



**National
Trust**

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4th March 2025

Online submission: Planning Inspectorate

Your Ref: EN010119

Our Ref: 20050771

Dear Sir/Madam

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd for North Falls Offshore Wind Farm (EN010119)

Procedural Deadline 2 Submission: Responses to First Written Questions (ExQ1)

Please find below responses from the National Trust to the Examiners First Written Questions.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted Signature]

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Regional Planning Adviser (Midlands and East of England)

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WQ1	Question to:	Question:
Ecological Enhancement		
Q10.2.3	<p>All relevant Council's (including Suffolk County Council/ East Suffolk District Council/ Essex County Council) Essex Wildlife Trust RSPB Natural England Forestry Commission National Trust Marine Management Organisation IPs</p>	<p>Ecological Enhancement/ BNG Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) All relevant Council's (including Suffolk County Council/East Suffolk District Council/Essex County Council)/Essex Wildlife Trust/RSPB/NE/Forestry Commission/National Trust/IPs submit your views on seeking any further ecological enhancement/ facilitating BNG, or wider environmental gains inclusive of any future proofing (even if dual purpose for meeting wider design principles, climate change/adaption and resilience purposes) which may be desirable including regard expected local climatic conditions. (ii) Submit your views on boosting the level of BNG or other ecological enhancement proposals that could be delivered factoring all relevant local initiatives and scope to secure betterment. This may be linked to existing development plans, planned revisions to those, or stand-alone initiatives. (iii) Explain what scope remains for the scheme to further complement existing ecological enhancement initiatives within the local areas the scheme passes through; or which may be relevant to in-combination considerations; or wider ecological enhancement possibility. (iv) If relevant local/ regional or national initiatives have not been fully considered to date, provide an Examination update on how potential integration could be achieved. (v) The ExA specifically highlights that the scheme is projected to deliver a net loss for watercourses. Thus, further consideration should be given to BNG for watercourses in tandem with the above. (vi) NE – Biodiversity credits. The ExA acknowledges the Applicant's intention that if 'bespoke' mechanisms of off-site habitat enhancement or creation cannot be achieved in area habitat and hedgerow modules through consultation with relevant bodies and stakeholders on or off-site, biodiversity credits could be purchased through NE's register. Is there confidence from NE that scope for such contingency can/should be reasonably relied upon in those circumstances?

		(vii) The Applicant – Does the Applicant consider the use of the register to be ‘likely’? What is the expected probability, at this stage, of the register mechanism being required and is it the Applicant’s preferred/expected position to rely on the register mechanism or not? The Applicant is invited to demonstrate the likelihood/need for such an option being utilised within the Examination period.
	Response from National Trust	The National Trust defers to statutory advisers on these matters. The National Trust’s interest relates to impacts on species (Lesser Black Backed Gulls and Auks) rather than habitat.

10.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment

Q10.3.1	The Applicant IPs Natural England Nature Scotland RSPB National Trust	Habitats Regulations/Derogation Implications (i) IPs/NE/Nature Scotland (NS)/RSPB/National Trust – Have all relevant designated sites (including SACs/SPAs/Ramsar sites) been properly addressed inclusive of all defining features within the Applicant’s ES and associated material? If not, state why not. (ii) The ExA notes that the Provision of Evidence Annex 1A HRA Compensation Consultation [APP-185] does not appear to have included NS as a consultee (even on a precautionary basis). Give your reasoning for this omission (deliberate or otherwise). (iii) IPs/NE/NS – Has the consultation undertaken been adequate? If not, explain your views for the Examination record.
	Response from National Trust	The National Trust defers to statutory advisers on these matters.

