



NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm

Statement of Common Ground

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

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Glossary of Acronyms

ALARP	As Low As Reasonably Practicable
DCO	Development Consent Order
dML	deemed Marine Licence
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
DWR	Deep Water Route
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MGN	Marine Guidance Note
NFOW	North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited
NIP	Navigation and Installation Plan
NRA	Navigational Risk Assessment
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground

Glossary of Terminology

Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA)	A document which assesses the hazards to shipping and navigation of a proposed Offshore Renewable Energy Installation (OREI) based upon the FSA.
Offshore cable corridor	The corridor of seabed from array area to the landfall within which the offshore export cables will be located.
Offshore export cables	The cables which bring electricity from the offshore substation platform(s) to the landfall, as well as auxiliary cables.
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.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by North Falls Offshore Wind Farm (NFOW) (the Applicant) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). 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 MCA. The applicable matters considered within the SoCG apply to MCA statutory and non-statutory remit.
4. Table 1.1 presents the topics included in the SoCG with the Applicant and MCA.

Table 1.1 Topics and Relevant Documents included in the SoCG

Topic/Chapter	DCO Document Reference
Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 15 Shipping and Navigation	APP-029; APP-029
ES Chapter 15 Shipping and Navigation Figures	APP-060
ES Appendix 15.1 Navigation Risk Assessment Parts 1 - 3	APP-106; APP-107; APP-108
Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)	AS-022

5. Topic specific matters agreed, not agreed, and matters that remain under discussion between the Applicant and MCA are included within this SoCG. Matters that are not yet agreed will be the subject of ongoing discussion between the Applicant and MCA to reach agreement on each matter whatever possible or refine the extent of disagreement between parties.

1.2 Consultation with MCA

6. The Applicant has engaged with MCA 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.
7. During formal (Section 42) consultation, MCA provided comments on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) by way of letter dated 14th July 2023.

8. Further to the statutory consultation, several meetings were held with MCA through the pre-application process (Table 1.2). These are detailed throughout the SoCG, Consultation Report (**Document reference: APP-215**) and minutes of the meetings.

Table 1.2 Summary of Consultation with MCA regarding Shipping and Navigation.

Date	Contact Type	Topic
Pre-Application		
August 2021	Scoping response	Scoping opinion responses provided by the MCA.
28 th April 2021	Meeting	Meeting to discuss Project updates.
11 th November 2021	Meeting	Meeting to discuss vessel traffic survey strategy.
9 th June 2022	Meeting	Meeting to discuss Project boundaries.
7 th July 2022	Meeting	Update provided to the Sunk Users Group.
14 th July 2023	PEIR response	Section 42 responses provided by MCA
24 th August 2023	Meeting	Meeting to discuss updates to the Project following PEIR responses.
30 th September 2023	Meeting	Meeting between the Applicant, MCA and the Belgian Maritime Authority.
12 th October 2023	Hazard Workshop	Meeting to review the Navigation Risk Assessment (NRA).
17 th January 2024	Meeting	Update provided to the Sunk Users Group.
5 th March 2024	Meeting	Meeting to discuss the distance of infrastructure from local routing measures.
27 th June 2024	Meeting	Meeting to discuss key considerations identified through the NRA process and the implementation of a Structure Exclusion Zone (SEZ).
9 th September 2024	Meeting	Meeting between the Applicant, MCA and the Belgian Maritime Authority.
15 th January 2025	Meeting	Update provided to the Sunk Users Group.
14 th May 2025	Meeting	Pre D5 Catch Up
26 th June 2025	Meeting	Pre D7 Catch Up

1.3 Summary of Agreed, Not Agreed and In Discussion

9. 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 1.3 is used in the SoCG.
10. Details of specific topics that are 'agreed', 'not agreed', or 'in discussion' between the Applicant and MCA are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 1.3 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 MCA 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 MCA 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 MCA.	In discussion

2. Statement of Common Ground

11. A summary of the consultation undertaken to date with MCA and the matters agreed or not agreed between the Applicant and MCA (based on discussions and information exchanged between the Applicant and MCA during the pre-application phase of the Application) are set out below for each of the SoCG topic areas.

