Inverdee House, Baxter Street,
Aberdeen, AB11 9QA, United Kingdom

Email: OIA@jncc.gov.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 266550
jncc.gov.uk

The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN
United Kingdom

JNCC Reference: OIA-10627
PINS Reference: EN010136
Date: 16 January 2025

By email: morganoffshorewindproject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

To whom it may concern,

Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Generation Assets – EN010136 – Response to the Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ2)

Thank you for consulting JNCC on the Morgan Offshore Wind Project Examining Authority's questions and requests for information

The advice contained within this minute is provided by JNCC as part of our statutory advisory role to the UK Government and devolved administrations on issues relating to nature conservation in UK offshore waters (beyond the territorial limit).

In response to Examining Authority's question MO 2.3 and question MO 2.2, please see ornithology comments below.

Ornithology

ExQ2: MO 2.3

Methodology for Ornithological Assessments. The SNCBs and RSPB are asked to confirm at D5 a list of the agreed and not agreed methodological issues, with reference to the summary data as referred to above and the range of clarification notes/errata submitted up to and including D4.

We previously had outstanding issues regarding incorrect seasonal definitions used for black-legged kittiwake, black-legged kittiwake age classes, not using a range of displacement and mortality rates, not including the most recent mortality estimates for Mona and Morecambe offshore wind farms and not including any mortality estimates for Llŷr offshore wind farm into the in-combination assessment (REP3-035).

The Applicant has subsequently provided JNCC with revised draft alone (23/12/2025) and in-combination (12/01/2025) assessments rectifying all of these issues. We are advised by the Applicant that they intend to submit these specific draft assessments into the examination at Deadline 5 and would suggest it is confirmed by the Examiners that the same documents are submitted between these drafts and final versions at Deadline 5. Based on the draft alone and in-combination assessments which we have received from the Applicant, we have no outstanding not-agreed methodological issues with the application.

Our conclusions on Likely Significant Effect (LSE) and Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEoI) to the relevant Special Protection Area (SPA) for which JNCC has joint responsibility (Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire/Sgomer, Sgogwm a Moroedd Penfro SPA) is presented below.

In our view, the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of any SPA for which JNCC has sole or joint responsibility.

The relevant seabird features of Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire/Sgomer, Sgogwm a Moroedd Penfro SPA are:

- European storm petrel
- Manx shearwater
- Atlantic puffin
- Lesser black-backed gull
- Seabird assemblage

We detail below our conclusions regarding LSE and AEoI to each feature.

European storm petrel

We agree with Table 1.70 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report (APP-099) that there is no LSE to European storm petrel.

Manx shearwater

The worst-case scenario of a predicted 84.2 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone (collision and 70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate) represents a 0.07% increase in baseline mortality. We consider that AEoI from the project alone can be ruled out on the basis that these mortalities constitute less than a 1% increase in baseline mortality, even under the worst-case impact scenario.

The predicted in-combination 1,932 mortalities annually (collision and 70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate), represents a 1.6% increase in baseline mortality. The Population Viability Analysis (PVA) suggests an increasing population after 35 years of operation, as indicated by a growth rate above one, and the Counterfactual of Growth Rate is 0.998. This suggests that there will be only a small impact on the growth rate in comparison to baseline conditions. Therefore, we consider that AEoI from the project in-combination with other Plans and Projects can be ruled out, even under the worst-case impact scenario.

Atlantic puffin

Whilst Atlantic puffin should have been included in Table 1.70 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report (APP-099) as it is a qualifying feature of the SPA, based on the low abundance of the species recorded in baseline surveys, we consider that there is no LSE to Atlantic puffin.

Lesser black-backed gull

The predicted 0.1 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone represents a 0.00% increase in baseline mortality. We consider that AEoI from the project alone can be ruled out on the basis that these mortalities constitute less than a 1% increase in baseline mortality.

We also consider that AEoI from the project in-combination with other Plans and Projects can be ruled out for the SPA on the basis that mortalities due to the project alone constitute less than a 0.05% increase in baseline mortality.

Seabird assemblage

Seabird assemblage had an estimated 394,260 individuals in total at designation, the main components are razorbill, common guillemot, black-legged kittiwake, Atlantic puffin, lesser black-backed gull, Manx shearwater and European storm petrel. The Applicant has made individual assessments of the impact of the Project on each assemblage component. We summarise our conclusions regarding AEoI to the seabird assemblage at the end of all of the components.

Razorbill

The worst-case scenario of a predicted 1.7 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone (70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate) represents a 0.08% increase in baseline mortality.

