level, finished platform level and building heights above ordnance datum.	Indicative onshore substation cross sections have been provided in S_D4_25.1 to provide clarity on the proposed finished ground levels of the onshore substation platform.
HAP_ISH3_11	Applicant	Submit clarification note on lighting – to include nighttime landscape and visual effects and ecological effects during construction and operational stages. Clarify previous statements made about the extent to which lighting effects have been assessed.	A lighting clarification note (S_D4_12) has been provided at Deadline 4.
HAP_ISH3_12	Applicant	Submit supplementary information on construction vibration effects.	A Construction Noise and Vibration Clarification Note (S_D4_14) has been submitted at Deadline 4 and includes details on the assessment of construction vibration effects.
HAP_ISH3_13	Applicant	Submit a supplementary note outlining the construction noise assessment in relation to the	The Construction Noise and Vibration Clarification Note (S_D4_14) clarifies the assessment of impacts of noise on residential properties. Specific detail regarding

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		Husseys' property. Include distances to all residential properties assessed as part of the noise assessment.	the Hussey's property has been extracted from this note and included in the Applicant's response to Mr and Mrs Hussey's Deadline 3 submission (S_D4_25).
HAP_ISH3_15	Applicant and all Interested Parties	With reference to NPS EN-1 para 4.3.19, is it possible that even if considered acceptable in their own right with mitigation measures in place, the various effects arising as a result of the onshore substation could add up to have a significant effect on the community or the environment either as a result of the project alone or cumulatively with other proposed developments?	The Applicant has provided a review of the assessment on inter-related effects, including inter-related effects on the community and the environment, at Deadline 4 (S_D4_6.1).
HAP_ISH3_18	Applicant	Submit extracts from the NRW Guidance to Landscape Sensitivity in Wales' (para 5.5) referred to in ISH3 regarding the definitions of high and very high value landscapes.	Extracts from NRW Report Reference no. GN 017: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Wales (NRW, 2023) have been submitted at Deadline 4 (S_D4_53).
HAP_ISH3_19	Applicant	Respond to the oral submissions of NRW in relation to Table 1.14 of [APP-104] (page 30) and the implications for the assessment of the absence of a 'very large' column.	The Applicant has responded in section 5 a and b of the Hearing Summary (ISH3): Environmental Matters (S_D4_2).
HAP_ISH3_20	Applicant	Create visualisation for at least VP1 Or VP4 and confirm timescales for their submission.	Updated visualisations, including VP1, and VP4 and additionally VP2, VP3, VP26 and VP55 have been submitted at Deadline 4 (S_D4_6.2).
HAP_ISH3_21	Applicant	Consider whether a compensation / enhancement solution can be provided on a "*without prejudice*" basis for effects on the Isle of Anglesey National Landscape.	The Applicant provided an update on this matter at the start of ISH4 (see section 2(2) of S_D4_4). Since ISH4 the Applicant has set up a meeting with NRW-A and IoACC for 15 November to discuss the matter, and will provide an update to the ExA at Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH3_22	Applicant	Provide a local landscape character assessment undertaken for Eryri National Park.	An assessment of local landscape character for Eryri National Park has been included in Landscape and Seascape Character in Wales – assessment of effects from the Mona Array Area (S_D4_57).
HAP_ISH3_23	Applicant	Make submissions about how the statutory duties under s.85 of the CROW Act and s.11A of the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act are met	The Applicant has responded to this in Annex 1.1 below.
HAP_ISH3_ AppA_1	Applicant	Appendix A	The vision for the proposed Mona Onshore Substation and surrounding area is provided in Section 3.9.1 of the Design Principles (REP2-026). The Applicant will provide, at Deadline 5, an update to this section to make this information clearer.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		Further information to be considered for inclusion in an updated design principles document: The vision for the proposed onshore sub-station and the adjacent area, including the proposed extension to the Bodelwyddan National Grid Substation, how that would create a distinctive place to the benefit of both the local community and the national capacity for renewable energy.	It will not be possible, at this stage, to provide any information on the vision for the Bodelwyddan National Grid Substation as this project is being brought forward by a separate developer (National Grid Electricity Transmission) and at time of writing there is no information available in the public domain on the design of this project or any associated landscape mitigation. The Applicant points to the response to the Design Commission for Wales relevant representation (RR.014.16, PDA-008). The Applicant believes the Denbighshire County Council is best placed to deliver a landscape-led masterplan for the area, as the Applicant has little to no influence over the landscape mitigation proposals put forward by other developers as part of separate projects.
HAP_ISH3_ AppA_2	Applicant	An explanation of the range of beneficial outcomes envisaged for the project and how the value of the area around the substations would be enhanced for the benefit of the local environment, economy and community.	The Applicant will provide, at Deadline 5, an updated Design Principles document (REP2-026) to include a section on the beneficial outcomes envisaged for the project.
HAP_ISH3_ AppA_3	Applicant	An analysis of local architectural forms and materials to demonstrate how this could inform the design, including materials and colour, of the buildings and structures envisaged for the substation site, including boundary treatment and roofscapes when viewed by sensitive receptors from a distance.	An initial site visit was undertaken in September 2024 to inform the Façade Options Report for the Onshore Substation. The results of this survey will be appended to the updated Design Principles (REP-026) at Deadline 5. It should be noted that this update will only present initial findings and will need to be supplemented, post-consent, by the results of further studies to be undertaken throughout the winter months.
HAP_ISH3_ AppA_4	Applicant	An Outline of (a) the content and (b) the programme for consultation in relation to the Design Guide referenced in the Design Principles Document and at ISH2.	The Applicant will provide, at Deadline 5, an updated Design Principles document (REP2-026) to include an indicative flow chart showing how the design of the project will be progressed post-consent, including details of engagement with other parties. It will not be possible to provide a detailed timeline as flexibility is required to allow for uncertainties around the procurement of suppliers.
HAP_ISH3_ AppA_5	Applicant	An outline programme and timeline indicating how, after the DCO application has been determined, the design and delivery of the project would be progressed in the context of the adopted design principles and the planned design guide (The timeline should indicate a programme of community engagement over design and implementation issues; when it is anticipated further engagement with the Design Commission for Wales	

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		(or other external, independent design review provider) and the decision-makers identified in the DCO would take place; and explain how this programme will be secured in the DCO.)	
HAP_ISH3_ AppA_6	Applicant	Comment on whether consideration has or would be given to the potential to use areas around the onshore substation dedicated to permanent landscaping to mitigate visual adverse effects and continuing in the Applicant's ownership for public recreational use, including the possibility of public art, and if this is deemed not possible, explain why	The Applicant gave consideration to including public recreational use within the permanent landscaping at the substation when designing the measures to be included in the landscape and ecology strategy plan. However, in order to minimise the total land take, the landscaping was designed to only include those areas required to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts from the Onshore Substation, as presented on the Illustrative Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan (Figure 1.4 of the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (REP2-034)). As the land in question is currently privately owned and managed as part of a wider estate it would not be suitable to create additional public recreational accesses through this area as it could have an impact on wider estate management, for example the ability of the Estate to effectively manage the deer population.

2.2 Applicant's response to Hearing Action Points from ISH4: Offshore Matters due at Deadline 4

Table 2.2: Hearing Action Points from ISH4.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH4_01	Applicant	Provide progress update on meetings planned with parties and opportunities identified for benthic intertidal and offshore biodiversity benefit.	The Applicant provided an update on progress with respect to intertidal and offshore biodiversity benefit during Issue Specific Hearing 4 under agenda item 3(a) (Ecosystem resilience and enhancement opportunities). In relation to benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology specifically, the Applicant confirmed that a number of opportunities are being considered, as detailed in the Biodiversity Benefit and Green Infrastructure Statement (APP-193). These include existing marine habitat and species restoration projects in the Irish Sea as well as nature-based design options, for example, biodiversity enhancement of infrastructure such as turbine foundations. Regarding existing restoration projects, the Applicant is engaging with several prospective project partners, including statutory nature conservation bodies (e.g. Natural Resources Wales) and non-governmental organisations, on the possibility of collaboration. Several meetings have taken place since submission of the Mona Offshore Wind Project development consent order application, and the Applicant anticipates further meetings taking place over the coming months. There are a number of considerations with identifying potentially suitable project opportunities, including aligning the ambitions of different project partners with respect to aims and objectives, timescales (i.e. bringing forward restoration projects relative to, for example, pre-existing funding cycles and project programmes), commercial approvals, contractual arrangements, etc. As such, this process takes time, and not wishing to prejudice discussions with prospective project partners, the Applicant is unable to disclose further information at this stage. Regarding nature-based design opportunities, this will be explored post-consent during the detailed design phase. Nonetheless, the Applicant can confirm that preliminary internal discussions are underway to understand what opportunities may potentially be available and relevant to the Mona Offshore Wind Project to ensure that consideration of nature-based design will be an inherent part of the detailed design process. However, any nature-based design details will not be confirmed until post-consent following detailed design. In summary, the Mona Offshore Wind Project is taking a proactive approach to considering net biodiversity benefit opportunities in the marine environment and progress has been made since application. However, it is important to remember that the consideration of intertidal and offshore biodiversity benefit is

