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Dear [REDACTED]

The Dogger Bank South Order 2026 – Request to Make Changes to Schedule 18 of the Development Consent Order

The following constitutes Natural England's formal statutory response to the Secretary of State's notification (dated 15th July 2026) of a request by the Applicant, RWE Renewables UK, to make changes to the Order under section 119 and Schedule 4 to the Planning Act 2008. This correction request pertains to paragraph 23 of Part 3, Schedule 18 to the Order, which concerns timings and triggers in relation to compensatory measures required for the guillemot feature of the Farne Islands Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protection Area (FFC SPA). Natural England has been invited to comment upon the request as set out in [007009017-01].

Paragraph 23 currently sets out that:

"No construction of offshore works relating to Work No. 1A or Work No. 1B may be commenced unless the measures set out in the guillemot CIMP approved by the Secretary of State have been in place for at least two breeding seasons prior to commencement of construction..."

The Applicant has requested to make amendments to the specified offshore works and the "in place" wording within this condition. Our comments on these two changes are set out below.

Amendment of offshore works

Works No. 1A and 1B detail the same construction works within the DCO to be undertaken for Dogger Bank South (DBS) East and West respectively. For brevity, we have only included Work No. 1A below, but our advice can be assumed to be equally applicable to 1B.

Schedule 1, Part 1 (1)

"DBS East Project

Offshore works

Work No. 1A—

(a) an offshore wind turbine generating station with a gross electrical output of over 100 megawatts comprising up to 100 wind turbine generators each fixed to the seabed by monopile or jacket foundations; and

(b) a network of HVAC subsea cables connecting the wind turbine generators and Work No.2A within the area shown on the works plans, including cable crossings and cable protection;

The Applicant has requested that paragraph 23 be amended to require predator eradication to have commenced prior to construction works starting on the installation of OWF towers only, rather than prior to Works No. 1A(a) and (b) in full.

Natural England have no concerns with Work No.1A(b) being removed as a requirement from paragraph 23. We note that the corresponding condition in the Hornsea Four OWF Order (Schedule 16, Part 3, 10(a)(iv)) explicitly excludes the equivalent works (Work No. 1(c)).

With respect to works 1A(a), we highlight that different approaches have been taken across different offshore wind DCOs. The Hornsea Four DCO includes the same requirements regarding Work No. 1A(a) that are implemented in the DBS Order, and extends the requirements to also include the installation of platforms associated with the Project. The recently consented Outer Dowsing Order on the other hand reflects the wording proposed by the Applicant, and restricts commencement to being prior to the installation of any tower comprised within wind turbine generators.

Whilst Natural England recognise the Applicant's argument that auk displacement will predominantly occur due to the construction of the turbine towers onwards, displacement can occur due to other activities in the array area earlier in the construction phase. This is reflected in the environmental assessment where construction displacement is assessed as 50% of the operational displacement rate. We also highlight that the Applicant's request is primarily due to construction timeline pressures associated with milestones relating to their Contract for Difference, rather than being on ecological grounds. On balance, Natural England's preference would be for Work No 1A(a) to be retained in paragraph 23, however we do acknowledge that there is precedent for the Applicant's proposed approach.

Amendment of 'in place'

The Applicant has also requested that paragraph 23 is amended to require the measures set out in the guillemot CIMP to have been *commenced* at least two breeding seasons prior to commencement of the relevant construction works, rather than to be *in place* for two breeding seasons prior. Natural England agrees with the Applicant that previous discussions on the compensation measure have been on the understanding that eradication works must have started two breeding seasons prior to

construction works, rather than completed two breeding seasons prior. Whilst Natural England would prefer earlier implementation of the measure, we recognise the pressure this would put on the Applicant's programme and acknowledge that the proposed amendment is in line with equivalent conditions on other DCOs where predator eradication is proposed as a compensation measure. Natural England therefore have no objections to the proposed amendment, whilst noting that this advice should not be taken as applying to non-eradication measures.

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

Yours sincerely,

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