

Date: 10 July 2025
Our ref: 17503; 517386
Your ref: EN010125
Interested Party ref: 20050173



National Infrastructure Planning
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam,

Application by RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (West) Ltd and RWE Renewables UK Dogger Bank South (East) Ltd for an Order granting Development Consent for the Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind Farms

The following constitutes Natural England's formal statutory response for Examination Deadline 9.

1. Natural England's Deadline 9 Submissions

Natural England has reviewed the documents submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 9. An update of Natural England's position regarding documents relevant to our remit is provided in Annex 1, including anticipated timing of responses. Natural England is also submitting the following detailed responses, signposted from Annex 1:

- EN010125 517386 DBS – Natural England's Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9
- EN010125 517386 DBS Appendix G9 - Natural England's Advice on Offshore Ornithology Deadline 9
- EN010125 517386 DBS Appendix J9 - Natural England's Advice on IPMP and Monitoring Deadline 9

2. Statement of Common Ground

Natural England has worked with the Applicant to make further updates to an agreed Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) submitted by the Applicant at this Deadline. Whilst the SoCG is based on Natural England's R&I log, it is important to note that the definitions used for the RAG status are not the same as in our R&I log, resulting in some issues being categorised differently.

3. Risk and Issues Log

As we are now at the End of Examination, resolution of outstanding concerns is unlikely to occur. Natural England has upgraded certain amber issues in our R&I log to red to reflect that resolution and/or agreement on key risks and issues, which we consider material considerations for project determination, will not be reached within Examination. Please note that Offshore Ornithology Compensation and Terrestrial Ecology have not been updated at this Deadline.

For those outstanding issues that required further review of the relevant ES Chapters submitted at Deadline 7, Natural England has reviewed a sample of the updates relevant to these and resolved where possible. Due to the late submission of these documents, and the short period of time between deadlines, we would like to highlight that the ES chapters have not been reviewed in their entirety, and we therefore cannot guarantee that any new additions not pertaining to an outstanding issue have been adequately assessed.

4. Rule 17 Letter - Request for further information dated 7th July 2025

Natural England have reviewed the questions within the Examining Authority's (ExA) Rule 17 Letter - Request for further information dated 7th July 2025 [PD-030] and can confirm that the assumptions outlined by the ExA regarding Benthic Ecology conclusions are correct.

5. Natural England's Advice on Monitoring Plans

Following the submission of the Examining Authority's (ExA) recommended amendments to the draft DCO [PD-028] and the Applicant's updated In-Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) [REP7-116], Natural England have provided our final advice on outstanding areas of monitoring which we consider have not currently been secured within Appendix J9 at Deadline 9.

6. Comments on updated thematic documents

6.1 Offshore Ornithology

Please see Appendix G9 of our Deadline 9 submission for detailed comments.

5.3 Benthic ecology

Natural England acknowledges the Applicant's updated without prejudice impact scenarios in Section 6.4.2.3 of 6.1 RIAA 2 of 4 –Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5) [REP7-017]. Natural England has reviewed the updates presented in Table 6-3 Worst-Case Scenario for Annex I Habitats Assessment and Table 6-7 Scenarios for Consideration Regarding Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Inclusion of Estimated Halo Effects in the Dogger Bank SAC and is satisfied that a WCS has been presented.

Whilst we maintain our previous advice regarding 50m halo effect for turbines; we note that the halo effect for cable protection is still not resolved. In the absence of further discussions, we welcome 50m being considered as a precautionary figure to agree compensation. However, if a reduced buffer for halo effect from cable protection (e.g. 20m) can be agreed then the compensation requirement will be reduced, and the current without prejudice habitat loss figure for the halo effect out to 50m would need to be reconsidered. It is also noted that in areas where cable protection is placed, there would be overlap between the halo effect and the habitat disturbance impact corridor. Therefore, if compensation for habitat disturbance is required and the same approach as for habitat loss (i.e. MPA designation or extension is provided for habitat disturbance) is applied, then some of the habitat loss from the Halo effect would already be compensated for, with the additional amounts of compensation extending from the edge of the disturbance corridor out to the edge of the halo effect (only). However, if compensation for habitat disturbance is not considered necessary by the Secretary of State, then habitat loss from the edge of cable protection out to the edge of the agreed halo effect buffer would need to be included as habitat loss.

In regard to the scale and extent of required benthic compensation, we maintain that there are outstanding concerns in relation to some of the marine processes and benthic assessments, but we do not believe that they will materially change compensatory requirements if a precautionary approach is adopted to compensation delivery.

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

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

Senior Officer – Marine Sustainable Development

Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire Area Team

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Annex 1: Natural England's Response to the Applicant's Documents Submitted at Deadline 7 & 8 Relevant to our Remit.

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
General		
REP8-001	18.1 Deadline 8 Cover Letter.pdf	Natural England has no comments to make on these documents.
REP8-002	1.4 Guide to the Application (Revision 9)	
REP8-006	3.2 Explanatory Memorandum (Revision 11) (Tracked)	
REP8-042	18.2 The Applicant's Closing Statements	
REP8-043	18.3 The Applicants' Responses to Deadline 7 Documents	
REP7-019	6.2 Habitats Regulations Derogation Provision of Evidence (Revision 4) (Tracked)	
REP7-116	8.23 In Principle Monitoring Plan (Revision 5) (Tracked)	Natural England has provided comment on this in Appendix J9 and our Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9.
REP7-102	8.6 Commitments Register (Revision 3) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in our Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9.
DCO		
REP8-004	3.1 Draft Development Consent Order (Revision 11) (Tracked)	Natural England has no comments to make on these documents.
REP8-007	3.4 Schedule of Changes (Revision 9)	
Benthic		
REP7-041	7.9.9.5 Appendix 9-5 Biotopes of Designated Sites	Natural England has no comments to make on these documents.
REP8-045	18.5 Cable Installation Works Restricted Area Plan	
REP7-017	6.1 RIAA HRA Part 2 of 4 – Annex I Offshore Habitats and Annex II Migratory Fish (Revision 5) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in our Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9.
REP7-039	7.9 ES Chapter 9 - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology (Revision 2) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in our Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9.
REP7-040	7.9.1 ES Chapter 9 - Benthic and Intertidal Ecology Figure 9-1 to Figure 9-6 (Revision 2)	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.

PINS Document Reference	Document Name	Natural England's Response/Position Summary
Marine Physical Environment		
REP7-036	7.8 ES Chapter 8 Marine Physical Environment (Revision 2) (Tracked).pdf	Natural England's response to this document is provided in our Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9.
REP7-037	7.8.1 ES Chapter 8 - Marine Physical Environment Figure 8-1 to Figure 8-13 (Revision 3).pdf	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.
Marine Mammals		
REP7-046	7.11 ES Chapter 11 - Marine Mammals (Revision 2) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to these documents is provided in our Risk and Issues Log Deadline 9.
REP7-047	7.11.1 ES Chapter 11 Marine Mammals - Figure 11-1 to Figure 11-6 (Revision 2)	
REP7-118	8.25 Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (Revision 5) (Tracked)	
Offshore Ornithology		
REP8-041	17.10 Appendix A - Offshore Ornithology Year 1 and 2 Combined Spatial Plots (Revision 2) (Tracked)	Natural England's response to this document is provided in Appendix G9.
REP8-036	10.19 Project Level Kittiwake Artificial Nesting Structure (ANS) Site Selection Report (Revision 2) (Tracked).pdf	Natural England has no comments to make on this document.