Western Link 2

Offshore Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries

Methodology and Reporting Form

MSDS Heritage

MSDS Marine

2026/MSDS25354/2

Western Link 2

Offshore Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries

Project Name	Western Link 2
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Client Project Number	
MSDS Marine Project Number	MSDS25354
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Glossary

Term	Definition
Anomaly	An anomaly is a localised deviation in geophysical data caused by a physical item on or below the seabed.
Anthropogenic	Of or relating to human activity.
Archaeological Curators	Responsible for providing advice on maritime finds when reported on.
Archaeological Receptor	A physical resource such as a shipwreck, aviation remains, archaeological sites, archaeological finds and material including pre-historic deposits.
Nominated contact	The project's lead archaeological contractor prior to consent
Retained Archaeologist	The project's lead archaeological contractor following consent.
Study Area	Area of marine archaeological assessment, usually measuring 1 km from project boundary.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviations	Definition
AD	*Anno Domini*
AEZ	Archaeological Exclusion Zone
BC	(years) Before Christ
BNG	British National Grid (also NGR)
DfC	Department for Communities (Northern Ireland)
CADW	National curatorial body for Wales.
Canmore (now Trove)	Online catalogue of Scotland's heritage. Renamed Trove in 2024.
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
Coflein	The database for the National Monuments Record of Wales.
COWRIE	Collaborative Offshore Wind Research into The Environment
e.g.	'For example'
EIA(R)	Environmental Impact Assessment (Report)
ES	Environmental Statement
Etc.	'and so forth'
HED	Historic Environment Division (Northern Ireland)
HER	Historic Environment Record
HERoNI	Historic Environment Record of Northern Ireland
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
HMPA	Historic Marine Protected Area
i.e.	'That is' or 'in other words'
IOMHER	Isle of Man Historic Environment Record
JNAPC	Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee
MD-LOT	Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team
MHWS	Mean High Water Springs
MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MPS	Marine Policy Statement

Acronym/Abbreviations	Definition
NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission
NGR	National Grid Reference (see BNG)
NL	Named Locations
NM	Nautical Mile
NMRW	National Monuments Record of Wales
NMP	National Marine Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statement
NRHE	National Record of the Historic Environment
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations
PAD	Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries
PMRA (1986)	*Protection of Military Remains Act* (1986)
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
RLB	Red Line Boundary
ROW	Receiver of Wreck
ScARF	Scottish Archaeological Research Framework
SPEN	Scottish Power Energy Network
TAEZ	Temporary Archaeological Exclusion Zone
TBT	Toolbox Talk
Trove	Online catalogue of Scotland's heritage. Formally Canmore.
UKHO	United Kingdom Hydrographic Office
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WD	Water Depth (m)
WGS 1984	World Geodetic System 1984
WL2	Western Link 2
WoSAS	West of Scotland Archaeology Service
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation
WWI	World War One (1914-1918)
WWII	World War Two (1939-1945)

1.0 Project Background

1.0.1 MSDS Marine Ltd have been commissioned by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and Scottish Power Energy Network (SPEN) to produce an Offshore Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (PAD) (hereafter PAD) in response to a condition under Part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) for Marine Licence RML2571 prior to geophysical, geotechnical, and benthic sampling for the Western Link 2 project (Figure 1).

1.0.2 Western Link 2 crosses multiple jurisdictions to provide High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) reinforcement on the west coast of Great Britain between Scotland and Wales. It is a first of a kind development, with the project creating a multi-terminal 525 kV, 2 GW solution, through two buried HVDC cables and a fibre optic cable between Scotland and Wales., The decision on whether the cable will be bundled or separated by up to 30 m is currently under assessment. The offshore elements of the project comprise of:

- A 50 km offshore HVDC cable system, consisting of two HVDC cables and one fibre optic cable between Monkton and a new switching station at Grangestone, north of Girvan in Ayrshire; and
- Two HVDC cables and a fibre optic cable between Grangestone and Gwynedd, North Wales.

1.1 Purpose of the documents

1.1.1 This document sets out the procedure for reporting discoveries of potential archaeological interest made offshore of Mean High-Water Springs (MHWS) during preconstruction activities associated with Western Link 2.