2.1 Shipping and Navigation

Table 2.1 Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed in relation to Shipping and Navigation

ID	The Applicant Position	Maritime and Coastguard Agency Position	Position Summary
NRA and EIA – Baseline Environment and Data			
1	Vessel Traffic Surveys The vessel traffic surveys were conducted in accordance with Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 654 (Maritime and Coastguard Agency, 2021) and therefore are suitable for assessment.	Agreed	Agreed
2	Secondary Data Sources Other supporting data sources as detailed within the NRA (APP-106; APP-107; and APP-108) adequately inform the shipping and navigation baseline.	Agreed	Agreed
3	Baseline Environment The data presented within the NRA (APP-106; APP-107; and APP-108) and Environmental Statement (ES) Shipping and Navigation Chapter (APP-029) adequately identifies shipping and navigation baseline including main routes operating within the area.	Agreed	Agreed
NRA and EIA - Assessment Methodology			
4	NRA and EIA Methodology The assessment has been undertaken in line with relevant shipping and navigation legislation and guidance including being compliant with MGN 654 requirements.	Agreed	Agreed

ID	The Applicant Position	Maritime and Coastguard Agency Position	Position Summary
5	Future Case Methodology The approach to the assessment of impacts is deemed appropriate for the purposes of predicting changes to the baseline environment.	Agreed	Agreed
6	Worst Case Worst case scenarios for shipping were identified in the NRA (APP-106; APP-107; and APP-108) and ES Shipping and Navigation Chapter (APP-029) and have been assessed.	Agreed	Agreed
Consultation			
7a	The MCA has been adequately consulted regarding shipping and navigation to date.	Agreed	Agreed
7b	MCA concerns raised during consultation around proximity to the Sunk TSS and Outer Precautionary Area have been mitigated including through the implementation of a Structure Exclusion Zone (SEZ).	Agreed	Agreed
EIA – Impact Assessment Conclusions			
8	Hazard (Impact) Identification The hazards (impacts) identified within the hazard log adequately capture the potential effects on shipping and navigation that may result from the Project.	On the understanding this means that the hazard log is adequate then it can be agreed.	Agreed
9	Risk Level (Impact Significance) of the Array Area - Project in isolation and Cumulative Based on the information provided within NRA (APP-106; APP-107; and APP-108) and the ES Shipping and Navigation Chapter (APP-029) it is agreed that in isolation and cumulative hazards (impacts), including main route	Agreed	Agreed

ID	The Applicant Position	Maritime and Coastguard Agency Position	Position Summary
	<p>deviations to baseline* traffic caused by the project and impacts on search & rescue, are unlikely to be significant with the mitigation measure and monitoring detailed in place. This includes implementation of the Structure Exclusion Zone (SEZ) which will allow for a minimum 1NM distance between the Sunk routeing measures and the turbines (blade tips).</p> <p>It is acknowledged that are open discussions with local ports in relation to the export cable corridor, and matters of disagreement with the MCA on the timing of the removal process for the Galloper Recommended Ferry Route. These items are covered under separate rows.</p> <p>* Ferries that would have been historically operating between Ostend and Harwich/Ipswich via the Galloper Recommended Ferry Route are not considered part of the baseline given the ferry route has not been active since 2009, and there are no known plans to re-activate it. .</p>		
10	<p>Risk Level (Impact Significance) Export Cable Corridor - Project in isolation and Cumulative</p> <p>The Applicant recognises the importance of maintaining vessel access to key local ports via the DW routes in the area, together with appropriate cable burial and consideration of the potential for increases in vessel draught in the future. The Applicant has set out its proposals for areas of deeper burial to facilitate this at</p>	Agreed	Agreed

