



NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm

Statement of Common Ground

(Tracked)

Forestry Commission

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0	March 2025	Final	RHDHV	NFOW	NFOW
1	March 2025	Final (Deadline 3)	RHDHV	NFOW	NFOW

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Glossary of Acronyms

DCO	Development Consent Order
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drill
NFOW	North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited
OLEMS	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground

Glossary of Terminology

The Applicant	North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited (NFOW).
The Project or 'North Falls'	North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, including all onshore and offshore infrastructure.
National Grid connection point	The grid connection location for the Project. National Grid are proposing to construct new electrical infrastructure (a new substation) to allow the Project to connect to the grid, and this new infrastructure will be located at the National Grid connection point.
Horizontal directional drill	Trenchless technique to bring the offshore cables ashore at the landfall. The technique will also be used for installation of the onshore export cables at sensitive areas of the onshore cable route.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited (NFOW) (the Applicant) and Forestry Commission. It identifies areas of North Falls Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter 'the Project' or 'North Falls') where matters are agreed, not agreed or that remain under discussion between the parties.
2. The Applicant has had regard to the Planning Inspectorate (2024) guidance regarding Statements of Common/Uncommon Ground for Hearings and Inquiries when compiling the SoCG.
3. This SoCG has been structured to reflect topics of the application which are of interest to Forestry Commission. The applicable matters considered within the SoCG apply to Forestry Commission's statutory and non-statutory remit.
4. Table 1.1 presents the topics included in the SoCG with the Applicant and Forestry Commission.

Table 1.1 Topics included in the SoCG

Topic/Chapter	DCO Document Reference
Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy	APP-249

5. Topic specific matters agreed, not agreed, and matters that remain under discussion between the Applicant and Forestry Commission are included within this SoCG. Matters that are not yet agreed will be the subject of ongoing discussion between the Applicant and Forestry Commission to reach agreement on each matter wherever possible or refine the extent of disagreement between parties.
6. Throughout the SoCG the phrase "Agreed" identifies any point of agreement between the Applicant and Forestry Commission. The phrase "Not Agreed" identifies any point that is not agreed between the Applicant and Forestry Commission.

1.2 Consultation with the Forestry Commission

7. The Applicant has engaged with Forestry Commission on the project during the pre-Application process, both in terms of informal non-statutory engagement and formal consultation carried out pursuant Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.
8. During statutory (Section 42) consultation, Forestry Commission provided comments on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) by way of letter dated 7th June 2023.
9. During the post-Application process, Forestry Commission provided a Relevant Representation on 15th October 2024.

1.3 Summary of Agreed, Not Agreed and In Discussion

10. In order to easily identify whether a matter is 'agreed', 'not agreed', or 'in discussion' the position status colour coding system set out in Table 1.2 is used in the SoCG.
11. Details of specific topics that are 'agreed', 'not agreed', or 'in discussion' between the Applicant and Forestry Commission are presented in Table 2.2

Table 1.2 Position status key

Position Status	Position Colour Coding
Agreed The matter is considered to be agreed between the parties.	Agreed
Not Agreed- no material impact The matter is not yet agreed between the parties however the outcome of the approach taken by either the Applicant and Forestry Commission is not considered to result in a material impact to the assessment conclusions and the matter is considered to be closed for the purposes of this SoCG. Discussion on these matters have concluded.	Not Agreed- no material impact
Not Agreed- material impact The matter is not agreed between the parties and the outcome of the approach taken by either the Applicant and Forestry Commission is considered to result in a materially different impact to the assessment conclusions. Discussions on these matters have concluded.	Not Agreed- material impact
In discussion The matter is neither 'agreed' nor 'not agreed' and is a matter where further discussion is required between the parties (e.g. where the documents are yet to be shared with the Forestry Commission).	In discussion

2 Statement of Common Ground

12. A summary of the consultation undertaken to date with Forestry Commission and the matters agreed or not agreed between the Applicant and Forestry Commission (based on discussions and information exchanged between the Applicant and Forestry Commission during the pre-application, pre-examination and Examination phases phase of the Application) is set out below.

