



NORTH FALLS

*Offshore Wind Farm*

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## Statement of Common Ground

National Federation of Fishermen's  
Organisations

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## Glossary of Acronyms

EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
NFFO	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
NFOW	North Falls Offshore Windfarm
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Impact Report
RR	Relevant Representations
SoCG	Statement of Common <del>Ground</del> <u>Grounds</u>

## 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.

# 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 National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO). 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 NFFO.
4. ~~Table 1.1~~ **Table 1.1** presents the topics included in the SoCG with the Applicant and NFFO.

**Table 1.1 Topics included in the SoCG**

Topic/Chapter	DCO Document Reference
<u>Commercial Fisheries</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries</li><li>• ES Chapter 14 Figures</li><li>• ES Appendix 14.1 Commercial Fisheries Technical Report</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• APP-028</li><li>• APP-059</li><li>• APP-105</li></ul>
<u>Fish and Shellfish Ecology:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ES Chapter 11 Fish and Shellfish Ecology</li><li>• ES Chapter 11 Figures</li><li>• ES Appendix 11.1 Fish and Shellfish Ecology Technical Report</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• APP-025</li><li>• APP-056</li><li>• APP-095</li></ul>

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

## 1.2 Consultation with NFFO

7. The Applicant has engaged with NFFO 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 (Statutory Consultation).

8. During Statutory Consultation, NFFO provided comments on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) by way of letter provided on 14th July 2023.
9. Further to the Statutory Consultation, several meetings were held with NFFO throughout the pre-application process. These are detailed throughout the SoCG, Consultation Report (Document reference: APP-215) and minutes of the meetings.

### 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 NFFO are presented in [Table 2.3](#).

**Table 1.2 Position status key**

Position Status	Position Colour Coding
<b>Agreed.</b> The matter is considered to be agreed between the parties.	<b>Agreed</b>
<b>Not Agreed- no material impact</b> The matter is not yet agreed between the parties however the outcome of the approach taken by either the Applicant and NFFO 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.	<b>Not Agreed- no material impact</b>
<b>Not Agreed- material impact</b> The matter is not agreed between the parties and the outcome of the approach taken by either the Applicant and NFFO is considered to result in a materially different impact to the assessment conclusions. Discussions on these matters have concluded.	<b>Not Agreed- material impact</b>
<b>In discussion</b> 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 NFFO).	<b>In discussion</b>
<b>Agreed with caveats - no material impact</b> The matter is considered to be agreed between the parties with caveats.	<b>Agreed with Caveats</b>

## 2. Statement of Common Ground

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

### 2.1 Consultation with NFFO

13. The Applicant engaged with NFFO on the Project during the pre-application process, both in terms of informal non-statutory engagement and formal Statutory Consultation.

14. The consultation carried out is summarised in [Table 2.1](#)~~Table 2.4~~. As shown, during Statutory Consultation, NFFO provided comments on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) by way of letter provided on 14th July 2023. Further to the Statutory Consultation, several meetings were held with NFFO during the pre-application process.

**Table 2.1 Pre-Application Consultation Summary**

Date	Meeting/Communication	Details
25/10/2022	Call	Phone communication to offer meeting between the Applicant and NFFO
02/11/2022	Email and call	Email and phone communication to offer meeting between the Applicant and NFFO
03/11/2022	Email	Email communication to offer meeting between the Applicant and NFFO
16/05/2023	Email	Invitation to Statutory Consultation event
14/07/2023	Letter	NFFO comments to the PEIR

15. Following the submission of the application the NFFO and the Applicant have continued to engage. The consultation carried out to date during this period is summarised in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 Post-Application Consultation Summary**

Date	Meeting/Communication	Details
18/10/2024	Letter	NFFO submitted a Relevant Representation (RR) on 18/10/2024 (RR-238) outlining their key concerns with regards to the Project.
07/01/2025	Meeting	Meeting with NFFO to discuss the feedback provided in their relevant representation (RR-



Date	Meeting/Communication	Details
		238) and to agree on a suitable approach to allow the development of a SoCG.
16/06/2025	Meeting	Meeting with the NFFO to discuss their positions on the SoCG.
<u>21/07/2025</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Meeting with the NFFO to discuss the Outline FLCP and finalise positions on the SoCG.</u>

**Table 2.3 Commercial Fisheries -Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed**

ID	The Applicant Position	NFFO Position	Position Summary
<b>Commercial Fisheries Baseline</b>			
1	Sufficient data has been collated to appropriately characterise the commercial fisheries baseline environment for the purposes of informing the EIA (Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028].	The NFFO are content that appropriate data, where available, was used to inform the EIA.	Agreed
<b>Impact Assessment Methodology</b>			
<del>32</del>	The impact assessment methodology used in Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] is appropriate.	The NFFO are not content with the assessment methodology used to inform Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028].	Not agreed – no material impact
<b>Assessment of Project Alone Impacts</b>			
<del>43</del>	The realistic worst-case scenarios presented in Table 14.3 of Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] are suitable for the assessment of impacts on commercial fishing.	The NFFO are content that the realistic worst-case scenarios presented in Table 14.3 of Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] are suitable for the assessment of impacts on commercial fishing.	Agreed
<del>54</del>	The conclusions of the impact assessment for construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning presented in section 14.6 of Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] are appropriate	The NFFO do not consider- that the Project Alone assessment sufficiently assesses the socioeconomic impacts on commercial fisheries, and are therefore not content with the conclusions reached in the assessment of the Project alone.	Not agreed – no material impact
<b>Cumulative Assessment</b>			
<del>65</del>	The methodology used for assessment of cumulative of impacts on commercial fisheries is considered appropriate. This is in line with that used for assessment of Project-Alone impacts.	The NFFO are not content with the methodology used for the Project Alone and therefore are also not content with the methodology that underpins the cumulative impact assessment.	Not agreed – no material impact