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
			a voluntary commitment, there are a number of factors to take into account when identifying and exploring potentially suitable biodiversity benefit opportunities, and that there is currently limited guidance on how this should be delivered in the context of marine developments in Welsh waters (although the Applicant notes NRW's core principles as outlined in Guidance Note 59 (NRW, 2022). Thus, the process of identifying and exploring potential net biodiversity benefit opportunities takes time and in the case of nature-based design, is inherent to the detailed design process, which occurs post-consent. Therefore, to manage the Examining Authority's expectations, it is unlikely that the Applicant will be able to provide a further substantive update on its position with respect to ecosystem resilience and enhancement opportunities before the close of the examination.
HAP_ISH4_02	Applicant	Indication of weight to be given to offshore enhancement opportunities proposed.	As set out paragraphs 3.6.11 to 3.6.13 of the Applicant's Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Statement (APP-193) offshore and intertidal biodiversity enhancement is recognised in NPS policy, but is not a policy requirement. In addition, no formal advice has been received from NRW in relation to the types of measures that would be appropriate for the Mona project. The Applicant's position is that in the absence of clear policy or objectives from Welsh Government or NRW in relation to offshore or intertidal enhancement it would be premature to commit to specific measures at this stage of the Mona Offshore Wind Project. The Applicant has explained its commitment to continuing to engage with the relevant parties on the opportunities for additional biodiversity benefit or enhancement, but in the absence of firm measures at this stage it considers that minimal weight should be attached to that commitment.
HAP_ISH4_04	Applicant	Advise if the Biodiversity Benefit and Green Infrastructure Statement [APP-193] could be included in schedule 15 document to be certified (in the dDCO).	The Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Statement is a summary of measures proposed by the Applicant, which where necessary or appropriate are secured though other documents or management plans (for example the Outline landscape and ecology management plan (REP2-034)). It is not referenced or secured in the draft Development Consent Order and therefore should not be included in Schedule 15 as a certified document.
HAP_ISH4_05	Applicant	Applicant to review the Mona Array area boundary on Figure 2.4 from Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology [APP-054] with the Mona Array area boundary on Figure 3.2 Project Description [APP-050].	The Applicant has responded in section 8 of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH4_06	Applicant	Clarify its approach to long term habitat loss/habitat alteration per biotype and whether there is a tipping point (in terms of % loss per biotype) that would alter the conclusion of its assessments.	The magnitude of the long-term habitat loss predicted as a result of the Mona Offshore Wind Project has been presented as a proportion of the Mona benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology study area, which as defined in section 2.4.3 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054), is the area encompassed by the Mona Array Area and Offshore Cable Corridor together with the zone of influence around the Mona Array Area (i.e. one tidal excursion). If the zone of influence is excluded from the Mona benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology study area and only the area potentially directly impacted is considered (i.e. the Mona Array Area and the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor), the Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for long-term habitat loss predicted within section 2.9.5 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054) of 2,192,412 m^2 would equate to 1.72% of the area encompassed by the Mona Array Area and Mona Offshore Cable Corridor alone . The Applicant would highlight that it is not currently possible to determine where the infrastructure associated with the Mona Offshore Wind Project will be placed on the seabed, which explains why it was not possible in to apportion the impacts on a biotope-by-biotope in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054). Furthermore, given the homogenous nature of the benthic communities across the Mona Array Area, the Applicant would highlight that this wouldn't be a necessary or appropriate way of presenting the assessment for the Mona Offshore Wind Project. The assessment of impacts in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054) has been made against defined important ecological features (IEFs), which groups together biotopes with similar community compositions and sensitivities, rather than against individual biotopes. This is an accepted way of dealing with small-scale and non-significant (i.e. in terms of the characterising communities and sensitivity) variability in communities for the purposes of impact assessments. Figure 2.4 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054) shows that the Mona Array Area was characterised predominately by the polychaete-rich deep Venus community in offshore mixed sediments (SS.SMx.OMx.PoVen) biotope and the circalittoral coarse sediment (SS.SCS.CCS) biotope, with small areas of the circalittoral mixed sediments (SS.SMx.CMx) biotope and the *Kurtiella bidentata* and *Thyasira* spp. in circalittoral muddy mixed sediment (SS.SMx.CMx.KurThyMx) biotope. As shown in Table 2.13 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054), for the purposes of undertaking the assessment, all of these biotopes were grouped together as the 'Subtidal coarse and mixed sediments with diverse benthic communities' IEF due to the similarities in community

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
			composition and sensitivity of component species, confirming the homogenous nature of the communities across the Mona Array Area. On the basis that the 'Subtidal coarse and mixed sediments with diverse benthic communities' IEF extends across the whole of the Mona Array Area, it can, therefore, be assumed that the extent of the IEF is the same as the Mona Array Area (i.e. ~300 km^2). As outlined in Table 2.18 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054), there may be up to 1,388,412 m^2 of long-term habitat loss in the Mona Array Area. This equates to 0.46% of the Mona Array Area and, by implication, 0.46% of the 'Subtidal coarse and mixed sediments with diverse benthic communities' IEF. There would be no scenario in which 100% of any of the IEFs would be affected by any impact pathway. In regard to the Examining Authorities question regarding a tipping point, this would depend upon the exact nature of the biotope in question and its sensitivity to the impact in question as well as the magnitude and nature of the impact. The communities mapped across the Mona Array Area are common across this part of the Irish Sea, as is evidenced in Volume 6, Annex 2.1: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology technical report (APP-087). Therefore, it is not a realistic scenario to consider that the infrastructure proposed as part of the Mona Offshore Wind Project would result in an impact of a magnitude that would cross any kind of ecological tipping point for any of the biotopes identified. The Applicant has provided greater clarity regarding the impact of the MDS in relation to specific biotopes (e.g. seapens and burrowing megafauna habitat) in response to comment REP3-084.5 in the Applicant's response to JNCC ExQ1 Responses (S_D4_30) submitted at Deadline 4.
HAP_ISH4_07	Applicant	Confirm ES paragraph that indicates the size of seabed blast crater for UXO clearance for 22 high charge detonation including that the effects have been considered in its assessment.	The Applicant has responded in section 10 of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).
HAP_ISH4_08	Applicant	Confirm ES paragraphs that identify colonisation patterns and rate of recovery would not be different between foundations in the middle of the array and along the border of the array.	The Applicant has responded in section 12 of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).
HAP_ISH4_09	Applicant	Clarify whether monitoring of benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology is to be undertaken.	The Applicant has not proposed any monitoring for benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology. Section 2.9.12.1 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054) states that no benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology monitoring to test the predictions made within the impact assessment is

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
			considered necessary. The Applicant has included a commitment to pre- and post-construction geomorphological surveys in Condition 24(4) and 26(3) of Schedule 14 of the draft DCO (REP2-006), and this is also expected to be secured within the standalone NRW Marine Licence. This data would be collected for the purpose of observing the effect of sediment transport and sediment transport pathways on cable burial but is indirectly relevant to benthic subtidal ecology. This is included under table 1.3 of the Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201). The Applicant notes that the Marine Licence Principles Document (J9 F04) refers to monitoring of benthic habitats and species under the summary of the Environmental Monitoring Plan. '*This must include monitoring, including methodologies and timings, physical and ecological pre- and postconstruction monitoring surveys to take place across the construction area, monitoring surveys designed to ensure minimal disturbance to, and loss of key benthic habitats and species'* The Marine Licence Principles Document (J9 F04) provides the principles which are anticipated to inform the transmission assets marine licence for the Mona Offshore Wind Project. NRW's Marine Licencing Team will ultimately draft the marine licence and any conditions requiring monitoring within it.
HAP_ISH4_10	Applicant	Applicant to provide justification with relevant evidence to demonstrate why it believes that NPS EN3 paragraph 2.8.221– refers to significant impact rather than as worded 'actual impacts'.	Paragraph 2.8.221 of NPS EN3 states: 'Applicants must develop an ecological monitoring programme to monitor impacts during the pre-construction, construction and operational phases to identify the actual impacts caused by the project and compare them to what was predicted in the EIA/HRA'. The Applicant has developed an ecological monitoring programme which is presented in the Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201) submitted with the application. The Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201) presents the objectives of any monitoring measures contained within the deemed marine licence (dML) in Schedule 14 of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) (C1 F05) or suggested within the Marine Licence Principles document (J9 F04) for inclusion in the standalone Natural Resources Wales (NRW) marine licence (ML). Monitoring has been included in the Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201) where the EIA identified potential significant effects or where it is industry best practice. The Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201) contains the following proposed monitoring: • Monitoring of the cables and their burial status