The predicted in-combination 35.8 mortalities annually (70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate), represents a 1.7% increase in baseline mortality. The PVA suggests an increasing population after 35 years of operation, as indicated by a growth rate above one, and the Counterfactual of Growth Rate is 0.998. This suggests that there will be only a small impact on the growth rate in comparison to baseline conditions.

Common guillemot

The worst-case scenario of a predicted 6.9 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone (70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate) represents a 0.26% increase in baseline mortality.

The predicted in-combination 739.7 mortalities annually (70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate), represents a 27.9% increase in baseline mortality. Whilst the PVA suggests a declining population after 35 years of operation, as indicated by a growth rate below one, the Counterfactual of Growth Rate is 0.981, with the other scenarios modelled by the Applicant (30% displacement rate and 1% mortality rate) showing a much lower level of impact. This suggests that there will be only a small impact on the growth rate in comparison to baseline conditions.

Black-legged kittiwake

The worst-case scenario of a predicted 0.7 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone (collision and 70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate) represents a 0.16% increase in baseline mortality.

The predicted in-combination 13.6 mortalities annually (collision and 70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate), represents a 3.1% increase in baseline mortality. Whilst the PVA suggests a declining population after 35 years of operation, as indicated by a growth rate below one, the Counterfactual of Growth Rate is 0.995, with the other scenarios modelled by the Applicant (collision and 30% displacement rate and 1% mortality rate) showing a much

lower level of impact. This suggests that there will be only a small impact on the growth rate in comparison to baseline conditions.

Atlantic puffin

Whilst Atlantic puffin should have been included in Table 1.70 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report (APP-099) as it is an assemblage component of the SPA, based on the low abundance of the species recorded in baseline surveys we consider that there is likely to be very low levels of impact on this species.

Lesser black-backed gull

The predicted 0.1 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone represents a 0.00% increase in baseline mortality.

Manx shearwater

The worst-case scenario of a predicted 84.2 mortalities annually due to Morgan alone (collision and 70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate) represents a 0.07% increase in baseline mortality.

The predicted in-combination 1,932 mortalities annually (collision and 70% displacement rate and 10% mortality rate), represents a 1.6% increase in baseline mortality. The PVA suggests an increasing population after 35 years of operation, as indicated by a growth rate above one, and the Counterfactual of Growth Rate is 0.998. This suggests that there will be only a small impact on the growth rate in comparison to baseline conditions.

European storm petrel

We agree with Table 1.70 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening Report (APP-099) that there is no LSE to European storm petrel.

Seabird assemblage conclusion

Subject to the draft revised alone and in-combination assessments provided to JNCC by the Applicant being entered into the Examination, in our view the Applicant has demonstrated that the growth rates of razorbill and Manx shearwater are unlikely to be significantly affected over the lifetime of the project and will continue to be stable or increasing. Only under the worst-case scenario, populations of common guillemot and black-legged kittiwake are predicted to decline. However, there is an extremely low risk that they would become locally extinct as a result of impacts from the proposed project, and both species would still contribute to the assemblage. There is an extremely low risk that the overall population abundance of the Seabird Assemblage would significantly decline over the lifetime of the project. Therefore, we agree that AEoI from the project alone and in-combination with other Plans and Projects can be ruled out.

ExQ2: MO 2.7

SSSI and CEA clarification notes NE, NRW and JNCC are asked to review the following additional ornithological clarification notes provided at D4 and provide comment at D5: i) Project alone and cumulative assessment for the Great Orme Head SSSI [REP4-029]. ii) Differences between the Morgan Generation Assets and the Mona Offshore Wind Project in abundance estimates used in the CEA [REP4-031].

The project alone and cumulative assessment for the Great Orme Head SSSI (REP4-029) solely concerns Great Orme Head SSSI for which JNCC do not have responsibility, therefore we have no comments to make regarding REP4-029.

We are content that there are only minor differences between the Morgan Generation Assets and the Mona Offshore Wind Project in abundance estimates used in the cumulative and in-combination assessment documents due to how each project treated the data differently during their own assessment (as described in REP4-031) and that these do not result in substantial differences in the cumulative and in-combination assessments between the two projects. In addition, mortalities estimates are often updated throughout examination, often making it difficult to obtain the correct estimates to utilise in cumulative and in-combination assessments, which is why it is imperative that updated HRAs and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) are submitted towards the end of the examination so that they are readily available. We recommend that updated HRAs and EIAs documents are submitted by the Applicant as part of this examination. We note that the Cumulative Effects Framework project will allow consistent cumulative and in-combination assessments to be carried out, but the tool to do this is not yet available.

Please contact me with any questions regarding the above comments.

Yours sincerely,

Erin Sherratt

Offshore Industries Adviser

Email: [redacted]