



**Cyfoeth
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Form

Record of a Habitats Regulations Assessment of a project

March 2016

OGN 200 Form 1

Document owner: Protected Sites Team, KSP

Version History:

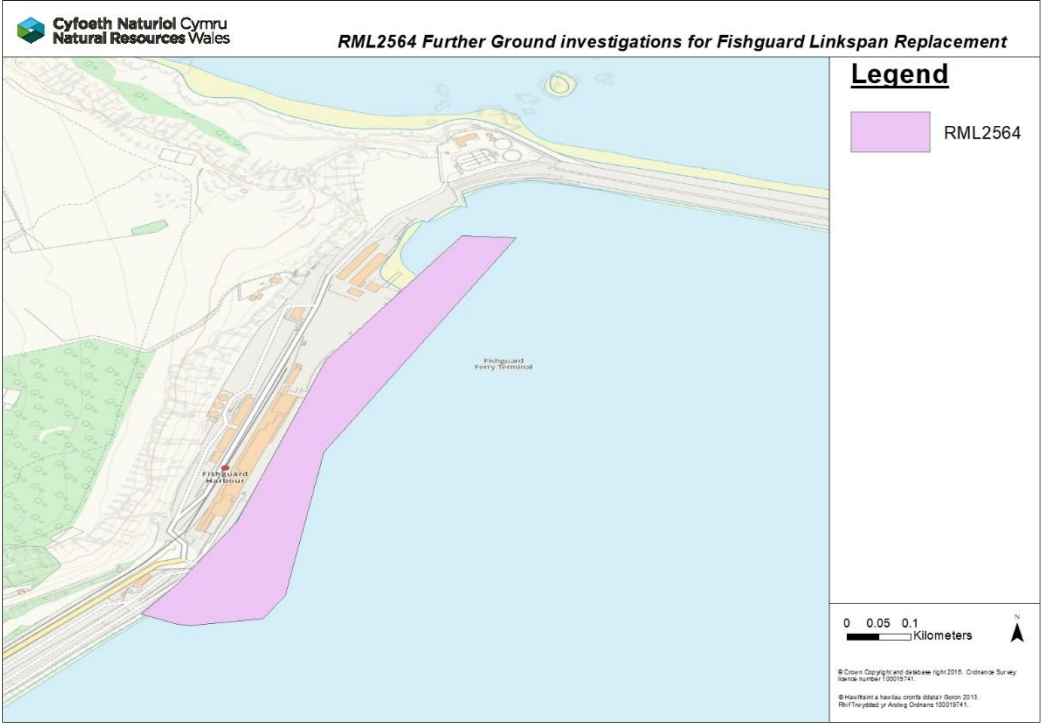
Document Version	Date Published	Summary of Changes
1.0	March 2016	Document created

Review Date: February 2017

Record of a Habitats Regulations Assessment of a project

1. Project Details

1(a): Project details where an external party has applied to NRW for any form of authorisation		
Application reference number (if applicable)	RML2564	
Date application received	27 October 2025	
Applicant details	Stena Line Ports Limited	
Activity proposed	Further Ground investigations for Fishguard Linkspan Replacement Proposed site investigation to include boreholes, vibrocores and grab samples. The results of these site investigations will inform the design and provide the information for the consenting process for a proposed replacement linkspan structure, dredging and associated civil works at Fishguard Harbour. - 13 marine boreholes to a maximum depth of 30m. Landside mounted equipment will likely be used for a number of the boreholes close to the quayside. A jack up barge may be required for the marine boreholes. - 12 vibrocores ranging from 1m to 6m in depth. - 60 grab samples across 11 sample sites. Samples will be collected on the seabed and following that at 0.5m intervals. Bed level collection of samples will be taken using a Van Veen grab sampler. A GPS device will be used to locate the sample position.	
Relevant legislation	Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009	
Location	Latitude	Longitude
	52.00871	-4.98745
	52.00913	-4.9869
	52.01005	-4.98608
	52.01222	-4.98478
	52.01402	-4.98294
	52.01398	-4.98219
	52.01099	-4.98488