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
			• Preparation of an Offshore Construction Method Statement post-consent with details of cable monitoring to reduce snagging risk • Bathymetric survey to IHO Order 1a standard that meets the requirements of MGN654 to assess the level of under keel clearance • Monitoring of marine traffic In addition, Schedule 14, Condition 25 (2) of the Draft Development Consent Order (C1 F05) contains the Applicant's commitment that in the event that driven or part-driven pile foundations are proposed, monitoring, including measurements of underwater sound generated by the installation of the first four piled foundations of each piled foundation type will be carried out. The scope of the Mona EIA is wide, and many of the topics included in the Environmental Statement conclude negligible or minor adverse effects (which are not significant in EIA terms). Therefore, it would be highly disproportionate to monitor all these receptors and potential effects, and there is no precedent to do so. The MMO (2014) Review of environmental data associated with post-consent monitoring of licence conditions of offshore wind farms, highlighted that offshore wind monitoring requirements are driven by consideration of: • uncertainty ('the extent of error or assumptions that were made in calculating the impact. The higher the degree of uncertainty, the greater the need to monitor') and • significance ('the extent to which the identified impact is deemed significant') (MMO, 2014). This guidance highlights the importance of ensuring any monitoring requirements are based on sound risk assessment principles and is "*proportionate, consistent and appropriately targeted*". Furthermore, under section 12 of MMO (2014), 'Recommendations on the guiding principles associated with the spatial and temporal scale of monitoring.', it is recommended that '*Across all topics monitoring should be receptor driven using EIA and HRA impact statements as a hypothesis for investigation. Monitoring should be used where there is uncertainty in the significance of an impact which could lead to a potentially significant impact on a sensitive receptor*' and '*Monitoring should not be required for impacts where there is already high certainty'* (MMO, 2014).

