

By email only:

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CC:

Planning Inspectorate – [DoggerBankSouth@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:DoggerBankSouth@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

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02 December 2025

Dear ██████████

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

We understand the Planning Inspectorate’s Examining Authority has considered the proposed Dogger Bank South Offshore Windfarm and produced a recommendation to inform your own determination process.

The proposal includes a derogation case, and a package of compensation measures, aimed at addressing impacts to guillemot and razorbill populations from Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Farne Island SPA, both located in England. The proposed compensation measures are to be delivered in Scotland, on the basis that the applicant has failed to secure compensation measures in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We understand that current DESNZ guidance prevents the applicant from participating in strategic compensation schemes, such as the Isles of Scilly Strategic scheme.

Due to an ongoing and increasing high caseload of marine energy projects in Scottish waters NatureScot has a limited capacity to engage with casework elsewhere in the UK. However, we offer the following comments for your consideration of the proposed compensation measures.

**NatureScot comments on the proposed Dogger Bank South compensation measures located in Scotland**

We are aware of, and have had, some preliminary discussions with the applicants in respect of guillemot and razorbill compensation on a without prejudice basis, focussed on predator eradication which is the only measure set out for auk species in DEFRA’s Library of Compensation Measures.

The detail of the compensation measures is under development and the applicant has carried out initial survey work as well as identifying relevant landowners. The measures currently being

proposed have a geographical focus in Scotland with a particular emphasis on the Outer Hebrides, plus a single site in Shetland.

While we welcome the detailed habitat identification and suitability assessment work that has been carried out, this proposal raises significant issues.

Currently there is no strategic consideration being given to the delivery of compensation measures and how this might affect existing conservation management to fit in with the UK site network management vision. Neither is strategic consideration being given to delivery of compensation measures as part of the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind in Scottish Waters.

We are not aware that Scottish Government have been consulted on any proposals from rUK windfarms looking to deliver compensation measures in Scotland and we consider this is an aspect that must be urgently addressed. Whilst NatureScot can advise on the ecological aspect of compensation measures, the overarching responsibility for the UK site network rests with Government(s) as does the emerging process under the Energy Act 2023 for changes to the Habitats Regulations Appraisal process. Given the differing jurisdictions we consider it important for Scottish Government to be involved in discussions around proposals such as these.

In terms of monitoring success, there are several aspects around this we wish to raise:

- Monitoring of implementing agreed measures i.e. are the actions carried out as agreed within any final derogation plan;
- Monitoring of efficacy and success – this is different to the above and relates to the proposition that the measures will increase productivity of guillemot and razorbill during breeding; and
- Monitoring of impacts on nearby SPAs – in our view the possibility of negative impacts to nearby SPAs has not adequately been considered. By implementing measures for guillemot and razorbill outside of the European site network - it is possible that unintended shifts in distribution, or population decline, of birds within SPAs may occur.

For each of the above aspects monitoring should be carried out based on agreement with both ourselves and Natural England for the period from consent to decommissioning of the windfarm, if consented. Also, the UK National site network and individual sites designated with guillemot and razorbill as a feature are not monitored annually, but on a more cyclical basis, we advise that monitoring of efficacy and success will need to be tied into the cycle of site condition monitoring.

At this stage we consider there is still significant detail to be provided on a derogation case with a plan of compensation measures for guillemot and razorbill, (if it is ascertained there is an adverse effect on guillemot and razorbill from the above mentioned SPAs from this offshore wind proposal), including site selection, predator management actions, monitoring arrangements and any adaptive management measures. We also provide some more fundamental thoughts around cross border compensation considerations below.

Finally, we highlight the restrictions introduced by the DEFRA Guidance which is appearing to lead to delays in the commencement of compensation delivery schemes such as the Isles of Scilly Scheme and the availability for developers currently going through the planning process to contribute to such schemes.

### **Wider comments on cross-border compensation measures**

This case and others where there are proposals for cross border compensation measures – raise some fundamental questions, which NatureScot advise require further consideration by UK competent authorities as well as the SNCBs. These include:

- Removal of compensation and/ or mitigation opportunities for projects within the receiving jurisdiction, including for other industries etc.
- Unintended consequences of implementing compensation measures at a distance from where predicted impacts could occur at an offshore windfarm – these could include impacts to:
  - Receiving communities
  - Increased resource demand on the receiving SNCB, including input to the planning process, provision of advice, review of monitoring and analysis and any adaptive management requirements, as well as impacts on the existing European site network and the impacted feature(s)
  - Nearby European sites.
- How do compensation measures fit into any requirement for community benefit from offshore windfarms? Whilst it is accepted there may be ecological benefits there may be consequences for communities.
- Consideration of how receiving community representatives can interact and contribute to the planning process and consideration in real time and not after the event.

I trust our advice is helpful, if you require any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact myself (contact details below) or [REDACTED] [naturescot](mailto:naturescot@nature.scot) phone 0131 316 2629 or [marineenergy@nature.scot](mailto:marineenergy@nature.scot).

Yours faithfully

Erica Knott  
Head of Marine Energy, Sustainable Coasts and Seas

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