	52.00897	-4.98542
	52.00864	-4.98576
	52.00855	-4.98678
	52.00856	-4.98694
		
Application documents	RML2564 - Application Form.pdf RML2564 - POR00886-RPS-ML-ZZ-DR-C-0221-A1-C01 Proposed Site Investigation Location.pdf RML2564 - POR00886-RPS-ML-ZZ-DR-C-0222-A1-C01 Proposed Access Route.pdf RML2564 - POR00886-RPS-ML-ZZ-DR-C-0223-A1-C01 Sampling Area Layout.pdf RML2564 - FGLR - SI MS.pdf RML2564 - Polygon Coords for ML Further SI.xlsx RML2564 - heneb.pdf RML2564 - MCA.pdf RML2564 - RCAHWW.pdf RML2564 - Trinity House.pdf	

Environmental Statement	N/A
Pre-application correspondence	N/A
NRW team responsible for drafting this HRA report, and name of lead officer	Jack Thompson - Marine Licensing Team

2. Determining the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment

2.1 Is the whole of the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of one or more Natura 2000 sites, for the purposes of conserving the habitats or species for which the Natura 2000 site(s) is/are designated?	No
2.2 Is there a possibility that the project could affect a different Natura 2000 site to the one(s) the project is intended to conserve?	N/A
2.3 Is it necessary to carry out an HRA?	Yes

3. Considering the likelihood of a significant effect (LSE)

3.1 Renewal of a permission on the same or more restrictive terms as the extant permission

Is this project a renewal of a current permission which complies with NRW approved criteria for ruling out significant effects of renewals (see section 6.2A of OGN 200) without conducting a project-specific LSE test?	No
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3.2 Likelihood of significant effects (LSE) test

3.2.1 Which Natura 2000 sites might be affected by the proposal?	Based on the project specification or information provided in the application, it is considered that the following Natura 2000 sites have features which could be affected by the project: <i>Special Areas of Conservation</i> • UK0030397 West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC The potential for the project to affect the following Natura 2000 sites was also initially considered, but can be ruled out without further consideration: • UK0030398 North Anglesey Marine / Gogledd Môn Forol SAC • UK0030396 Bristol Channel Approaches / Dynesfeydd Môr Hafren The above have been initially considered for Harbour porpoise as the activity falls within the Celtic & Irish Seas (Harbour porpoise). However, due to the location and nature of the activity the risk of disturbance and collision to the species has been ruled out and the sites have not been taken through the screening assessment.
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3.2.2 Screening assessment			
	Assessment of likelihood of significant effect		
	I Relevant conservation objective	II Potential impact pathway	III In light of the ruling of the CJEU in case C-323/17 'People over Wind', avoidance measures should not be considered at this stage of HRA, so this column is left blank.
West Wales Marine / Gorllewin Cymru Forol SAC			

Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)	To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the harbour porpoise or significant disturbance to the harbour porpoise, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes an appropriate contribution to maintaining Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for the UK harbour porpoise. To ensure for harbour porpoise that, subject to natural change, the following attributes are maintained or restored in the long term: 1. The species is a viable component of the site. 2. There is no significant disturbance of the species. 3. The supporting habitats and processes relevant to harbour porpoises and their prey are maintained.	Owing to the limited nature of the project scope (boreholes, grab samples and vibro-cores), and physical disturbance of area (removal of less than 15.5m³) the likelihood of significant effect to these mobile features is negligible. Additionally, the worksite is sited within the boundary of a busy port and ferry terminal (Fishguard Harbour). Any disturbance from the project will be lower than baseline levels associated with the surroundings: Per NRW(A)'s Position on Assessing Behavioural Disturbance of Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) from underwater noise, NRW(A) recommended the use of the level B harassment level (NMFS 1995; 2005) of 120 dB re 1µPa SPLrms threshold (NRW 2023). Root-mean-square sound pressure levels (SPL) for vibrocoreing may be calculated in the region of 187.4 dB re 1 µPa·m (Chorney et al. (2011)). Additionally, noise source levels for activities such as jack-up rig geotechnical drilling in shallow water and standard penetration testing are 142-145 dB re 1 µPa·m and 160 dB re 1 µPa·m respectively, and so it may be considered that the noise generation from the bore holing is likely to be in the same region. Given these estimated noise source levels from the proposed works, there is a viable pathway to the harbour porpoise feature of the SAC from underwater noise disturbance. Given the small number of planned samples (12 vibrocores and 13 boreholes), it is unlikely that the disturbance footprint of the works would exceed the spatiotemporal thresholds outlines in the '<i>Guidance for assessing the significance of noise disturbance against Conservation Objectives of harbour porpoise SACs (England, Wales & Northern Ireland)</i>' (JNCC 2020)'. Sources such as Jiménez-Arranz et al. (2020) cite source levels of 165 dB re 1 µPa·m, 165–175 dB re 1 µPa·m, and 175–185 dB re 1 µPa·m for small, medium and large vessels respectively NO IMPACT PATHWAY PREDICTED FOR:
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		• PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO FEATURE • DAMAGE TO FEATURE'S HABITAT • DAMAGE TO FEATURE'S SUPPORT-SPECIES OR THEIR HABITAT • NON-PHYSICAL DISTURBANCE
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3.2.3 Screening decision of the project 'alone'

