



Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm Limited Triton Knoll Electrical System

Appendix 23: Hedgerow Removal and Mitigation Clarification Note

Date: 30th November 2015

**Appendix 23 of the Applicant's
response to Deadline 3**

Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm Limited

Triton Knoll Electrical System

Appendix 23 Hedgerow Removal and
Mitigation Clarification Note

Triton Knoll
Offshore Wind Farm Limited
4th Floor One Kingdom Street
Paddington Central
London
W2 6BD

T: 0845 026 0562
Email: info@tritonknoll.co.uk

www.rweinnogy.com/tritonknoll

Appendix 23 of the Applicant's response to
Deadline 3

Date: 30th November 2015

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Approved By:	Kim Gauld Clark
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1. Hedgerow Removal and Mitigation

- 1.1 Clarification has been requested regarding the assessment of hedgerow impacts, hedgerow removal and management of hedgerows during the construction phase of the Triton Knoll Electrical System project.
- 1.2 The assessment of hedgerow impacts is set out in paragraphs 4.118 – 4.121 of Volume 3, Chapter 4 Terrestrial Ecology of the ES. Further information is provided in paragraph 2.36 of the Outline Construction Method Statement (Outline CMS) (document reference 8.7.1) and paragraphs 6.16 and 6.17 of the Outline Landscape Strategy and Ecological Management Plan (Outline LSEMP) (document reference 8.8) and is detailed below to provide further clarity.
- 1.3 As set out in para 6.16 of the Outline LSEMP, where hedgerows are being crossed by the cable corridor the width of the cable corridor will be reduced to 30 m.
- 1.4 Hedgerows that require removal to facilitate construction will be cut during the winter period (September through February) wherever possible which is prior to the breeding bird period. This is to avoid the damage or destruction of active bird's nests, eggs or young. If vegetation requires removal within the bird breeding season, the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) would first check the area to ensure no nesting birds are present prior to any activity taking place. In the event that an active bird's nest is identified, the vegetation removal would be re-scheduled until confirmation had been provided by the ECoW that the chicks had fledged or the nest(s) had failed.
- 1.5 Due to the nature of the project, construction works will not take place along all areas of the cable route simultaneously and the date of commencement of construction of the different cable sections could be separated by more than one year. Therefore, hedgerow removal may take place over more than one winter period with the final timetable being determined through the work scheduling undertaken during the detailed design phase.
- 1.6 Given the restriction on the timing for the removal of hedgerows to the winter months, the construction scheduling that is undertaken at the detailed design stage may identify that it is necessary to remove the hedgerows within a particular cable section prior to the commencement of construction on that section in order to ensure that breeding birds are not disturbed. The Applicant therefore considers that it is appropriate to exclude the removal of hedgerows from the definition of "commence" to ensure that these works do not trigger the discharge of the numerous Requirements set out in Schedule 1 Part 3 of the

draft DCO. The Applicant does, however, accept that the removal of hedgerows should only take place in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Outline LSEMP and the Outline CMS.

- 1.7 Once each section of hedgerow has been removed, it may be a number of years until restoration occurs as access along the cable route during the construction phase may still be required during the cable testing phase (i.e. to enable access to remedy any issues identified). Following restoration, it is likely that hedgerow establishment will take 3 to 5 years. The duration of this impact has been considered within the assessment provided. In general it is acknowledged that the removal of relatively small sections of hedgerow (i.e. each of 30m) within a landscape that supports considerable lengths of this resource will have a low level adverse impact (Table 4.21 in Volume 3, Chapter 4 of the ES). This impact will, however become minor positive in the medium to long term as hedgerow plantings within the onshore development area made during the restoration phase provide significantly more resource than that temporarily lost (Paragraph 4.121 in Volume 3, Chapter 4 of the ES).
- 1.8 Paragraph 6.16 of the Outline LSEMP (document reference 8.8) and paragraph 4.119 of the ES, Volume 3, Chapter 4 of the ES notes that the temporary gaps that are created in the hedgerows will be filled with the cut brash to maintain ecological connectivity during the construction phase, prior to the replanting of the hedgerow. This brash will be placed in the gap following the completion of the main construction works within the section, but prior to the reinstatement of the topsoil or removal of the haul road. Brash will only be moved if it can be ascertained that breeding birds, such as wrens, have not built nests within it. This check will be undertaken by the ECoW. This brash will help to maintain ecological connectivity and provide a barrier that can be opened should access be required later on in the project's overall construction phase. Any movement of brash would be controlled by the ECoW. Following the completion of cable testing, any brash moved for access would again be replaced as part of reinstatement of that stage of works. This would be undertaken coincident with replanting with appropriate shallow rooting hedgerow species. The brash will help to maintain ecological connectivity and protect the new plants used to restore the site.
- 1.9 Whilst construction within a given section is ongoing the ECoW will have the ability to determine whether or not further measures are required to maintain ecological connectivity, especially for bats. In these instances chestnut palings (or a similar temporary fencing solution) can be placed across the gap overnight to provide a continuous linear feature to commuting bats. Currently it is not considered necessary to secure this measure as survey results suggest that it would not be required based on the number and type of bats present, the

relatively small gap created and the large amounts of other linear habitats present in the general area (e.g. the ditch network).