ID	The Applicant Position	NFFO Position	Position Summary
<del>76</del>	As listed in Table 14.6, the cumulative assessment presented in Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] gives consideration to a comprehensive range of projects and activities at various development stages as well as Marine Protected Area (MPAs).	The NFFO are content that the cumulative assessment gives consideration to a comprehensive range of projects and activities at various development stages as well as Marine Protected Area (MPAs).	Agreed
<del>87</del>	The conclusions of the cumulative impact assessment presented in section 14.7.3 of Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] are appropriate. Given the location and characteristics of the Project, it is the Applicant's view that it will not result in a significant contribution to cumulative impacts to commercial fisheries in the region.	The NFFO are not content with the methodology taken to the Cumulative Impact Assessment and therefore are not content with the conclusions assessed.  The Inner and Outer Thames Region has undergone, and continues to face, extensive spatial restrictions and there are specific concerns that the region has reached an over-saturated state, and this is having an ever, increasing effect on the regional and wider fishing industry.	Not Agreed – no material impact
<b>Mitigation</b>			
<del>98</del>	Given the impacts of the Project, the embedded mitigation outlined in Table 14.4 Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] are appropriate.	The NFFO are content that <u>the majority of</u> the embedded mitigation outlined in Table 14.4 Chapter 14 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028] are appropriate.	Agreed
<b>Outline Fisheries Liaison and Coexistence Plan</b>			
<del>109</del>	The measures outlined in the Outline Fisheries Liaison and Coexistence Plan [APP-244] are appropriate for liaison and consultation with the fishing industry throughout the lifetime of the Project.	<del>NFFO to comment/provide specific input.</del> <u>The NFFO are content that the measures outlined in the Outline Fisheries Liaison and Coexistence Plan [APP-244] are appropriate for liaison and consultation and will continue to be developed post-consent.</u>	<del>In discussion</del> <u>Agreed</u>

ID	The Applicant Position	NFFO Position	Position Summary
10	<u>The Applicant's commitment to burying offshore export cables where practicable to a target minimum burial depth of 0.6m is sufficient for minimising potential interactions between fishing gear and cables.</u>	<u>The NFFO is not content that a target minimum burial depth of 0.6m is sufficient for minimising potential interactions between fishing gear and cables.</u>	Not agreed – Material impact

**Table 2.4 Fish and Shellfish Ecology -Topics agreed, in discussion or not agreed**

ID	The Applicant Position	NFFO Position	Position Summary
<b>Fish and Shellfish Ecology Baseline</b>			
1	Sufficient data has been collated to appropriately characterise the baseline environment for the purposes of informing the EIA (see Section 11.4.2 of Chapter 11 Fish and Shellfish Ecology [APP-025] and Appendix 11.1 Fish and Shellfish Ecology Technical Report [APP- 147]. The Applicant notes that sources of data and information used to inform the fish and shellfish ecology baseline were discussed as part of the Evidence Plan Process (EPP) with the Seabed Expert Working Group (20/06/2022). As part of these discussions, it was agreed that existing available data was suitable and there was no need to collect additional or more contemporary fish and shellfish ecology data to inform the assessment.	The NFFO are not content with the baseline data used to inform the fish and shellfish ecology baseline. Specifically, the NFFO are concerned over the lack of contemporary and site-specific and population-level data for key stocks included in the assessment.	Not agreed – no material impact
<b>Impact Assessment Methodology</b>			
2	The potential impacts identified and assessed, and the methodology used for assessment in Chapter 11 Fish and Shellfish Ecology [APP-025] is appropriate.	The NFFO is content with the methodology used and potential impacts identified and assessed.	Agreed
3	The realistic worst-case scenarios presented in Table 11.2 of Chapter 11 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028]	The NFFO are content that the realistic worst-case scenarios presented in Table 11.2 of Chapter 11 Commercial Fisheries [APP-028]	Agreed

ID	The Applicant Position	NFFO Position	Position Summary
	are suitable for the assessment of impacts on fish and shellfish ecology.	are suitable for the assessment of impacts on fish and shellfish ecology.	
<b>Assessment of Impacts</b>			
4	The conclusions of the impact assessment for the project alone and cumulatively with other projects/activities for construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning presented in section 14.6 and section 11.7.3 of Chapter 11 Commercial Fisheries [APP-025] are appropriate	The NFFO is not content with the conclusions of the assessments due to the lack of site specific and contemporary data presented in the baseline that underpins the assessments.	Not Agreed – no material impact
<b>Mitigation</b>			
5	Given the impacts of the Project, the embedded mitigation outlined in Table 11.3 Chapter 11 Fish and Shellfish Ecology [APP-025] are appropriate.	The NFFO is content that the embedded mitigation measures are appropriate for fish and shellfish, however, the mitigation measures are not relevant to commercial fishermen.	Agreed with caveats

### 3. Signatures

16. The above SoCG is agreed between the Applicant and NFFO on the day specified below.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Duly authorised for and on behalf of the NFFO

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## 4. References

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*



**RWE**

## **HARNESSING THE POWER OF NORTH SEA WIND**

*North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited*

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

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