ID	The Applicant Position	Maritime and Coastguard Agency Position	Position Summary
	Deadline 6, and is confident of reaching agreement on the technical content of the relevant plans with the ports by the end of examination, noting the areas and depths proposed are as per those requested by the ports.		
Draft DCO / Mitigation and Monitoring			
11	The wording of DCO/dML conditions relevant to MCA is appropriate, other than 11(a) as set out below.	Agreed	Agreed
11(a)	<p>With regards to the removal of the Galloper Recommended Ferry Route, the Applicant does not consider it necessary for a specific condition to be put in place given there is already provision within the DCO for layout approval through the MMO in consultation with the MCA.</p> <p>However, the Applicant will reluctantly accept inclusion of a condition to allow for the IMO application process to progress.</p>	<p>In Discussion. MCA's position is that a condition is necessary and it must be secured in the DCO. The two processes for removing the Galloper RR and layout approval are mutually exclusive.</p> <p>The MCA has provided suggested edits to the Applicant on sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) of their without prejudice condition submission [Additional Submission - 9.96]. MCA will submit full comments at D7. It is unacceptable to include a time clause for receiving IMO approval and sub-paragraph (5) is not agreed.</p>	In Discussion
Galloper Recommended Ferry Route			
12	The data analysis and consultation undertaken to date shows that the route is not being used for its originally intended purpose i.e., by ferries operating between Ostend and Harwich/Ipswich using the Sunk routing	Agreed	

ID	The Applicant Position	Maritime and Coastguard Agency Position	Position Summary
	measures. Current usage by commercial vessels (cargo, passenger, tankers) and recreation craft is low.		
13	The Applicant has demonstrated that should the historic ferry route from Ostend ever be reestablished for a new market there are safe and viable alternative routeing options. Future routes from Ostend may potentially be to other UK ports.	Agreed	Agreed
14	The removal of the Galloper Recommended Ferry Route will be raised at the 2025 Autumn UKSON session,	This is subject to agreement of the DCO condition to remove the Galloper RR.	In Discussion
15	<p>Confirmation has been received from the Belgian Maritime Authority (Directorate General of Shipping) that they are content with the assessment that North Falls have provided, and as such the Applicant's position is that the process for the removal of the Galloper Recommended Ferry Route should proceed immediately. The Applicant can support the MCA on the application via provision of data analysis and risk assessment. Delay in submitting the application to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) would mean that that the development of a consented North Falls could be unnecessarily withheld.</p> <p>The North Falls position is therefore that the proposal should be made to the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue</p>	<p>MCA will propose the formal removal of the Galloper Route to IMO only if North Falls receives consent. MCA is not prepared to submit a proposal to IMO without the guarantee of consent.</p> <p>The earliest NCSR session the proposal can be submitted is 2027. The deadline to submit proposals for NCSR 2026 is December 2025 which is before the expected consent decision in Q1 2026. Therefore it is not possible to submit for NSCR 2026 and a proposal must wait to submit in December 2026 for NCSR 2027. This has not changed from our Deadline 4 response following ISH2.</p>	Not Agreed

ID	The Applicant Position	Maritime and Coastguard Agency	Position Summary
	(NCSR) in 2026, noting as above (Item 11a) they will reluctantly accept a DCO condition.		

3. Signatures

12. The above SoCG is agreed between the Applicant and Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the day specified below.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Duly authorised for and on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Duly authorised for and on behalf of North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd

4. References

MCA (2021). Marine Guidance Note 654 (Merchant and Fishing) safety of Navigation: offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREIs) – Guidance on UK Navigational Practice, Safety and Emergency Response. Southampton: MCA.
Planning Inspectorate (2024) Statements of Common/Uncommon Ground for Hearings and Inquiries. Available at: Statements of Common/Uncommon Ground for Hearings and Inquiries - GOV.UK



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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