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
			Specifically for the Mona Offshore Wind Project, NRW (A) (paragraph 2.4.8 of Relevant Representation (RR-11)) states that (in relation to physical processes) they 'recognise that monitoring is not essential, given the active sediment transport in the study area and the availability of recharge material'. In addition, NRW (A) (paragraph 180 of Written Representation (REP1-056)) confirms that 'marine mammal monitoring to test the predictions made within the impact assessment would not be required from a consenting perspective'. Commercial wind farms have been constructed and operational in the UK for over two decades, and the Applicant considers that, in many cases, the assessment of impacts is now well understood. The Crown Estate has established the Marine Data Exchange for all offshore wind monitoring which is used to inform impact assessments, including those undertaken for the Mona Offshore Wind Project. In 2019, The Crown Estate undertook a review of cable installation, protection, mitigation and habitat recoverability (TCE, 2019). The report undertook a desk study to collate information on offshore electrical cable installation techniques and seabed recovery, in support of the Plan Level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4. It concluded that '*a large number of survey reports were reviewed, and the evidence reviewed as part of this project indicated that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) predictions largely align with the monitoring data that is available on seabed impacts and recovery and historic industry evidence reviews'*. Therefore, offshore wind EIAs have been shown to accurately predict the potential effects of offshore wind projects (or be highly precautionary) and the industry can thus, have confidence in the assessment outputs. Where there is confidence in non-significance assessment conclusions, monitoring is not required (in accordance with MMO, 2014). The Applicant's approach to monitoring for significant effects is therefore in line with the offshore wind industry best practice with regard to monitoring and evidence regarding accuracy of offshore wind EIA prediction of effects.
HAP_ISH4_11	Applicant	The Applicant response to cable protection in the shallow nearshore environment [REP2-080] notes it is not the Applicant's intention to place cable protection in shallow water but to avoid this if at all possible. Can the Applicant elaborate on the statement 'avoid this if at all possible' and give examples on where	The Applicant aims to avoid the requirement for cable protection in the shallow nearshore environment by achieving the minimum burial depth of 0.5 m for the offshore export cables (which as detailed in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description (APP-050) and subject to confirmation in the Cable Burial Risk Assessment undertaken post-consent). This includes burial of the cable ducts at the exit pits (seaward of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS)) for the installation of export cables under the intertidal area via trenchless techniques.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		this situation could arise including what has been assessed in the ES.	The only factor that could prevent the minimal burial depth from being achieved would be challenging ground conditions (e.g. extremely hard substrates, boulders or rock outcrops). Geotechnical site investigations were undertaken in 2022 and 2023 and confirmed that the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor is dominated by circalittoral sediments (as per paragraph 1.5.1.22 of Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-053)) therefore in shallow waters, inshore of the Constable Bank, the Applicant is confident that cable trenching and burial can be undertaken and the laying of cables directly on the seabed with associated cable protection would not be required. Should challenging ground conditions be encountered, these will be avoided, if possible, by re-routing installation of the offshore export cables within the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor. In the unlikely event cable protection is required in the shallow nearshore environment, the Applicant has committed to ensuring that no more than a 5% reduction in water depth (referenced to Chart Datum) will occur (without prior written approval from the Licensing Authority in consultation with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency) to ensure that sediment transport continues unhindered, and the wave climate is not notably altered. This commitment is set out in the Marine Licence Principles Document (J9 F04) and is expected to be secured within the standalone NRW marine licence. The Applicant is confident that a maximum of 5% reduction in water depth (referenced to Chart Datum) will be achievable in the shallow nearshore environment as it is expected that the height of the cable protection above the seabed can be sufficiently altered in relation to the given water depth in order to adhere to this commitment. For example, this may include the provision of concrete mattressing, typically 0.3 m in height, overlaying the cable and completely or partially buried. The potential requirement for cable protection in the shallow nearshore environment (seaward of MLWS) is included within the maximum design scenario assessed for cable protection requirements for the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Areas (i.e. cable protection for up to 20% of the 360 km of offshore export cables). The impacts on benthic ecology from the presence of cable protection within the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Areas are assessed in section 2.9.5 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054) for long-term habitat loss and section 2.9.9 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-054) for changes in physical processes.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH4_12	Applicant	The Examination progress tracker [REP2-091] notes that the Applicant will ensure that any cable protection is sufficiently low profile to cause minimal changes to wave, tide and sediment transport. Can the Applicant elaborate on parameters forming sufficiently low profile and if these parameters are to be secured.	The Applicant notes its reference to cable protection being of 'sufficiently low profile' in the Examination progress tracker (REP2-091) regarding discussions around placement of cable protection in the shallow nearshore environment. In this context, 'sufficiently low profile' is considered to represent cable protection that does not reduce the water depth (referenced to Chart Datum) by more than 5%. The relevant commitment in relation to this is described in the Mitigation and Monitoring Schedule (Document Reference J10 F04) in rows 8 and 14. NRW (Advisory's) comments in their Deadline 3 responses (REP3-090) have pointed towards concerns with regards to cable protection in shallow water. It is anticipated that the relevant controls will therefore be provided through the standalone NRW marine licence for the transmission assets. Further detail on the position is set out in the Applicant's document All Responses to NRW D3 Submission (S_D4_16) rows REP3-090.103 to REP3-090.105 and the Examination progress tracker (S_PD_4 F03) has also been updated to include reference to this commitment.
HAP_ISH4_14	Applicant	Refine the definition of "layout principles" within paragraph 1 of Schedule 14 (DML) of the draft DCO to more closely align with Table 3.7 of APP- 050.	The definition of "layout principles" in Schedule 14 of the draft DCO has been updated to refer to Table 3.7.
HAP_ISH4_15	Applicant	Review the definitions of 'tolerance allowance' and 'micro-siting allowance' in APP-050 and /or explain of why the two allowances are treated as additive (Principles 5 and 6 of Table 3.7).	Principle 5 of the layout development principles set out in Table 3.7 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the Environmental Statement (APP-050) relates to installation tolerance for offshore surface structures (wind turbine generators (WTGs) and offshore substation platforms (OSPs)). Principle 5 provides an allowance in metres for the potential deviation from the centre point of the nominal offshore surface structure position. Principle 6 provides an allowance in metres for micro-siting around a constraint from the centre point of the nominal offshore surface structure position. Principle 5 and 6 can be additive where the tolerance allowance is applied to the new micro-sited offshore surface structure position. For example (and applying the reduced micrositing distance of 50 m and installation tolerance of 5 m highlighted by the Applicant at the hearing), it may be necessary to move a wind turbine foundation up to 50 m from the nominal offshore surface structure position to avoid an archaeological resource. The installation tolerance of up to 5 m would still be required at the new micro-sited position, which could mean that the final micro-sited position is 55 m from the nominal offshore surface structure position.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH4_16	Applicant	DML Condition 18(1)(k) Vessel Traffic Monitoring Strategy – either supplement the Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan with principles underpinning the construction and post- construction stage monitoring of vessel traffic or submit an Outline Vessel Traffic Monitoring Strategy.	The Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201) includes a number of monitoring commitments identified within Volume 2, Chapter 7: Shipping and Navigation (APP-059), including developing a Navigation Monitoring Strategy to ensure navigational safety is maintained during construction and immediately post construction. As described in the Applicant's response to ExQ1.15.13 (REP3-062), the underlying principles of that monitoring are set out in MGN654 Section 6.6. Based on this guidance and experience on previous projects, the monitoring approach will be as follows: 1. The Applicant will prepare a Vessel Traffic Monitoring Strategy in consultation with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Trinity House. 2. For each year during construction, the Applicant will collect Automatic Identification System (AIS) data for a period to be determined (likely in excess of 28 days and seasonally representative). 3. Analysis will be undertaken to compare the routes, traffic densities and incidents occurring during that period against the predictions of the Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA). 4. Where possible, engagement with operators through the Marine Navigation Engagement Forum will be used to validate these findings. 5. A report will be submitted to the MCA and Trinity House to confirm consistency with the NRA and that mitigation measures are effective and remain fit for purpose. If necessary, discussions with the MCA will take place as set out in MGN654 Section 6.6. 6. The reports will also be submitted for each year post-construction for a period to be determined (the Applicant notes that this was suggested by the MCA during ISH4 to be a period of three years (EV6-003)). The Applicant does not consider that the preparation of an Outline Vessel Traffic Monitoring Strategy would provide meaningfully more information than the principles outlined above. The Applicant will submit an update to the Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (APP-201) incorporating these principles at Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH4_17	Scottish Whitefish	Provide the surface area in sq. kilometres of the yellow shaded area (queen scallop fishing ground)	The Applicant has responded in section 5a of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
	Producers Association	and pink shaded area (queen scallop good fishing stonier ground) on Figure 2.1 of [REP3-066].	The Applicant notes that this action has been assigned to the Scottish Whitefish Producers Association, however the requested areas have been calculated by the Applicant for the purpose of providing a response to HAP_ISH4_18 below.
HAP_ISH4_18	Applicant	The minimum distance of 1.4km between each wind turbine generator (WTG), would result in a higher capacity density than 6.2 MW/Km2 noted in Scallops Mitigation Zone document [REP3-066]. Can the Applicant advise what would be the effect on capacity density if the size of scallops mitigation zone would be increased to include the following scenarios: i) Yellow shaded area (queen scallop fishing ground) ii) pink shaded area (queen scallop good fishing stonier ground) iii) combination of yellow and pink shaded area	Capacity density is the target capacity of a wind farm at the onshore grid connection point divided by the area of the wind farm. As the area of a wind farm decreases, the capacity density increases in line with a reduction in spatial flexibility, the ability to manage layout constraints and the ability to maximise capacity and energy generation of the Project. As stated within the Applicant's response to ExQ1 Q1.5.1 (REP3-066), The Crown Estate limited 'Round 4' bids to a maximum area based on a capacity density of 3 MW/km^2 and a requirement that at the point of entering into the lease post-consent, that the final capacity density of the wind farm is not less than 5 MW/km^2. With the commitment to the scallop mitigation zone (SMZ), the Mona array already has a capacity density of 6.2 MW/km2 and has yet to finalise the layout and address known and unknown constraints. The effect on the capacity density from increasing the SMZ to cover the 3 new scenarios is given below. For each scenario, capacity density has been calculated by subtracting the SMZ plus the new scenarios from the total area of the Mona array to give the updated area available for installation of wind turbines generators (WTGs) and offshore substation platforms (OSPs). The target capacity at the onshore connection point of 1,500 MW is then divided by the updated area available for WTGs and OSPs. As a result, capacity density is increased from 6.2 MW/km^2 for the SMZ alone, to 6.9 MW/km^2 for Scenario 'ii', 8.6 MW/km^2 for scenario 'i' and 10.1 MW/km^2 for scenario 'iii' as set out in the calculations below. • **Scenario 'i':** Yellow (68.7 km2) + Red i.e. SMZ (57.8 km2) = 126.5 km2 (42% of the Mona Array Area based on 300 – 126.5 = 173.5 km^2). The resulting capacity density is 1500 MW ÷ 173.5 = 8.6 MW/km2 • **Scenario 'ii':** Pink (25.4 km2) + Red i.e. SMZ (57.8 km2) = 83.2 km2 (28% of the Mona Array Area based on 300 – 83.2 = 216.8 km2). The resulting capacity density is 1500 MW ÷ 216.8 = 6.9 MW/km2 • **Scenario 'iii':** Yellow (68.7 km2) + Pink (25.4 km2) + Red i.e. SMZ (57.8 km2) = 151.9 km2 (51% of the Mona Array Area based on 300 – 151.9 = 148.1 km2). The resulting capacity density is 1500 MW ÷ 148.1 = 10.1 MW/km2

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
			However, as the Applicant explained in detail within the response to ExQ1 Q1.5.1 (REP3-066) and during Agenda Item 5 of Issue Specific Hearing 4 (see Applicant's summary of oral submission (S_D4_4)), further reducing the remaining space within the Mona Array Area / increasing capacity density beyond the current density of 6.2 MW/km^2 presents significant risks to retaining the necessary spatial flexibility to manage known constraints on the final layout and unknown constraints that may arise through the final design pre-construction, in addition to reducing the ability to maximise capacity and energy generation of the Project through layout design. As a result, an increase in capacity density greater than 6.2 MW/km^2 would not be acceptable to the Applicant.
HAP_ISH4_19	Applicant	Provide footprint area (m2) for seabed preparation area.	The Applicant has responded in section 5b of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).
HAP_ISH4_20	Applicant	Provide footprint areas (m2) for reduction of access around infrastructure due to buried and protected inter-array and inter-connector cables.	The Applicant has responded in section 5b of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).
HAP_ISH4_25	Applicant	In the next update of the Commercial Side Agreements Tracker, explain the reason for including both NATS (Services) Limited and NATS (En Route) Plc.	The Applicant understands that NATS (Services) Limited and NATS (En Route) Plc are two separate entities who together operate air navigation services in the UK. It is standard for both entities to be parties to the relevant side agreement. The Applicant will include this in its next iteration of the Commercial Side Agreements Tracker.
HAP_ISH4_26	Applicant	Provide update on outcome of meeting between Applicant and Ronaldsway Airport on potential effects on Primary Surveillance Radar.	The Applicant has responded in section 7b of the Hearing Summary (ISH4): Offshore Matters (S_D4_4).

