



THE PLANNING ACT 2008

THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES
2010

NORTH FALLS OFFSHORE WIND FARM

Appendix I4 to the Natural England Deadline 4 Submission
Natural England's SLVIA Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 2 and 3 Document

For:

The construction and operation of North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, located approximately 40 km from the East Anglia Coast in the Southern North Sea.

Planning Inspectorate Reference EN010119

25 April 2025

Appendix I4 - Natural England's SLVIA advice on the Applicant's Deadline 2 and 3 Documents

In formulating these comments, the following documents have been considered:

- [REP2-024] 9.22 Applicant's response to NE's SLVIA Rel Reps (submitted at DL1)
- [REP3-044] 9.33 Assessment of the Special Qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape and Suffolk Heritage Coast - Technical Note (Rev 0)

Detailed Comments

1. [REP2-024] 9.22 Applicant's response to NE's SLVIA Rel Reps (submitted at DL1)

- **REP2-024** does not contain new information requiring further detailed Natural England comment. Minor comments on the contents on REP2-024 are as follows:
 - REP2-024 refers to a new technical document, REP3-044, submitted at Deadline 3 (DL3), which contains an Assessment of the Special Qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape (SECHNL) and Suffolk Heritage Coast (SHC). Natural England's comments on REP3-044 are provided in point 2 below.
 - Natural England note the Applicant's response to issue I7, that *"the inclusion of any other measures specifically to further the purposes of the SECHNL would not be considered reasonable, proportionate or appropriate, in the context of concluding no significant effects on the special qualities of the SECHNL from the Project."* Natural England do not agree with this conclusion and our key concerns remain as summarised in issue I2 of the Natural England's Relevant Representations (RR).
 - Natural England note the Applicant's responses to issues I8, I10, I11 and confirm there is no change in our advice provided in Natural England RR.
 - For issue I9, Natural England would like to provide a note of clarification. Natural England's advice for I9 does relate to the Applicant's judgements made on impacts to visual receptors (people) at Orford Ness. With this clarification, Natural England's comments for I9 remain unchanged (that the sensitivity of receptors at Orford Ness is high) and Natural England do not accept the Applicant's rationale regarding where the attention of receptors at Orford Ness will be focussed.

2. [REP3-044] 9.33 Assessment of the Special Qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape and Suffolk Heritage Coast - Technical Note (Rev 0)

- Natural England's comments on **REP3-044**, Assessment of the Special Qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape and Suffolk Heritage Coast, are as follows:
 - Natural England welcome the submission of REP3-044, which directly provides the further information Natural England requested in issues I5 and I6 of the Natural England RR.

- The submission of Table 4 Potential Effects on Each of the Selected Special Qualities of the SECHNL is welcomed. For each special quality listed, the scale of effect is reported and the magnitude of change to these special qualities is stated as low. We note the Applicant's conclusion that *"the project will give rise to moderate-minor (not significant) effects on the Scenic Quality and Relative Wildness aspects of the natural beauty of the SECHNL"*. Based on this assessment:
 - Natural England agrees with the Applicant's assessment that special qualities relating to landscape quality, scenic quality and relative wildness special qualities have the potential to be influenced by the project.
 - **Natural England disagrees with the judgements applied.** Please see Table 1 for examples of how these special qualities could be impacted by the project.
- Natural England welcome the Applicant's assessment of impacts to the SHC in Table 5. Upon review of this information, Natural England do not change our advice on the significance of impacts to the Landscape Character Types identified in Table 3 of our Natural England RR, for the reasons stated in that submission.
- For issue I12 Natural England welcomes the Applicant's updated position on the significance of cumulative effects on Landscape Designations. **Natural England note that the Applicant now concludes that *"total cumulative effects on the special qualities of the SECHNL and the special character of the SHC may be significant"*.** This updates the Applicant's previous judgement described in Table 29.39 of the SLVIA stating that *"the cumulative effect is predicted to be moderate-minor, which is not significant in EIA terms"*. Natural England advice on cumulative effects remains unchanged.

Table 1: Examples to justify Natural England’s advice that the special qualities relating to landscape quality, scenic quality and relative wildness of the SECHNL have the potential to be influenced by the project. Natural England’s advice in Table 1 is provided in response to the Applicant’s information provided within Table 4 of REP3-044.

Special Quality (overarching landscape element in grey)	Applicant judgement on scale of effect within REP3-044	The Applicant’s judgement on significance of effect in EIA terms, as indicated in REP3-044	Natural England advice on significance of effect in EIA terms.
Landscape Quality			
Offshore wind turbines at Greater Gabbard, Galloper and the more distant London Array are visible from some stretches of the coastline. These create a cluttered horizon and, like the large scale elements onshore, also divide opinion.	Small	Not significant	<p>Disagree – moderate (significant).</p> <p>See Natural England advice on the impact of the current Environmental Statement (ES) design in I12. Natural England advise that the North Falls array will be visible from some stretches of coastline and will contribute to the cluttered horizon.</p> <p>Please refer to Table 3 in Natural England RR, where Natural England judgements on the significance of effects on landscape character are described.</p>
Scenic Quality			
Extensive shingle beaches and shallow bays provide opportunities for long distance and panoramic views including out to sea and along the Heritage Coast. Views to coastal landform also possible from locations offshore.	Medium	Moderate-minor (not significant)	<p>Disagree - major adverse (significant) from select viewpoints.</p> <p>Natural England advise that the sensitivity of receptors at Orford Ness is high, see Natural England issue I9. As described in Natural England issue I2, one of Natural England’s key concerns is the significance of visual effects, particularly between Orford Ness and Bawdsey Manor.</p>
Elevated vantage points provide impressive views over low lying coastal marshes, estuaries, beaches and	Medium	Moderate-minor (not significant)	<p>Disagree – major adverse (significant) from select viewpoints.</p>

expansive long distance views out to sea. Views to the coastline from out at sea are also noted.			Please refer to Table 3 in Natural England RR, where Natural England judgements on the significance of visual effects are described.
Relative Wildness			
Largely undeveloped coastline and offshore areas and areas of semi-natural habitat including Sandlings Heath, forests, reedbeds, estuaries and marshland.	Medium	Moderate-minor (not significant)	<p>Disagree – moderate (significant).</p> <p>See Natural England advice on the impact of the current ES design in I12. Natural England advise that the North Falls array will be visible from some stretches of coastline and will contribute to the industrialisation of views from the SECHNL.</p>