(a) If ALL rows in column II of Table 3.2.2 are GREEN	The project is not likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site, because there is no impact pathway from the project to any Natura 2000 features, and no further consideration under the Habitats Directive/Regulations is required in order to determine the application.
(b) If there are NO rows coloured RED in column II of Table 3.2.2, and there are ANY rows which are BLUE	The project is not likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites when considered alone, but the possibility of significant effects in combination with other plans and projects needs to be considered.
(c) If ANY rows in Column II of Table 3.2.2 are RED	The project is likely have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites and therefore an appropriate assessment is required.

4. Appropriate assessment of the project when considered alone

4.1 Assessment of project as currently defined

N/A

4.2 Assessment of the project taking into account additional mitigating measures, conditions or restrictions

N/A

4.3 Concluding the appropriate assessment of the project alone

N/A

5 In combination assessment

5.1 Identifying possible in combination effects

N/A

5.2 Addressing in-combination effects

N/A

6. Conclusion

HRA is not required because the whole of the project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of one or more Natura 2000/Ramsar sites, for the purposes of conserving the habitats or species for which the site(s) is/are designated, <u>and</u> the project is not likely to have a significant effect on any other Natura 2000/Ramsar sites. (As documented in section 2.1 and 2.2 of this form)	
HRA is not required because there is no conceivable impact pathway to any Natura 2000/Ramsar site (As documented in section 2.3 of this form)	
This project is a renewal of a current permission which complies with NRW agreed criteria for ruling out significant effects of a renewal without conducting a project-specific LSE test. Therefore it is considered not likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000/Ramsar sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. (As documented in section 3.1 of this form)	
The project has been screened for likelihood of significant effects and, taking account of the advice received from protected sites advisors, is considered not likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000/Ramsar site (As documented in section 3.2 of this form, or section 5 if applicable)	X
In light of the conclusions of an appropriate assessment, and taking account of the advice received from protected sites advisors, it has been established that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000/Ramsar site, taking into account any conditions or restrictions as applicable, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. (As documented in section 4 of this form, and section 5 if applicable)	
In light of the conclusions of the appropriate assessment, it has <u>not</u> been ascertained that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000/Ramsar site, as documented in section 4 of this form, and section 5 is applicable. Approval for the project <u>cannot</u> be given unless either: - the project specification, and/or the terms under which it might be approved, are modified so as to remove the risk of adverse effects, and a revised HRA report is prepared, or - the project satisfies the requirements of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, an Article 6(4) Statement of Case is prepared (OGN 200 Form 3) and submitted for consideration by the appropriate authority, normally Welsh Ministers	
Signed:  Name: Jack Thompson Position: Senior Marine Licensing Officer Date: 29 October 2025	

7. Consultation with protected sites advisor(s) and how sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this HRA report (as applicable) take into account that advice.

Relevant section of the HRA report	Date(s) of correspondence* and any meeting(s) with protected sites advisor(s)	Description of how the comments from protected sites advisors have been taken into account

Appropriate nature conservation body (ANCB) response to an internal HRA consultation

This form should be completed by the team or individual providing the ANCB advice to the competent authority team

TO: Jack Thompson – Marine Licensing Team

FROM: Ryan Rees – Marine Area Advice and Management Team

SUBJECT: Habitats Regulations Assessment of RML2564

Thank you for consulting Marine Area Advice and Management Team on the above. Our comments are as follows:

We agree with the conclusion of the above mentioned HRA, with respect to the marine features of the West Wales Marine SAC. We agree that the project has been screened for likelihood of significant effects, and it is considered not likely to have a significant effect on the above named Natura 2000/Ramsar site/s.

Signed: Ryan Rees

Date: 12/11/25