

Date: 18 March 2025  
Our ref: Case: 27843 Consultation: 501985  
Your ref: EN010119



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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**North Falls Offshore Wind Farm**

The following constitutes Natural England's formal statutory response for Examination Deadline 3.

**1. Natural England's Deadline 3 Submissions**

Natural England has reviewed the documents submitted by the Applicant at Deadlines 1 and 2. An update of Natural England's position regarding documents relevant to our remit is provided in Annex 1, including anticipated timing of responses. Natural England is also submitting the following detailed responses, signposted from Annex 1:

- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix A3 – NE Comments on the Draft Development Consent Order [REP1-012, REP2-008 and REP2-014] - Deadline 3.pdf
- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix B3 – Natural England's Marine Physical Processes Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 1 Documents – Deadline 3.pdf
- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix C3 – Natural England's Benthic Ecology Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 1 Documents – Deadline 3.pdf
- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix G3 – Natural England's Red Throated Diver Compensation Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 1 Documents – Deadline 3.pdf
- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix H3.1 – Natural England's Protected Species Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 1 Documents – Deadline 3.pdf
- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix H3.2 NE Comments on 7.15 Outline Horizontal Directional Drill Method Statement and Contingency Plan [REP1-038] - Deadline 3.pdf
- EN010119 501985 North Falls Appendix K3 – Natural England's Risk and Issues Log –

## **2. Updated Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)**

Natural England has reviewed the updated Development Consent Orders submitted at Deadline 1 and Deadline 2. We have noted that several minor changes have been made and have updated our Risks and Issues log Appendix K3 where these have progressed or addressed our concerns. Our Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) issue P1 has been resolved by changes to Schedules 8-10 Part 2 condition 26 (3) and (4), which now include the appropriate requirement to stop piling in the event during construction noise monitoring detects underwater noise levels significantly in excess of that assessed and approved.

## **3. Build Option 3: Offshore Electrical Connection Supplied by a Third Party [REP1-005]**

Natural England notes that [REP1-005] the consortium comprising North Falls, Five Estuaries and National Grid Energy Transmission (Sea Link) has issued a statement (Appendix E, REP1-005) supporting the Secretary of State's decision (Appendix D, REP1-005) not to continue funding for an offshore network coordination. We also note that the Applicant is retaining the offshore connection point within its project design envelope, and this is reflected in the draft DCO [REP2-008] which includes sufficient provisions to allow for Build Option 3. Although, the Applicant also states [REP1-005] that currently no third party is promoting a coordinated offshore cable option in collaboration with the North Falls proposed grid connection point. We highlight our earlier advice [RR-243] that an offshore grid connection represents the least environmentally impactful option (for marine physical processes, benthic ecology and potentially other receptors) as it would greatly reduce the need for offshore export cables to shore.

## **4. Margate and Long Sands Special Area of Conservation (MLS SAC) - Updated Condition Assessment (January 2025)**

Natural England has updated the [Margate and Longs Sand SAC condition assessment](#) (January 2025). This assessment has determined the site to be in unfavourable condition due to existing anthropogenic pressures on the designate site feature. In due course, the condition assessment will be used to update the conservation advice package including setting the Conservation Objective targets to restore. Natural England highlights that this is key context for current and future decision making, in particular in regard to in-combination assessments and ensuring that projects sufficiently employ the mitigation hierarchy to minimise impacts to avoid where possible materially contributing to any in-combination assessment and taking the site further away from its restore trajectory. Therefore, we welcome the ongoing efforts of the North Falls project in adopting mitigation measures and hope that our risk and issues in relation to MLS SAC can be resolved during examination.