2.3 Applicant's response to Hearing Action Points from ISH5: dDCO due at Deadline 4

Table 2.3: Hearing Action Points from ISH5.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH5_01	Applicant	Part 1 Article 2: consider need for article in DCO regarding Open Space.	The draft Development Consent Order (Document reference C1 F05) (Draft DCO) does not require a "Special Category Land" article regarding open space to be included. This is because as set out in Row REP3-078.7 of the Applicant's Response to Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council ExQ1 (Document Reference S_D4_26 F01), the circumstances in section 132(3) apply in this case as the open space (when burdened with the order right) will be no less advantageous than it was before to the persons in whom it is vested, other persons with rights in that land and the public. As such, no replacement land is required which would be the subject of a "Special Category Land" article.
HAP_ISH5_02	Applicant	Part 1 Article 2: consider if definition of 'building' should exclude lightning rods as it currently includes the term structures.	The Draft DCO, Requirement 6(3)(b) has been updated to exclude lightning rods from the maximum height restriction. This ensures the definition of building as used within Requirement 6(3)(b) does not inadvertently restrict the height of lightning rods. No change to the definition of "building" is proposed.
HAP_ISH5_03	Applicant	Part 1 Article 2: check if definition of 'Commence' should include standalone Marine Licence.	It is noted, as discussed during Issue Specific Hearing 5, that both the Examining Authority and Natural Resources Wales Marine Licencing Team have questions about how the Draft DCO, including the deemed marine licence, work alongside the standalone transmission marine licence. From those discussions, the Applicant understands that the points which need further consideration are about the definition of "commence", in particular in relation to offshore works. How that definition would work in practice through the discharge process, including in respect of the landfall construction method statement which covers both the onshore and offshore works. Finally, what the position is with regards to mean low/high water and mean low/high water springs. These are technical legal points which the Applicant will respond to at Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH5_04	Applicant	Part 1 Article 2: consider definition of 'Maintain' and inclusion of wording to preclude total replacement of reconstruction of the onshore substation.	The Applicant will respond to this hearing action point at Deadline 5. As directed by the Examining Authority, the Applicant has reviewed the definition of "maintain" within The Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions Offshore Wind Farm Order 2024. The definition is a significant change in position from what is included in the Draft DCO and requires further time for consideration. During Issue Specific Hearing 5, the Applicant noted concerns about the application of the definition in practice working to unduly restrict the undertaker's ability to carry out essential maintenance works. These concerns remain.
HAP_ISH5_05	Applicant	Article 7 sub para (7): check if this should	Article 7 provides for the undertaker's ability to transfer or lease the whole or part of the Order, except for in relation to the deemed marine licence in which case only the whole of the deemed marine licence can be transferred. These powers are included in article 7(2) which creates the mechanism to transfer or lease the

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		exclude sub paragraph (5).	whole or part of the Order, and article 7(3) which creates the mechanism to transfer the whole of the deemed marine licence. Articles 7(2) and 7(3) are both subject to article 7(5). Article 7(5) applies so that in transferring or granting the benefit of the Order (through Articles 7(2) and 7(3)), those benefits will include any relevant rights and obligations (Article 7(5)(a)), the benefits will reside exclusively with the transferee or lessee (Article 7(5)(b)), and the exercise of those benefits will be subject to relevant restrictions, liabilities and obligations (Article 7(5)(c)). Article 7(7) specifies that where an agreement is made under Articles 7(2) and 7(3) references to the 'undertaker' shall mean the transferee or lessee. There is no need for Article 7(7) to exclude Article 7(5), however. This is because the ability to transfer or lease under Articles 7(2) and 7(3) is already subject to Article 7(5). In practice that means that any agreement under Articles 7(2) and 7(3) will already specify particular circumstances which will apply to the transfer or lease. For example, there might be circumstances where the Order powers do remain with the undertaker (defined as Mona Offshore Wind Farm Limited) in contrast to the provisions in Article 7(7) but that would be specified through the agreement made under Articles 7(2) and 7(3). Article 7(7) has been updated to make clear that any references to the "*undertaker will include references to the transferee or lessee* ***in accordance with that agreement***".
HAP_ISH5_06	Applicant/Council	Article 12(1): explain in Explanatory Memorandum (EM) why the article includes any street and whether this is justified and proportionate / Council to consider wording.	The purpose of Article 12(1) is that it provides the undertaker with a general power to stop up or restrict streets. This general power applies to streets within and out with the Order limits. However, controls on that general power are applied through Article 12(5). This paragraph ensures that although the general power applies to all streets, the undertaker must only use the general power in two circumstances. The first is where the power is being exercised in relation to those streets are described within Schedule 4 of the Draft DCO. In this case, the power can only be used to the extent described and only following consultation with the street authority (in this case Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council – as appropriate for the street in question). The second circumstance is where the undertaker uses that general power in relation to any other streets (i.e. not those described in Schedule 4) in which case they must obtain the consent of the street authority in advance of exercising the power and the street authority may attached reasonable conditions to that consent. This drafting is very well precedented in offshore wind DCOs including most recently the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions Offshore Wind Farm Order 2024, Hornsea Four Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023 and East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022. The Applicant also notes that the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023 was consented with the general power to stop up or restrict any street (including those outside the Order limits), without any of the restrictions which the Applicant has already included in its drafting. The Applicant will update the Explanatory Memoranudm at Deadline 5 in relation to Article 12.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH5_07	Applicant	Article 17: to add wording to include details of the survey work within the notice	The draft Development Consent Order (Document reference C1 F05), Article 17(2) has been updated to specify that if certain activities are proposed as part of the surveying or investigation of land, details of those activities will be included within the notice to be served, in advance, on landowners and occupiers. The Applicant has followed the precedent set by the Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions Offshore Wind Farm Order 2024 save for in relation to 17(2)(a) where the reference to 'searching' has been removed as it is not clear in what context that would apply to the Project.
HAP_ISH5_08	Applicant	Expand justification/explanation for Article 17 in the EM.	As discussed during Issue Specific Hearing 5, the Applicant explained that it is necessary for the power to survey or investigate land to apply within and outside the Order limits. This is because there may be circumstances in which it is necessary to exercise that power in relation to land which is neither within nor immediately adjacent to the Order limits in order to gather necessary information, for example to inform detailed design (see paragraph 36 of Hearing Summary (ISH5) dDCO (Document Reference S_D4_5 F01)). This drafting is very well precedented in offshore wind DCOs, as well as DCOs for other types of project, including most recently the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions Offshore Wind Farm Order 2024, Hornsea Four Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023 and East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022. The Applicant will update the Explanatory Memoranudm at Deadline 5 in relation to Article 17.
HAP_ISH5_09	Applicant	Article 47: identify the known planning permissions that paragraph (1) would apply to and explain why they would be inconsistent with the proposed development.	The Applicant notes the discussions which took place during Issue Specific Hearing 5 in respect of Article 47. In light of those discussions, the Applicant is further reviewing the position with regards to known planning permissions and the drafting of the Article and will provide an update at Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH5_10	Applicant	Article 47: update EM to explain what is meant by 'development that is consistent with the authorised development' and 'development that is unrelated to the authorised project' and how this would not circumvent the legislative process for	Please see response to HAP_ISH5_09.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		amending a DCO contained in the PA2008.	
HAP_ISH5_11	Applicant	Schedule 1 Part 1: remove duplicate co-ordinates 8 and 9.	Tables 1 and 3 of the Draft DCO have been updated to provide coordinates with 7 decimal places to demonstrate that coordinate points 8 and 9 different. The offshore order limits and grid coordinates plan (PDA-002) will be updated at Deadline 5 to reflect these changes.
HAP_ISH5_12	Applicant	Requirement 1 (2): consider whether a definition of proceedings is needed and update EM to explain how this would operate in practice in terms of awareness of the additional time.	The Applicant has based the drafting of Requirement 1(2) on the text included within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for example Section 91(3A) which states "*Subsection (3B) applies if any proceedings are begun to challenge the validity, in respect of the development of land in England, of a grant of planning permission or of a deemed grant of planning permission*". No definition of proceedings is included within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Applicant considers that it is clear what the meaning of "*proceedings… to challenge the validity of this Order*" would be in this context on a plain English reading of the drafting. No definition of "proceedings" is being proposed. The extension of time for the commencement of the authorised project which would be provided by Requirement 1(2) would solely benefit for the undertaker. It would therefore be for the undertaker to provide suitable evidence of proceedings have been begun when submitting details for approval under the Requirements if they were seeking to rely on an extended time period to commence. The Applicant will update the Explanatory Memoranudm at Deadline 5 in relation to Requirement 1(2).
HAP_ISH5_13	Applicant	Requirement 3(3): explain or define the reference to "Lowest permissible lighting intensity level."	Requirement 3 of the Draft DCO follows the precedent drafting included within the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023. The Applicant has reviewed the drafting again and notes that the Air Navigation Order 2016, which contains the mandated requirements for the lighting of wind turbine generators and specifies the requirement for the reduction in light intensity (see section 223(8) of the Air Navigation Order 2016), uses the phrase "light intensity". The Applicant has therefore updated the drafting to refer to this, rather than "lighting intensity". The meaning of "lowest permissible" would be with reference to the lowest level which would be allowed for the Project as directed by the Air Navigation Order 2016 and as controlled by Requirement 3(1).
HAP_ISH5_14	Applicant	Requirement 5: requires retention clause (wider action to revisit all requirements from	The Applicant does not intend to update the drafting of Requirement 5. The intention of the Requirement is to provide for the construction of the onshore substation to be in accordance with details approved by the local authority. The Applicant notes that no comments have been made on the drafting of Requirement 5 by the local authorities and the drafting follows precedent set by the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Order

