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Dyddiad/Date: 03 December 2024

Er sylw / For the attention of: Jake Stephens

Annwyl / Dear Jake,

**FFERM WYNT ALLTRAETH MONA / PROPOSED MONA OFFSHORE WINDFARM**

**CYFEIRNOD YR AROLYGIAETH GYNLLUNIO / PLANNING INSPECTORATE  
REFERECE: EN010137**

**EIN CYFEIRNOD / OUR REFERENCE: 20048445**

**RE: NATURAL RESOURCES WALES' RESPONSE TO THE EXAMINING  
AUTHORITY'S SECOND SET OF WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Thank you for your Rule 8 letter, dated 23 July 2024, requesting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) comments regarding the above.

Please find below NRW's Response to the Examining Authority's second set of written questions (ExAQ2), published on 19 November 2024.

These comments/question responses should be read in conjunction with advice previously provided into the examination.

The comments provided in this submission comprise NRW's response as a Statutory Party under the Planning Act 2008 and Infrastructure Planning (Interested Parties) Regulations 2015 and as an 'interested party' under s102(1) of the Planning Act 2008.

Our comments are made without prejudice to any further comments or advice we may wish to make in relation to this application and examination whether in relation to the Environmental Statement (ES) and associated documents, provisions of the draft Development Consent Order ('DCO') and its Requirements, or other evidence and documents provided by RWE ('the Applicant'), the Examining Body or other interested parties.

Should further clarity be required, we will be pleased to answer these further through the Examining Authority questions and / or a Rule 17 request(s).

Please do not hesitate to contact Emma Lowe  
[REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)),  
[REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)), and [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)) should you require further advice or  
information regarding these representations.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**Marine Services Manager**  
**Natural Resources Wales**

[CONTINUED]

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
<b>2.5 Commercial Fisheries, Fish and Shellfish</b>			
Q.2.5.11	NRW (A) Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Scottish Whitefish Producers Association Limited, West Coast Sea Products Ltd	Queen Scallops Impacts Chapter 3 (Vol 2) Fish and shellfish ecology [APP-055] identifies for queen scallop, a low magnitude and a low sensitivity resulting in minor adverse (which is not significant in EIA terms) for impacts related to: i) temporary habitat loss/disturbance ii) increased suspended sediment concentrations (SSCs) and associated sediment deposition. iii) disturbance/remobilisation of sediment-bound contaminants during construction. If you disagree with this assessment, can you please provide evidence to justify your position and include any appropriate mitigation measures	NRW (A) agree with the assessment - no further comment.
Q.2.5.12	NRW (A) Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Scottish Whitefish Producers Association Limited,	Queen Scallops Impact Chapter 3 (Vol 2) Fish and shellfish ecology [APP-055] identifies that long term habitat loss on queen scallop would have a low magnitude impact and that the sensitivity is considered to be medium, resulting in minor adverse significance which is not significant in EIA terms. If you disagree with this assessment, can you please provide evidence to justify your position and include any appropriate mitigation measures.	NRW (A) agree with the assessment - no further comment.

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
	West Coast Sea Products Ltd		
Q.2.5.13	NRW (A) Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Scottish Whitefish Producers Association Limited, West Coast Sea Products Ltd	Queen Scallops Impact Section 3.11 Cumulative Assessment within Chapter 3 (Vol 2) Fish and shellfish ecology [APP-055] identifies for queen scallop the significance of effects as being not significant in EIA terms. If you disagree with this assessment, can you please provide evidence to justify you position and include any appropriate mitigation measures.	NRW (A) agree with the assessment - no further comment.
Q.2.5.14	NRW (A)	Cod and Herring Can you provide an update regarding cod and herring issues and summarise any remaining principal points of disagreement including any monitoring requirements.	The primary remaining point of disagreement relates to Cod. The Applicant and NRW (A) disagree on the Applicant's assessment of 'low' magnitude of impact from the project alone in relation to cod and underwater noise impacts. This is primarily due to the Applicant's modelled noise radius covering 21%+ of the high intensity spawning ground for cod, alongside a number of other factors which we have written in detail across various submissions into the examination process (notably our Written Representations [REP1-056]). The Applicant's low magnitude assessment, results in an overall 'minor adverse' significance assessment, meaning mitigation is not required.