For any queries relating to the content of this letter please contact me using the details provided below.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Sussex and Kent Area Team

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[REDACTED]

**Annex 1: Natural England's Response to the Applicant's Documents Submitted at Deadline X Relevant to our Remit**

<b>PINS Document Reference</b>	<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Natural England's Response/Position Summary</b>
<b>Deadline 1</b>		
REP1-001	Cover Letter	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP1-003	1.3 Guide to the Application (Revision 4) (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP1-005	2.5 Co-ordination Report (Rev 2) (Tracked)	Please refer to Section 3 of this cover letter.
REP1-007	2.6 Schedule of Mitigation (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendices B3 and C3.
REP1-012	6.1 Draft Development Consent Order (Rev 2) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix A3 to this Deadline 3 submission and Section 2 of this cover letter.
REP1-016	7.2.1 HRA Appendix 1 Compensatory Measures Overview (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-018	7.2.2 HRA Appendix 2 Lesser Black-backed Gull Compensation Document (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-020	7.2.2.1 HRA Annex 2A Outline LBBG Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-022	7.2.3 HRA Appendix Red Throated Diver Compensation Document (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix G3.
REP1-024	7.2.3.1 HRA Annex 3A Outline RTD Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix G3.
REP1-026	7.2.4.1 HRA Annex 4A Outline Kittiwake Compensation Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-028	7.2.5 HRA Appendix 5 Guillemot and Razorbill Compensation Document (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.

<b>PINS Document Reference</b>	<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Natural England's Response/Position Summary</b>
REP1-030	7.2.5.1 HRA Annex 5A Outline Guillemot and Razorbill Implementation and Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-034	7.13 Outline Code of Construction Practice (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP1-036	7.14 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix H3.1.
REP1-038	7.15 Outline HDD Method Statement and Contingency Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix H3.2.
REP1-042	7.30 Schedule of Changes to the draft DCO (Rev 1)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix A3 to this Deadline 3 submission and Section 2 of this cover letter.
REP1-044	9.1 Applicant's Response to Relevant Reps from NE	Natural England's response to this document has been provided in updates to Appendix K3 Risk and issues Log to this Deadline 3 submission.
REP1-045	9.2 Applicant's Response to Rel Reps from Statutory Consultees and Non-Prescribed Consultees	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP1-046	9.3 Applicant's Response to Rel Reps from LAs and Parish Councils	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP1-050	9.7 BNG Strategy Technical Note	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-051	9.8 Applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions at the Open Floor Hearing (OFH1)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP1-056	9.13 HRA Shadow AA for Guillemot at the Farne Islands SPA	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-057	9.14 Further Information Regarding Marine Mammals	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP1-058	9.15 HRA Update to Breeding Season Apportioning of LBBG at AOE	Natural England will provide a response on this

<b>PINS Document Reference</b>	<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Natural England's Response/Position Summary</b>
	SPA	document at Deadline 4.
REP1-059	9.17 Export Cable Crossing Zone Plan	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix B3 to this Deadline 3 submission.
<b>Deadline 2</b>		
REP2-001	Cover Letter	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP2-003	1.3 Guide to the Application (Rev 5) (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP2-006	5.8 Offshore Order Limits and Boundary Coordinates (Rev 1)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP2-008	6.1 Draft DCO (Rev 3) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix A3 to this Deadline 3 submission and Section 2 of this cover letter.
REP2-010	6.3 Book of Reference (Rev 3) (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP2-012	7.2.4 Appendix 4 Kittiwake Compensation Document (Rev 1) (Tracked)	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP2-013	7.30 Schedule of Changes to the dDCO (Rev 2)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix A3 to this Deadline 3 submission and Section 2 of this cover letter.
REP2-019	9.12 Schedule of Changes to the Book of Reference (Rev 1)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
REP2-020	9.19 Applicant's Response to Written Questions (ExQ1) (Rev 0)	Natural England reserves the right to provide comment on this document at a later stage.
REP2-021	9.19.1 Appendix to Applicant's Response to Written Questions (Rev 0)	Natural England reserves the right to provide comment on this document at a later stage.

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
REP2-022	9.20 Applicant's Comments on other Deadline 1 Submissions (Rev 0)	Natural England reserves the right to provide comment on this document at a later stage.
REP2-024	9.22 Applicant's response to NE's SLVIA Rel Reps (submitted at DL1_	Natural England will provide a response on this document at Deadline 4.
REP2-025	9.23 FSA Removal of the Galloper Recommended Ferry Route (Rev 0)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.