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
		maintenance or retention clauses).	2023, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions Offshore Wind Farm Order 2024, Hornsea Four Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023 and East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022.
HAP_ISH5_15	Applicant	Requirement 6 (4): review the need for the inclusion of tailpieces "unless otherwise agreed by the LPA" or tighten up wording.	The draft Development Consent Order (Document reference CF F05) Requirement 6(4) includes reference to "unless otherwise agreed by the LPA" and that should be retained. The drafting of Requirement 6(4) states that "[t]renchless installation techniques must be used to install the cable ducts and electrical circuits where identified in the onshore crossing schedule". The onshore crossing schedule (REP1-007) refers to obstacles which will be crossed during the installation of the onshore cables and how those obstacles will be crossed. In some circumstances the Applicant has retained optionality to delivery "Trenching or trenchless". Due to this drafting, if the ability to agree with the local planning authority was not also referred to, those crossings which are "Trenching or trenchless" would have to be delivered as trenchless (by virtue of the fact they refer to "trenchless"). It is the Applicant's intention is to retain that optionality in the onshore crossing schedule for "Trenching or trenchless" and through the process of detailed design the specific form of crossing will be decided and form part of the construction details submitted to the relevant local authorities.
HAP_ISH5_16	Applicant	Review and clarify if replacement planting is secured for the full extent of the order limits.	Requirement 8 of the Draft DCO contains the obligation to replant species provided through the approved landscaping plan under Requirement 7. That obligation will therefore apply only to the landscaping which is approved under that requirement which forms the landscaping at the onshore substation. The Applicant is reviewing the Outline landscape and ecology management plan following discussions with the local planning authorities and will provide an update at Deadline 5, including in relation to this Hearing Action Point.
HAP_ISH5_17	Applicant	Requirement 8 correction: 8(2) should read "agreed in writing".	In addition to the general application of Requirement 22, the draft Development Consent Order (Document reference CF F05) Requirement 8(2), Schedule 2 has been updated to specify that any replacement tree or shrub planted as part of an approved landscaping scheme must be approved and agreed in writing.
HAP_ISH5_18	Applicant	Requirement 14: to look at other DCOs (including the Awel y Mor (AyM DCO) as to how mobilisation is included within the DCO and how this could be included.	The drafting of Requirement 14 follows precedent drafting from the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions Offshore Wind Farm Order 2024, Hornsea Four Offshore Wind Farm Order 2023 and East Anglia ONE North Offshore Wind Farm Order 2022. The structure of the Requirement is intended to set default construction hours against which the undertaker can agree alternative hours with the relevant local planning authority. As described in the outline code of construction practice (Document Reference J26 F03) the Applicant intends to have a mobilisation period up to one hour before and after the core construction hours (see section 1.8.2.1 of that document). Consent for this will be given through the agreement of the local planning authorities in the discharge of Requirement 14. It is therefore not necessary for the mobilisation period to be included specifically within Requirement 14 and the Applicant does not intend to add reference to it.

Ref.	Directed to	Action	Applicant's response
HAP_ISH5_19	Applicant	Requirement 15: review timing for submission of details to the Council.	As discussed during Issue Specific Hearing 5, the Applicant is in discussion with the local planning authorities with regards to Requirement 15 and how that would work in practice. Those discussions are ongoing and the Applicant has agreed to produce a note to explain its approach. That position, and associated note, is expected to be detailed in advance for Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH5_20	Applicant	Requirement 19: consider AyM drafting and consider if appropriate for Mona.	The Applicant notes the comments made by the Examining Authority during Issue Specific Hearing 5 regarding the proposed drafting updates to Requirement 19. The Applicant is reviewing the position in light of these comments and will provide an update to the Examining Authority at Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH5_21	Applicant	Schedule 12: to review all time periods.	The Applicant has reviewed the timings set out in Schedule 12 and has made changes including in relation to the request made by the local authorities in respect of Schedule 12, paragraph 4(1) (see comments on Schedule 12 in the Local Impact Report – REP1-049).
HAP_ISH5_22	Applicant	Schedule 12(5) correct drafting error.	This has been corrected in Schedule 12.
HAP_ISH5_23	Applicant	Schedule 10 Pt 3: request that Dŵr Cymru Cyfyngedig submit agreement into the Examination.	The Applicant has requested that Dŵr Cymru Cyfyngedig write to the Examining Authority at Deadline 4 to confirm agreement with the provisions included in Part 3 of Schedule 10 of the Draft DCO and believe this has now been done.
HAP_ISH5_24	Applicant	Schedule 10 Pt 4: update DCO with agreed wording.	During Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 1, the Applicant reported that the Protective Provisions for the benefit of SP Manweb were agreed. The Applicant has since identified a drafting point which requires clarification with SP Manweb prior to making the necessary updates to Schedule 10, Part 4. The Applicant is confident that this outstanding point is minor in nature and will not pose any barrier to SP Manweb and the Applicant reaching agreement on Protective Provisions. An update will be provided at Deadline 5.
HAP_ISH5_26	Applicant	Update Schedule 15 to reflect the latest versions of documents to be certified.	Schedule 15 of the Draft DCO has been updated to include an updated list of documents, including relevant details, to be certified.

3 REFERENCES

MMO (2014). Review of post-consent offshore wind farm monitoring data associated with licence conditions. A report produced for the Marine Management Organisation, pp 194. MMO Project No: 1031. ISBN: 978-1-909452-24-4.

NRW (2022). Principles supporting restoration and enhancement in marine or coastal development proposals. Guidance Note 59. Available at: Final version 29/07/22

A.1.1 Annex

A.1.1.1 Applicant's response to ISH3_HAP_23

MAKE SUBMISSIONS ABOUT HOW THE STATUTORY DUTIES UNDER S.85 OF THE CROW ACT AND S.11A OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO COUNTRYSIDE ACT ARE MET

1 Statutory Tests

1.1 Section 85(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROWA) provides (as relevant to an Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AoNB) (now National Landscape (NL)) in Wales:

(1) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in Wales, *a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.*

1.2 S11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPACA) provides (as relevant to a National Park in Wales):

(2) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park in Wales any relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes specified in subsection (1) of section five of this Act and, if it appears that there is a conflict between those purposes, shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area comprised in the National Park.

1.3 The purposes specified in section 5(1) of the NPACA are:

(a) *conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and*

(b) *promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public.*

1.4 For the purposes of the Mona offshore wind project, the Examining Authority and Secretary of State are required to have regard to s85(1) of the CROWA in relation to the potential seascape, landscape and visual impacts of the project on the Isle of Anglesey (IoA) NL and the Eryri National Park (ENP). The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley (CRDV) NL is not considered further in this note as the Applicant and NRW have concluded that given the context of views towards the Mona Array Area from the CRDV NL (beyond the existing wind farms and at a distance of over 40 km) , the Mona array would not significantly affect the special qualities and the character of the CRDV NL.

1.5 It is the Applicant's understanding that there is no suggestion that the Mona project would affect the wildlife or cultural heritage of the ENP, and therefore this note only considers the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

1.6 In considering the extent to which the above statutory duties are met by the Mona project it is important to consider the following:

(a) The duties require regard to be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty, they do not require projects to conserve and enhance natural beauty;

(b) National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 at Paragraph 5.10.34 advises that the '*duty to have regard to the purposes of nationally designated areas also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas which may have impacts within them. The aim should be to avoid compromising the purposes of designation and such projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints*.' … and further advises that "'*The fact that a proposed project will be visible from within a designated area should not in itself be a reason for refusing consent*';

(c) The ability for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, like the Mona offshore wind project, to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscapes is inherently limited by the nature of the project and its technical and engineering requirements;

(d) Paragraph 5.10.36 of NPS EN-1 confirms that '*the scale of energy projects means they will often be visible across a very wide area. The SoS should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits (including need) of the project*'.

(e) NPS EN-3 states at paragraph 2.8.263 that '*Neither the design nor scale of individual wind turbines can be changed without significantly affecting the electricity generating output of the wind turbines. Therefore, the Secretary of State should expect it to be unlikely that mitigation in the form of reduction in scale will be feasible*.' It goes on to state at paragraph 2.8.264 that: '*However, the siting layout of the turbines should be designed appropriately to minimise harm, considering other constraints such as ecological effects, safety reasons or engineering and design parameters'*.