10.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment

Q10.3.9	The Applicant Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarm All relevant Councils National Trust	Compensation - all ornithology NE/RSPB RR’s combined consider that compensation measures would be required for the following species: 1. Lesser Black Backed Gull (LBBG); 2. Kittiwake; 3. Northern Gannet; 4. Guillemot; 5. Razorbill; and 6. Red-throated Diver, should the Secretary of State decide to consent the Application as it is currently proposed. The Applicant has identified potential compensation measures for impacts on the following species: - Kittiwake (due to collision risk impacts on the
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		<p>Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA) - Guillemot and Razorbill (due to displacement impacts on the Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA) – LBBG (due to collision risk impacts on the Alde-Ore Estuaries SPA); and Red-Throated Diver (due to displacement impacts on the Outer Thames Estuary SPA).</p> <p>All of those compensation measures, with the exception of those for LBBG, are proposed on a “without prejudice” basis. Nonetheless, the ExA notes that the compensation proposals (on a without prejudice basis or otherwise) do not appear to be sufficiently advanced at this stage.</p> <p>Notwithstanding any potential HRA outcome, the ExA requests that compensation proposals are updated to allow due analysis/comment within the Examination period itself. This is to enable the likelihood of compensation effectiveness to be properly evaluated as well as ensuring potential choices have a holistic basis. The following information is therefore required: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The precise/detailed ecological compensation package expected to be committed to for all relevant species including location/design/how effective delivery would be secured against any delivery risks (collaboration with other windfarm operators and potential operators in the vicinity is also invited to be committed to). Alongside existing Ramsar/SPA/SAC site management obligation expectations. (ii) The precise mechanisms by which ‘all’ detailed ecological compensation proposals evidenced to the Examination would be formally secured within the DCO ‘if’ the ExA recommended this being undertaken to the Secretary of State. (iii) Confirmation from relevant Councils (host Councils, or otherwise, including East Suffolk Council) of the sufficiency of the mechanism and details committed to accounting for collaboration with them where it is appropriate and beneficial to wider ecological interests. (iv) All relevant Councils (including East Suffolk Council) /Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarm make whatever comments you deem to be necessary on the scheme’s compensation proposals. This would include any suggestions
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		to maximise optimal wider natural resource/nature recovery outcomes.
	Response from National Trust	<p>The National Trust has been discussing potential compensation proposals for Lesser Black Backed Gulls on land which is within our freehold interest at Lantern Marshes on Orford Ness. These discussions are ongoing, and no formal agreement is in place.</p> <p>The National Trust is in principle broadly supportive of the compensation scheme and feel that Lantern Marshes is an appropriate location for such a scheme given it was historically home to a large population of Lesser Black Backed Gulls and the National Trust is keen to support attempts to increase this population again.</p> <p>We note that the proposed compensation measures include predator exclusion fencing, predator control and habitat management. We must defer decisions on the suitability of the scheme to Natural England as the statutory body. However, the National Trust believe that a larger area than the 4ha scheme proposed would be beneficial to the long-term success of the scheme.</p> <p>The National Trust has also had discussions with the applicant about potential compensation for Guillemot and Razorbill at sites owned by us in the southwest of England. However, no specific measures have been proposed. It is understood that the applicant has yet to carry out and breeding or disturbance surveys. The National Trust agrees with the Examining Authority that these proposals are not sufficiently advanced. Without seeing the results of these surveys, we are unable to comment further.</p>
14 Landscape, Visual and Seascape Effects		
Q14.1.17	The Applicant, National Trust	<p>Orford Ness – landscape impact</p> <p>Orford Ness is a National Trust (NT) National Nature Reserve wholly within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape. The NT, in its RR [RR-241] describes this as a focal point within the area of the Alde-Ore estuary, and that it is also the location for designated heritage assets including listed buildings and scheduled monuments. Please can the Applicant set out or signpost to the assessment if the visual</p>

		impact of the proposed measures on this landscape and associated heritage assets. The NT is also invited to comment further with specific concerns.
	Response from National Trust	Details of the precise location and design of the proposed compensation measures for Lesser Black Backed Gulls have not yet been provided. The National Trust will comment further on this matter once the details have been provided, at a later deadline.