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Our ref: 389076
Your ref: EN070008

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BY EMAIL ONLY



Consultations
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T [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Boyle

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping consultation (Regulation 15 (4) of the Town and Country Planning EIA Regulations 2017): EIA Scoping Opinion request for onshore section of V Net Zero Pipeline Project

Natural England has further advice to add to our response of 10 March 2022 on the scope of the Environmental Statement.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

I have been informed that the East Midlands Area Team in Natural England is supporting a proposal for a Heritage Coast definition for the stretch of coast from Humberstone Fitties in the north to just north of Mablethorpe in the south. I have attached an image of the section of the draft outline boundary map to the north of Mablethorpe to this letter. Please see below information regarding Heritage Coasts and our advice on the proposal.

Brief overview of Heritage Coasts, they:

- are stretches of the most beautiful, undeveloped coastline in England. They are managed in order to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors;
- are definitions rather than a designation. This means there is no statutory process when it comes to deciding on a Heritage Coast. They are defined by an agreement between the relevant maritime authorities in that local area, and Natural England;
- make up around thirty-three per cent of scenic English coastline;
- started when Beachy Head in Sussex was defined (the Durham Coast was the most recent).

A Heritage Coast should:

- comprise a coastline of exceptionally fine scenic quality;
- exceed one mile in length;
- be substantially undeveloped;
- contain features of special significance and interest, whether natural or man-made.

Natural England is supporting the definition of Heritage Coast for this stretch of Lincolnshire coastline because:

- A sustainable heritage coastal environment will provide high quality facilities for communities and visitors, improvements for wildlife and contribute to a healthy local economy
- It is a key component of Natural England's East Midlands Area Team's strategy to promote landscape scale change in this area (along with habitat improvement and community engagement through the EU Life Dynamic Dunescapes project)
- Lincolnshire County Council foresees major benefits from a Heritage Coast definition for both nature and the local economy (potentially millions of pounds)
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and East Lindsey District Council are additional supportive partners and see significant benefits in achieving a Heritage Coast for this stretch of Lincolnshire Coast

Planning Policy:

- Heritage Coasts continue to be valued for a range of reasons and are included within section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (revised 2021). Paragraphs 174, 176 and 178 are the most relevant.
- Paragraph 174 states that:

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:(c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

- Paragraph 176 refers to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks

- Paragraph 178 states that:

Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 176), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character

Request for Further Information:

I have discussed the proposal with Natural England colleagues working on the proposal and advised the applicant that it is hoped that this stretch of coast might be defined as a Heritage Coast within the next year. To allow any assessment of potential impacts and mitigation options relating to the V Net Zero Pipeline, we have requested the following information:

- What new infrastructure will be needed/developed within the coastal strip – i.e. within the beach including the dunes, and immediately behind the dunes to approximately 1 km inland? We are interested in new structures within the proposed Heritage Coast boundary itself, which here would literally just include the beach and dunes, but also any development inland which might be visible from within the potential Heritage Coast boundary.
- If there is likely to be new infrastructure, what are the details of the structures and likely construction phase (obviously provisional at this stage).
- Will the pipeline and any associated infrastructure on the beach/dunes be buried? Will anything be left visible and if so what might that be (size/height)?
- It seems to be suggested in the EIA scoping report that the old Theddlethorpe Gas Terminal gas pipeline may be used, therefore no new piping or other infrastructure may be needed in this coastal zone. If that is the case, will there be any associated works, for example to confirm the state of the existing pipeline? If so, what are the details - the location, scale, type and likely longevity of activity, and associated activity to make good.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter please contact Sandra Close at [REDACTED]. Please send any new consultations or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

SANDRA CLOSE
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East Midlands Area