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
			<p>NRW(A) have advised that the low magnitude assessment should be revised upwards, resulting in a 'moderate adverse' significance assessment which would then trigger a need for mitigation to protect cod during their peak spawning period. We have suggested that adequate mitigation would be to cease piling within the key spawning months (February and March).</p> <p>Despite this disagreement, we are in discussions with the Applicant on this matter and subject to the Underwater Sound Management Strategy (UWSMS) being developed further in consultation with NRW (A), and the necessary mitigation measures included and captured securely, we anticipate this issue will be resolved. We are of the understanding that the Applicant will be submitting a revised UWSMS into the examination at Deadline 5. We will provide further advice once we have had the opportunity to fully review that submission.</p> <p>NRW (A) agrees with the cumulative assessment for cod of 'moderate adverse' significance for underwater noise impacts, requiring mitigation. This is proposed to be secured within the UWSMS, however, as previously advised, the document contains limited detail at present. NRW(A) have committed to working with the Applicant on securing the measures proposed as the document is further developed.</p> <p>Herring has been assessed as requiring mitigation for both alone and cumulative impacts, in relation to underwater noise impacts, which NRW (A) are in agreement with. This</p>

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
			<p>mitigation will be secured within the UWSMS. We will be further advising the Applicant on appropriate mitigation measures for herring as the UWSMS document is further developed.</p> <p>The Mitigation and Monitoring schedule [REP4-013] was recently updated, following NRW (A) highlighting the omission of some key documents that were referenced in the fish and shellfish document as being of relevance to fish. NRW(A) are content with this document as it currently stands.</p>
<b>2.8 Flood Risk and Water Environment</b>			
Q.2.8.10	NRW	<p>Water Framework Directive</p> <p>Does the Applicant's Geomorphology Clarification Note [REP4-040] address your comments in point 3.2.7 Fluvial geomorphology elements of the WFD of your RR (RR-011) and in your SoCG with the Applicant [REP1-026]? If not, what further information or evidence do you need from the Applicant to allay your concern?</p>	Yes, please see NRW (A)'s Deadline 5 Response, section 2.2.
<b>2.14 Marine and Coastal Physical Processes and Coastal Change</b>			
Q2.14.1	The Applicant	<p>Cable protection</p> <p>In its D3 submission [REP3-090], NRW (A) states that in the event that any area of cable protection exceeding 5% of navigable depth is identified, a further physical processes assessment in the shallow nearshore environment just seawards of</p>	<p>Whilst this question is not directed at NRW (A), we note that it is the Applicant's expectation that a condition will be imposed within the standalone NRW Marine Licence securing the commitment to limit changes in water depth to 5% caused by the presence of cable protection along the export cable corridor up to and including the exit pits just seaward of MLWS. We note in REP4-047 that the Applicant</p>

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
		MLWS over the exit pits should be conducted (para 102). Do you agree if this is appropriate and if so, how would this be secured?	states that where that 5% restriction is anticipated to be exceeded, the Applicant will consult with NRW (A) in respect of agreeing an alternative position. In our deadline 5 submissions, NRW (A) have agreed with the Applicant on this position. We note and agree that this discussion will involve consideration of whether further physical processes and benthic ecology assessments in the shallow nearshore area would be required, and if so on what terms these assessments would be undertaken. NRW (A) advise that this commitment is secured in the stand-alone Marine Licence – we will also be advising the regulator of the transmission asset the same.
Q2.14.2	The Applicant	Cable burial In its D3 submission [REP3-030] NRW (A) advise that the Applicant should review historical beach profiles in order to determine the depth of cable burial to avoid exposure following a major storm event. Could this be secured via the Landfall Construction Method Statement?	Whilst this question is not directed at NRW (A), we welcome the Applicant's commitment that consideration will be given to the natural envelope of beach profile change over time from historical beach profiles – this is in order to inform the final detailed design of the drill duct profile to avoid the risk of cable exposure at the beach. This addition is detailed in section 1.10.3.2 of the updated Outline Landfall Construction Method Statement [REP4-017].
Q2.14.3	The Applicant	Sandwave recovery monitoring Noting your response to ExQ1 (Q1.14.4) [REP3-062] that the geomorphological surveys already committed to will now be considered in the context of sandwave recovery modelling for information purposes, can you ensure that this is included in the updated Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan to be submitted at D5 so that it is	Whilst this question is not directed at NRW (A), we agree that this should be secured in the updated Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan to be submitted at D5.