2.1 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy

Table 2.1 Summary of Consultation with Forestry Commission regarding the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy

Date	Contact Type	Topic
Post-Application		
15 th October 2024	Relevant Representation	Forestry Commission response to the relevant representation consultation.
<u>10th March 2025</u>	<u>Virtual meeting</u>	<u>Discussion regarding the points outstanding in the SoCG</u>

Table 2.2 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy

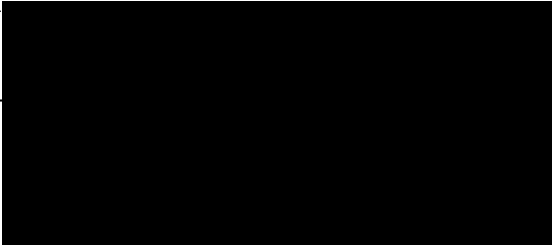
ID	The Applicants Position	Forestry Commission Position	Position Summary
1	The Applicant has sought to avoid direct effects upon woodland through the use of trenchless techniques (e.g. HDD).	We note that it is planned that potential woodland loss will be avoided by the use of trenchless HDD crossing techniques and that appropriate buffers and protection measures will be employed.	Agreed
2	Section 3.6 of the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy (OLEMS) [APP-249] details the Outline Landscape Strategy for the project. Further detail on the species and specification of planting and seeding will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, post consent. Reference will be made to the Essex County Council Tree Palette and Forestry Research guide to climate resilient species. Locally important and native species will be used, as advised by Essex Wildlife Trust. The Applicant is not proposing to undertake any woodland removal within the proposed National Grid connection point; this is the location for connection work into pre-constructed infrastructure construction by National Grid Electricity Transmission only.	It should be noted there is also a 1.28ha area of woodland within the area marked for the Project's National Grid Connection Point that was either established or managed with the support of public money from the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS). (Approx location: TM 0756 2924) This grant is still in obligation. The landowner is expected to meet all the Terms and Conditions of the agreement contract. Failure to do so would likely require the Forestry Commission to seek to recover all of the relevant grant that has been paid for that area.	In discussion Agreed
3	Section 3.10.2.1 of the OLEMS [APP-249] recognises that future management beyond the 10-year management period	We understand this area will include further woodland planting, with maintenance being secured for a period of 10 years.	Agreed

ID	The Applicants Position	Forestry Commission Position	Position Summary
	will be required. This is proposed to be in the form of regular inspections (at least annually) to identify any signs of diseased trees, dangerous limbs or rot requiring removal.		
4	Section 3.8 of the OLEMS [APP-249] details the project's Landscape Strategy Principles, which consider the proposed habitats within a broader landscape setting. Section 5.5 of the Design Vision [APP-234] sets out the outline landscape strategy for the site, considering the existing landscape features (Section 5.5.4) within and surrounding the site. These typically include woodland belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The Outline Landscape Mitigation Plan (Section 5.5.10) shows how new planting of woodland shelter belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees will interconnect with perimeter features. <u>The Applicant intends to update the OLEMS [APP-249] to include the measures recommended by the Forestry Commission regarding tree planting. Additionally, the OLEMS [APP-249] will be updated to include consideration of measures to control squirrel and deer</u>	Hedgerows, individual trees and woodlands within a development site should also be considered in terms of their overall connectivity between woodlands affected by the development. Perhaps with the creation of some larger woodland blocks and hedgerow/hedgerow trees possibly between the existing woodland blocks on site, to ensure maximum gains to increase habitat connectivity and benefit biodiversity across the whole site, not solely in specific areas just to be used as screening. With the Government aspiration to increase tree and canopy cover to 16.5% of land area in England by 2050. The Forestry Commission is seeking to ensure that tree planting is a consideration in every development. However, there are a number of issues that need to be considered when proposing significant planting schemes: • Biosecurity of all planting stock needs to be considered. • Woodlands need to be climate, pest and disease resilient.	In discussion Agreed

ID	The Applicants Position	Forestry Commission Position	Position Summary
	<u>browsing in new woodland planting, where appropriate.</u>	• Maximise the ecosystem services benefits of all new woodland wherever possible (flood reduction) • Planting contributes to a 'resilient treescape' by maximising connectivity across the landscape. • Plans are in place to ensure long term management and maintenance of all new woodland. • Woodland management plans should be UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) compliant.	

3 Signatures

13. The above SoCG is agreed between the Applicant and the Forestry Commission on the day specified below.

Signed: _____		_____
Print Name: _____		_____
Job Title: _____	Local Partnership Advisor	_____
Date: _____	18 th February 2025	_____
Duly authorised for and on behalf of the Forestry Commission		

Signed: _____	Cormac Rooney	_____
Print Name: _____	Cormac Rooney	_____
Job Title: _____	Onshore Consents Manager	_____
Date: _____	20/02/2025	_____
Duly authorised for and on behalf of North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited		



NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm



HARNESSING THE POWER OF NORTH SEA WIND

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited

A joint venture company owned equally by SSE Renewables and RWE.

To contact please email contact@northfallsoffshore.com

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