2 Mona Array Area

2.1 The Applicant explained the various siting and design constraints on the Mona project at ISH3 (see section 5 a and b of the Hearing Summary (ISH3): Environmental Matters (S_D4_2)) to demonstrate that as far as possible and taking account of all other constraints, the siting of the turbines has sought to minimise harm to the ENP and IoA NL.

Alternative sites

2.2 Alternative locations for the Mona Array Area are not possible due to other constraints, give rise to unacceptable cumulative effects, or would not materially reduce seascape, landscape and visual impacts.

2.3 Within the constraints of the Crown Estate's Round 4 North Wales and Irish Sea leasing bidding area (a considerable amount of which is located around the IoA coast (see Figure 4.3 in Applicant's Response to s51 Advice - F1.4 Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives (AS-016)), seascape, landscape and visual effects were a consideration in the selection of the Mona agreement for lease area. This selection considered distance from shore, and in particular designated landscape areas, as one of several factors which also included wind speed, water depth, ground conditions, and other known constraints.

2.4 To address cumulative shipping and navigation impacts, it has been necessary to make material reductions in the Mona Array Area (principally to the north and east).

2.5 Moving or extending the Mona Array Area to the east is not possible due to cumulative shipping and navigation constraints, and moving the Mona Array Area east or south brings it closer to the designated areas and would extend the turbine spread as visible from the IoA NL.

Reduction in project scale

2.6 NPS EN1 paragraph 5.10.26 states: '*Reducing the scale of a project can help to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design of a proposed energy infrastructure project may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function – for example, electricity generation output. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances, where mitigation could have a very significant benefit and warrant a small reduction in function. In these circumstances, the Secretary of State may decide that the benefits of the mitigation to reduce the landscape and/or visual effects outweigh the marginal loss of function*.'

2.7 Reducing the scale of the Mona Array Area, such that all of it is outside of the White Consultants (2019) low magnitude buffer distance, would require pushing the southwest turbines back from a closest distance of c.29 km to a distance of 44 km from the IoA coastline (outer end of 35 to 44 km). This would result in a significant loss of array area and generation capacity.

2.8 Such a large reduction in area would significantly impact project generation capacity, turbine spacing (requiring the turbines to be located closer to each other), and therefore yield and project deliverability, without, in the Applicant's view, significantly reducing the impacts from the IoA NL.

Size of turbines

2.9 As highlighted above, NPS EN3: 2.8.263 states '*Neither the design nor scale of individual wind turbines can be changed without significantly affecting the electricity generating output of the wind turbines. Therefore, the Secretary of State should expect it to be unlikely that mitigation in the form of reduction in scale will be feasible'*.

2.10 Smaller turbines are not available for the Mona project and are not economically viable.

2.11 Project consents must take account of future changes in turbine size from when the envelope is drawn up to when procurement occurs. This was the reason for the increase in turbine tip height from PEIR, 324 m, to Environmental Statement, 364 m, which was driven by further engagement with the supply chain and ensuring the project is deliverable based on what is expected to be available at the point of procurement.

3 NPS POLICY COMPLIANCE

3.1 Having considered the statutory duty of preserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the IoA National Landscape (NL) [previously AONB] and Eryri National Park (NP), it is then relevant to consider whether consenting the Mona project would be in accordance with the NPS policy such that any perceived adverse impact would be outweighed by its benefits.

Isle of Anglesey National Landscape

3.2 In determining the level of impact it is important to consider the likely effects of Mona on the integrity of the AONB/NL, which is a measure of the degree to which its special qualities will continue to define the area. The question 'Would Mona cause such 'harm' to the IoA NL that its overall integrity would be diminished such that it could no longer be considered to qualify as an area of outstanding natural beauty' lies at the core of these effects.

3.3 The factors to be considered in determining the degree of harm that may arise as a result of Mona, how this has been minimised through design, and how this should be considered in the decision-making process are set out below.

(a) There are fourteen Special Qualities identified in the IoA AONB Management Plan 2023 - 2028 (Isle of Anglesey Council. 2023) and it is the combination and interaction of distinctive resources and activities that form the basis of the designation. The majority of these resources (including features and special qualities) and activities would be unaffected by the Mona Array Area due to the nature of the development and its location at some distance from the IoA NL.

(b) The NL would only be affected through visibility of the Mona Array Area, which is located at a substantial distance offshore, and not as a result of any physical change to the balance of its features or activities. It is visible from the IoA NL, but is not prominent in the available views from and within the NL. It is the relationship and quality of the landscape resources and receptors and activities within the IoA NL that largely define its inherent character and integrity and these are not affected by the Mona Array Area.

(c) The IoA NL is predominantly coastal but also includes inland areas that form the backdrop to the coast. Some of its characteristics and special qualities include expansive views that may be over the seascape as well as the relative tranquillity, relative openness and exposure the seascape can evoke on the perception of the NL.

(d) The landscape of the IoA NL and its context has evolved substantially over time in response to landownership changes, the material and social needs of society (including to support extensive mining, industry and energy production), health and safety of shipping through the introduction of lighthouses in prominent coastal locations, transportation and agricultural practices.

(e) Whilst there is no large-scale industrial development within the IoA NL, there has, since its designation in 1966, been a strong association between the IoA NL and large-scale development, which unlike the Mona Array Area, are located very close to its boundaries. This includes the Wylfa nuclear power station, former aluminium smelting plant and an RAF Training Base. In designating the IoA as an AONB, it was considered acceptable for such large-scale developments to coexist alongside the designated area.

(f) The need to balance potential development that may be proposed within or affecting the IoA NL is recognised in the IoA AONB Management Plan 2023 – 2028 (Isle of Anglesey Council, 2023). This notably relates to tourist-related development, which is an important component of the economics of the IoA, but of more relevance is that '*The Isle of Anglesey Couty Council has, for several years, prioritised energy generation, and in particular 'green' low carbon energy, as a key economic driver – this, in the form of the Anglesey Energy Island Programme, remains a key corporate strategic priority for the Council'*. And '*offshore renewables also remains high on the agenda*…' It must be construed from this that the management plan recognises the need to accommodate appropriately sited development alongside this nationally important landscape such that both aims can be achieved.

(g) The IoA AONB Management Plan 2023 – 2028 (Isle of Anglesey Council, 2023) seeks to actively conserve, through appropriate management the special qualities from development that might degrade them, by ensuring that all development within and adjacent to the boundary of the NL is compatible with the aims and objectives of the designation. The Mona Array Area is not within or adjacent to the boundary of the NL. The Mona Array Area is visible, but not prominent, from the NL. It could be construed that it is within the visible setting of the NL. However, settings to designated areas are not

designations or receptors in their own right and will vary with the nature of the development proposed (Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024_01, section 5(13).

3.4 The design principles that the Mona Array Area enshrines are detailed in Guidance on the Assessment of the impact of offshore wind farms: Seascape and Visual Report (DTI, 2005) and have not been superseded. The guidelines for offshore wind farm location and layout are illustrated on Figure 20 of DTI (2005) and the 'Key Considerations in siting, layout and design' are set out on page 59 of DTI (2005). In summary, these are:

- Locate the wind farm as far offshore as possible
- Keep well away from scenic landscapes/coastal landscape designations
- Keep away from focus of key views (where coast meets the sea)
- Minimise horizon spread from key viewpoints
- Colour of turbines, such as light grey to minimise visibility of turbines.

3.5 The DTI (2005) guidelines on location and layout note that seascape is only one of a number of factors which are significant in siting, others include marine safety, fisheries, marine processes and ecology, birds and marine archaeology.

3.6 The Applicant does not agree with NRW that there will be significant effects on the IoA NL from the development of the Mona Array Area, or that these effects would compromise the purposes of the designation as claimed by NRW at ISH3. The Applicant accepts that there would be adverse effects which would not be consistent with objectives that seek to enhance the IoA NL, but it is considered that almost no large-scale development would be able to comply with the principle of enhancement and therefore it must be anticipated that any major development would be unable to comply with such an aim.

3.7 It would be difficult for any large-scale development of this nature, visible from a designated landscape at whatever distance, to be considered to directly conserve or enhance that landscape's natural beauty. This is expressly acknowledged in NPS EN-1 at paragraph 4.7.2 where it is stated that '*the nature of energy infrastructure development will often limit the extent to which it can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area*.'