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
		explicit this will be completed and which DML condition secures the monitoring.	
<b>2.17 Offshore Biodiversity, Ecology and Natural Environment</b>			
<b>Benthic</b>			
Q.2.17.5	The Applicant NRW A JNCC	<p>Water depth</p> <p>The Mitigation and Monitoring Schedule [REP4-013] reference no 8 notes that if the water depth is reduced by more than 5% written approval from the Licensing Authority in consultation with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) would be sought.</p> <p>Can you summarise what approach would be taken regarding benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology assessment of effects including any necessary approval from SNCBs if water depth is reduced by more than 5%?</p>	<p>From a Physical Processes and Benthic Ecology perspective, NRW (A) request that the mitigation is amended to ensure that where the 5% restriction in water depth is exceeded, the Applicant will consult with NRW (A) in agreeing an alternative position. As noted in REP3-090, para 102, this discussion will involve consideration of whether further physical processes and benthic ecology assessment in the shallow nearshore area would be required, and if so on what terms that assessment would be undertaken. NRW (A) request that this commitment is secured in the stand-alone Marine Licence and secured in the appropriate plans.</p>
Q2.17.6	The Applicant	<p>Close proximity to the works</p> <p>The Mitigation and Monitoring Schedule [REP4-013] reference no 10 notes that material arising from drilling and/or sandwave clearance would be deposited in close proximity to the works. Can you clarify what is meant by close proximity to the works and what distance parameters and constraints were considered under the maximum design scenario. For example, could sandwave clearance on the Constable Bank result in</p>	<p>Whist this question is not directed to NRW (A), we note that Constable Bank is excluded as a disposal site and therefore any material removed during sand wave clearance is assumed to be taken off the sandbank. Please note that any sediment removed by sand wave clearance along the export cable corridor, will be deposited in the newly licenced disposal sites which are anticipated to be located in close proximity of the sand wave clearance activities.</p>



Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
		material arising being deposited within Constable Bank?	
Q.2.17.9	NRW A JNCC	Mitigation and monitoring measures Can you confirm if you are satisfied with the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology mitigation measures being put forward by the Applicant, and provide a summary of reasons if you disagree with the statement that “no benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology monitoring to test the predictions made within the impact assessment is considered necessary.	NRW (A) are satisfied with the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology mitigation measures put forward by the Applicant providing the request above under Q2.17.5 to amend the relevant mitigation is met. We agree with the statement that “no benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology monitoring to test the predictions made within the impact assessment is considered necessary”.
<b>Marine Mammals</b>			
Q2.17.12	The Applicant JNCC NRW A	UXO Clearance In order to mitigate the potential likelihood of injury from UXO clearance the Proposed Development key measures consists of an UXO staged mitigation hierarchy (avoid, low charge, high charge) an Outline MMMP [APP-207], an Outline underwater sound management strategy [APP-202] and conditions 20 and 21 (schedule 14) of the deemed marine licence [REP2-004]. Can you summarise what further data, assessment and measures would be required for a separate marine licence application (to facilitate high order clearance charges) and the expected timeframe required for a separate marine licence application and decision.	Although not directed at NRW MLT, we would however advise the following in relation to timeframes in relation to a separate Marine Licence application and decision. A separate Marine Licence application for UXO clearance would likely fall under our Band 3 application process. Band 3 applications do not have a service level agreement for determination timescales. Band 3 projects are varied and often complex in nature so determination time can vary significantly.  Please also see NRW (A)’s deadline 5 submission, section 1.2.7 for our full comments with regard to Marine Mammals.  NRW (A) confirm that for fish, the staged hierarchy approach is acceptable. Any further developments to make the

