

Date: 13 March 2025
Our ref: Case: 18251 Consultation: 480575
Your ref: EN010121



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Robert Jackson,

Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Generation Assets

The following constitutes Natural England's formal statutory response for Examination Deadline 5.

1. Natural England's Deadline 5 Submissions

Natural England has reviewed the documents submitted by the Applicant at Deadlines 3 and 4. We are submitting the following detailed responses:

- Appendix B10 Natural England's advice on Offshore Ornithology at Deadline 5
- Annex B4 Natural England's advice on Red Throated Diver compensation proposals
- Appendix D2 Natural England's advice on Marine Mammals at Deadline 5
- Appendix I2 Natural England's response to Examiners Questions 2
- Appendix J Natural England's advice on Bats at Deadline 5
- Appendix J2 Further references cited in NE advice on bats at Deadline 5

2. Comments on mitigation measures for Benthic; Marine Geology, Oceanography and Physical Processes; and Water and Sediment Quality receptors.

Natural England has reviewed the Commitment Register and can confirm that mitigation measures relevant to Benthic; Marine Geology, Oceanography and Physical Processes; and Water and Sediment Quality are subject to conditions that require their inclusion in named plans. The majority of these are standard best practice design measures and we welcome their inclusion. We note however that the relevant plans currently exist in outline form only and

lack detail on the exact parameters and methods for delivery of the mitigation measures. We therefore advise that while these can be considered as secured in principle, they are still subject to additional information to be submitted for further review and discussion in the pre-construction phase. Our outstanding issues for mitigation in these topics relate to the proposals for micro-siting, locations of cable crossings and the decommissioning programme: these are dealt with in their respective Risk and Issues log entries.

3. Timing of submissions for pre-construction plans and documentation

Natural England advises that the default timescale for submission of pre-construction material should be 6 months and that the 4 month period should be by exception (currently the inverse is true in condition 10(1) at Schedule 6 part 2 of the dDCO). This is reflective of NE's view that all marine licence condition discharge consultations should have a 6 month timescale. For submissions with a 4 month timescale the Applicant should therefore provide a justification as to why a 4 month period is appropriate.

Natural England advises that the following plans, which currently include a requirement to be submitted 4 months prior to commencement of construction within the dDCO, should be moved to a 6 month timescale due to their importance in delivering key mitigation measures for the project:

- Offshore Construction Method Statement
- Project Environmental Management Plan
- Vessel Traffic Management Plan
- Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan

4. Update following Applicants response to 1BEM13 regarding sensitivity of sea pens

The Applicant has responded in [REP3_068] with clarifications regarding the assessments for geomorphological seabed features and sea pens. Natural England agrees with the overall rationale presented. The evidence presented by the applicant indicates the presence of the habitat FOCI "*Sea-pens and burrowing megafauna communities*". Given the presence of sea pens in similar habitats nearby, they could be considered "potentially present" despite the lack of evidence. Whilst not a significant concern raised by Natural England, we would welcome any commitment made by the Applicant to avoid impacts to this feature of conservation interest where possible.

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

Yours sincerely,

Laurence Browning
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Annex 1: Natural England's Response to the Applicant's Documents Submitted at Deadline 5 Relevant to our Remit

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
Marine Mammals		
REP4-010	4.9.1 Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 4)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-012	5.1.11.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 11: Marine Mammals (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 5)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-014	5.2.11.1.1 Environmental Statement Appendix 11.1: Underwater Noise Assessment (Tracked) - Revision 02 (Volume 5)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-016	5.2.11.2.1 Environmental Statement Appendix 11.2: Marine Mammal Information and Survey Data (Tracked) - Revision 04 (Volume 5)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-018	5.2.11.3.1 Environmental Statement Appendix 11.3: Marine Mammal Unexploded Ordnance Assessment (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 5)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-020	5.2.11.4.1 Environmental Statement Appendix 11.4: Marine Mammal CEA Project Screening (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 5)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-026	6.4.1 In Principle Monitoring Plan (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 6)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-028	6.5.1 Draft Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 6)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
REP4-050	9.32.1 Outline Underwater Sound Management Strategy (Tracked) - Revision 02 (Volume 9)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to our Risks and Issues log.
Offshore ornithology		
REP3-064	9.37 Habitats Regulations Assessment Without Prejudice Derogation Case – Red-Throated Diver at Liverpool Bay / Bar Lerpwl SPA - Revision 01 (Volume 9)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Annex B4 and updates to the Risk and Issues log.
REP4-010	4.9.1 Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (Tracked) - Revision 03 (Volume 4)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix B10 and updates to the Risk and Issues log.

REP4-054	9.47 Additional information to support assessment of Red-throated Diver feature at Liverpool Bay SPA - Revision 01 (Volume 9)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix B10 and updates to the Risk and Issues log.
General		
REP3-046	6.4.1 In Principle Monitoring Plan - Revision 02 (Volume 6) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix D2 and updates to the Risk and Issues log.
PD-015	Examining Authority's Written Questions 2 (ExQ2)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix I2 and updates to the Risk and Issues log.
Marine Geology, Oceanography and Physical Processes and Marine Sediment and Water Quality		
REP4-048	9.31.1 Commitments Register (Tracked) - Revision 02 (Volume 9)	Natural England has provided an update in our cover letter and Risks and Issues log in relation to this document.
Benthic Ecology		
REP4-056	9.49 Outline Construction Method Statement - Revision 01 (Volume 9)	Natural England has provided an update in our Risks and Issues log in relation to this document.