3.8 Whilst not a defined term applied in Wales in relation to NLs or National Parks, considering the effect on 'overall integrity' is nonetheless helpful in understanding how the special qualities of a designated landscape area come together to represent the whole or overall value. It is a useful approach to adopt when considering the degree of impact or harm overall.

3.9 Whilst two of the 14 special qualities might be adversely affected (Expansive Views, and Peace and Tranquillity), the overall IoA NL designation would not be compromised by the Mona development, i.e. its integrity would remain conserved.

3.10 Notably, in relation to the purpose 'to conserve', the purpose of the Mona development is to mitigate climate change impacts, which are predicted to give rise to widespread changes in our landscapes, habitats and species, including those in the NLs and NPs. Mona would, therefore, also play a part in conserving aspects of the designated area.

3.11 Following consideration of all of these factors it is accepted that there would be some perceived diminishment of (adverse effects on) two of the 14 special qualities (Expansive Views and Peace and Tranquillity) and the natural beauty of the IoA NL associated with these special qualities; however, such effects would only occur within a limited geographical area of the NL. Therefore, substantial areas of the NL, as well as 12 of its 14 special qualities throughout the whole of the NL, would be unaffected. Taking into account these factors, the effects are not considered to occur to such a degree that it would affect the integrity of the IoA NL or its inherent natural beauty, and it would occur within a context and understanding of the need for change including accommodating new energy development as set out in the Isle of Anglesey AONB Management Plan 2023 – 2028 (Isle of Anglesey Council, 2023).

Eryri National Park

Effects on Special Qualities

3.12 Cynllun Eryri - The Snowdonia National Park Partnership Plan 2020 (Eryri National Park Authority, 2021) outlines the nine identified special qualities of ENP. The Plan also defines special qualities as '*The combination of distinctive features of each National Park that led to these areas being designated to be protected*.'

3.13 The majority of the special qualities would not be affected by the Mona Array Area, with the seascape and visual resources assessment (Volume 2, Chapter 8: Seascape and Visual Resources (APP-060)) assessing the only impact to be on the special quality of Tranquillity and Solitude – Peaceful Areas.

National Park Purposes for Designation

3.14 The Applicant's assessment has found there to be no significant effects on visual receptors, landscape/seascape character or special qualities, although it is acknowledged that there would be non-significant effects that are adverse. This indicates that some degree of 'harm' may arise in relation to the impacts of the development on the wider setting of the ENP through its visibility from the northerly areas and mountain landscape overlooking the coast.

3.15 In considering whether Mona would cause such 'harm' to the ENP that its overall integrity would be diminished, such that it could no longer be considered to meet the objectives of a National Park it is important to consider the likely effects of the Mona Array Area on the integrity of the ENP, which is a measure of the degree to which its special qualities continue to define the area. Factors to be considered in determining the degree of harm that may arise as a result of the Mona Array Area, how this has been minimised through design and how this should be balanced by decision makers are set out below.

(a) There are nine Special Qualities identified in Cynllun Eryri - The Snowdonia National Park Partnership Plan 2020 (Eryri National Park Authority, 2021). The Mona Array Area affects only one of these (Tranquillity and Solitude – Peaceful Areas), and the remaining eight special qualities remain unaffected. The Snowdonia National Park (SNP) Partnership Plan notes that it is '*The combination of distinctive features of each National Park that led to these areas being designated to be protected*.' The majority of these distinctive features would be unaffected by the Mona Array Area, largely due to its location at some distance from the ENP.

(b) The ENP would only be affected through visibility of the Mona Array Area at a substantial distance offshore (approximately 36 km) and not as a result of any physical change to the balance of features or activities therein. It is the distinctive relationship and quality of the features and activities within the ENP that largely define its inherent character and integrity, and not views out from ENP.

(c) It is the Applicant's position that visibility of the Mona Array Area from within ENP does not result in significant effects on any of the identified special qualities, landscape character or seascape character receptors within the ENP.

(d) The ENP extends back from the steeply sided coastal hills. These, as well as the next ridge of hills inland, provide a high degree of visual screening of the Mona Array Area from the majority of SNP further to the south. Between these sets of hills there is an area of open moorland which is influenced by pylon mounted transmission lines which cross over this area and through the southern set of hills.

(e) The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (S_D4_15) shows the extent of the theoretical visibility, which has been calculated to equate to 3.35% of ENP within the SLVIA Study Area. 96.65% of the total area of ENP would have negligible or no change to views or character as a result of the visibility of the Mona Array Area as part of its diverse context. Parts of the ZTV areas with theoretical visibility would have no or limited actual visibility due to there being the potential for only blade visibility (not hubs or towers - making the turbines less likely to be discerned over long distances and extensive separating landform) or intervening screening by woodland across certain areas.

(f) There would be no changes to the diverse landscapes of ENP around the Dyfi, Mawddach and Dwyryd estuaries or to the numerous valleys and passes between the upland areas that are specifically noted in the Cynllun Eryri - The Snowdonia National Park Partnership Plan 2020 (Eryri National Park Authority, 2021).

(g) One of the ENP special qualities includes diverse views that include views over the seascape. The Cynllun Eryri - The Snowdonia National Park Partnership Plan 2020 (Eryri National Park Authority,

2021) notes the importance of the national park's coastline, sandy beaches and unspoilt coastal settings as being highly valued and that this coastline extends to 23 km of the ENP boundary. Notably none of this coastline arises within the Mona study area, it is solely to the west, where the ENP meets Cardigan Bay. Land between the northern part of the ENP and the coast has been highly modified by development uses which include the A55, rail infrastructure, and extensive views of urban development as well as a number of operational offshore wind farms.

(h) Whilst there would be no visibility of the Mona Array Area from the Synchant Pass, which is set inland slightly from the coast, the wider seascape setting of the northern parts of SNP around the Sychnant Pass are important and scenically attractive with contrasting features of open sea, notable headlands (the Great Orme) and bays that have a strong sense of place.

(i) In relation to landscape character change it is considered that the strong inherent character of the landscape character area (LCA), which is largely informed by the features and patterns of elements within the geographical extent of the LCA itself and make it distinctive from other parts of the landscape, will remain predominant.

3.16 It is accepted by the Applicant that there would be some adverse impacts on the views towards the seascape from the ENP and that development of the Mona Array Area would therefore not be consistent with objectives that seek to enhance the natural beauty or quality of the ENP. However, the Applicant considers that almost no large-scale development would be able to comply with the principle of enhancement and therefore it must be anticipated that any major development would give rise to some degree of friction with such an aim. This is also acknowledged in NPS EN-1 at paragraph 4.7.2 whereby it is stated that '*the nature of much energy infrastructure development will often limit the extent to which it can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area*.'

3.17 The Applicant considers that there may be some perceived diminishment of (harmful effects on) the special qualities of Tranquillity and Solitude – Peaceful Area, but such effects are not considered to be significant and are therefore limited. However, there is no question of the seascape, landscape and visual receptors within the SNP being diminished to such a degree that the overall integrity of the ENP or its inherent natural beauty would be affected. In addition, such impacts would occur within a context and understanding of the need for change, including accommodating alternative energy.

3.18 Whilst not a defined term applied in Wales in relation to National Parks, the Applicant suggests that considering the effect on 'overall integrity' is nonetheless a very clear way of expressing how the special qualities of a designated landscape area come together to represent the whole or overall value. It is a useful approach to adopt when considering the degree of overall harm, especially where there is a management plan identifying special quality. As acknowledged by Cynllun Eryri Snowdonia National Park Partnership Plan 2020 (Eryri National Park Authority, 2021)" The *combination of these Special Qualities are the core of designation as a National Park*."

3.19 While some special qualities might be adversely affected, the overall ENP designation would not be compromised, i.e. its integrity would remain conserved.

3.20 Notably, in relation to the purpose 'to conserve', the purpose of the Mona development is to mitigate climate change impacts, which are predicted to give rise to widespread changes in our landscapes, habitats and species, including those in the ENP. Mona would, therefore, also play a part in conserving aspects of the designated area.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Applicant considers that it has had due regard to the purpose of the IoA NL and the ENP, consistent with the statutory duty. In addition, the Secretary of State can conclude with confidence that the effects of the Mona Array Area on designated landscapes would be consistent with the relevant policy in the NPS, in particular paragraph 5.9.12 of EN1.

4.2 The adverse effects on the ENP and IoA NL are limited and will not result in overall harm with the identified special qualities continuing to define these areas' overall and fundamental character.