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
			approach more robust with regard for mammals would also be of benefit to fish receptors.
Q2.17.13	The Applicant	Mitigation and Monitoring Schedule Reference no 35 in the Mitigation and Monitoring Schedule [REP4-013] relates to Underwater Sound Management Strategy (UWSMS) that includes for consideration of Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) as part of mitigation options. Can you clarify the statement ...and is expected to be secured within the standalone Natural Resources Wales marine licence (that appears in means of securing the commitment). As the standalone Natural Resources Wales marine licence would be for the transmission assets, can you confirm what measure would be in place for Array area.	Whilst this question is not directed to NRW (A), we clarify that our statement “...and is expected to be secured within the standalone NRW ML” was not intended to refer to the NRW ML only (i.e. the transmission assets alone), but that in addition to the current consenting application (for the array) we would also expect mitigation for the transmission assets to be secured within the standalone NRW ML.
Q.2.17.16	NRW A JNCC	Mitigation and monitoring measures Can you confirm if you are satisfied with the marine mammals mitigation measures being put forward by the Applicant, and provide a summary of reasons if you disagree with the statement in the ES Chapter 4 (Vol 2) Marine Mammals [APP-056] paragraphs 4.9.10.1 and 4.12.1.1 that “no marine mammal monitoring to test the predictions made within the impact assessment is considered necessary”.	Please see paragraph 180-181 of REP1-056, and paragraph 74 in REP3-090.
<b>Ornithology</b>			
Q.2.17.19	NRW A JNCC	Mitigation and monitoring measures	NRW (A) welcome the offshore ornithology mitigation measures put forward, namely:

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
		<p>Can you confirm if you are satisfied with the offshore ornithology mitigation measures being put forward by the Applicant, and provide a summary of reasons if you disagree with the statement in the ES Chapter 5 (Vol 2) Offshore ornithology [REP4-007] paragraph 5.7.8.1 that “no future monitoring is considered given the level of certainty around the potential effects”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum lower blade tip height (air draught) of 34 m above Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT), which allowing for -4 m tidal offset between LAT and mean sea level (MSL) is an air draught of 30 m above MSL (see Table 1.5 of APP-093).</li> <li>• Development of, and adherence to, an offshore Environmental Management Plan (EMP). The Measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals and rafting birds from transiting vessels will be included within the Offshore EMP. They will include a timing restriction of no offshore export cable installation during the period 1 November to 31 March within the Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA).</li> <li>• Development and adherence to an offshore Environmental Management Plan (EMP) that will include a Marine Pollution Contingency Plan (MPCP) which will include planning for accidental spills, address all potential contaminant releases and include key emergency details.</li> </ul> <p>We confirm that we are satisfied with the offshore ornithology mitigation measures being put forward by the Applicant with regard to the alone and cumulative EIA. We note our conclusion on significant adverse impact on great black-backed gull from cumulative collision mortality at an EIA scale [REP4-105] and for kittiwake for the Pen y Gogarth / Great Orme’s Head SSSI (see our Deadline 5 advice on REP4-025). However, we are content that the Applicant has provided proportionate mitigation (through the air draught height) for great black-backed gull and kittiwake.</p>

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
			<p>We agree with the mitigation proposed by the Applicant with regard to impacts from the cable installation within Liverpool Bay / Bae Lerpwl SPA (measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals and rafting birds, including the seasonal timing restriction). However, we do not agree that the mitigation proposed by the Applicant is sufficient to avoid an adverse effect on site integrity (AEoSI) to Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA as a result of the potential for pre-commencement activities, including UXO clearance, to occur within Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA during the sensitive period for red-throated diver and common scoter (1st November to 31st March, inclusive).</p> <p>However, we understand from recent correspondence with the Applicant (02 December 2024), that it is their intention to remove high-order clearance options from the draft development consent order (dDCO), its associated deemed Marine Licence (dML), and the stand alone Marine Licence, and that the seasonal timing restriction on the cable activities within Liverpool Bay SPA will also be applied to the low-order UXO clearance. Once this information is submitted into the examination at Deadline 5, we will provide further advice with respect to the above.</p> <p>Given that we are not currently in a position where we can agree with the outcome of the in-combination HRA with regard to Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire/Sgomer, Sgogwm a Moroedd Penfro SPA, Grassholm SPA and Aberdaron Coast and Bardsey Island</p>

Q. no	Question to:	Question:	NRW RESPONSE
			SPA, we cannot currently say whether the offshore ornithology mitigation measures being put forward by the Applicant are appropriate at this stage.