1.1.2 Any archaeological finds made by project staff are important because they may shed light on past human use of the landscape, sea and seabed. The information that such discoveries bring to light can help archaeologists to better understand what happened in the past, and therefore to better protect those aspects of our history and prehistory that should be conserved on behalf of future generations.

1.1.3 The aim of the PAD is to reduce any adverse effects of the development upon the historic environment by enabling people working on the project to report their finds in a manner that is both convenient to their every-day work and effective regarding curatorial requirements.

1.1.4 NGET and SPEN will ensure their obligations under this condition are met by using the protocol set out within this document which details the process of reporting of finds of potential archaeological interest, the cessation of activities while the find is reviewed, and curatorial advice sought on mitigation where necessary (where confirmed archaeological features or finds are identified).

1.2 PAD Aims and Objectives

1.2.1 The PAD is based on the Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries for Offshore Renewables Projects introduced by The Crown Estate (2014)[1]; and the best practice guidance within The Crown Estate (2021) Archaeological Written Schemes of Investigation for Offshore Windfarm Projects[2]. Within Wales, the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) have produced a PAD for individuals or companies undertaking minor seabed works which do not require full-scale, marine archaeological support as part of the consenting process[3]. The contents of the RCAHMW PAD have been taken into consideration during the production of this PAD.

1.2.2 The objectives of this document are as follows:

- To satisfy licence condition pertaining to the need for a PAD;
- To provide details of the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the PAD; and
- To provide guidance on any finds recovered through the PAD.

1.3 Relevant legislation, policy, and guidance

1.3.1 Specific relevant legislation for the four jurisdictions covered by this PAD is set out in Chapter Two of the Western Link 2 Scoping Report[4]. Specific legislation related to marine archaeology is detailed in Annex A. This legislation varies by jurisdiction, with various pieces of legislation replaced following devolution to the three legislators. Additional guidance documents used in the creation of this PAD are outlined in Annex B. It should be noted that although most reference offshore windfarm development, they are considered by regulators to be the industry standard for all offshore development works within the four jurisdictions.

Jurisdictional variations in requirements

1.3.2 All four jurisdictions require the reporting of wreck material to the Receiver of Wreck under the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Act (1995) and must abide by the provisions of the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) and Protection of Military Remains Act (1986). However, within Scottish waters, only Section 2 of the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) is applicable (concerning dangerous wrecks). Remains within Scottish waters may also be subject to the Marine Scotland Act (2010), responsible for the designation of Historic Marine Protected Areas (HMPAs), along with the provisions laid out in the Marine Scotland Act (2010).

[1] The Crown Estate, (2014). *Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries for Offshore Renewables Projects*. Available at: https://www.wessexarch.co.uk/sites/default/files/field_file/2_Protocol%20For%20Archaeological%20Discoveries.pdf [Accessed 02/2026].
[2] The Crown Estate, (2021). *Archaeological Written Schemes of Investigation for Offshore Windfarm Projects.* Available at: https://www.datocms-assets.com/136653/1720791439-guide-to-archaeological-requirements-for-offshore-wind.pdf [Accessed 02/2026].
[3] RCAHMW, (2025). *Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries*.
[4] RSK, (2026). *National Grid Electricity Transmission Western Link 2 Scoping Report*. Unpublished report. Project ref: 81553.

1.3.3 The Treasure Act (1996) which governs the finding and reporting of any material that may be considered as treasure as defined within the Act[5], only applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, the definition and reporting of Treasure is set out with Scottish common law and regulated by the Treasure Trove Unit (TTU)[6]. In the Isle of Man, the Treasure Act (2017) applies.

1.3.4 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) is applicable to the Isle of Man and Scotland, but not applicable in Wales having been replaced with the Historic Environment (Wales) Act (2023); or Northern Ireland, where the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 operates.

1.3.5 In Wales as part of the marine licence requirement for a PAD, there is additionally an instruction to report all non-treasure archaeological finds through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) local PAS Cymru Finds Reporting Officer.

[5] The definition has recently been expanded under the Treasure (Designation) Order 2002, pursuant to Section 2(4) of the Treasure Act (1996).
[6] The Scottish Government, (2014). *Treasure Trove in Scotland. A Code of Practise.* Available at: https://treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/ [Accessed: 03/2026].

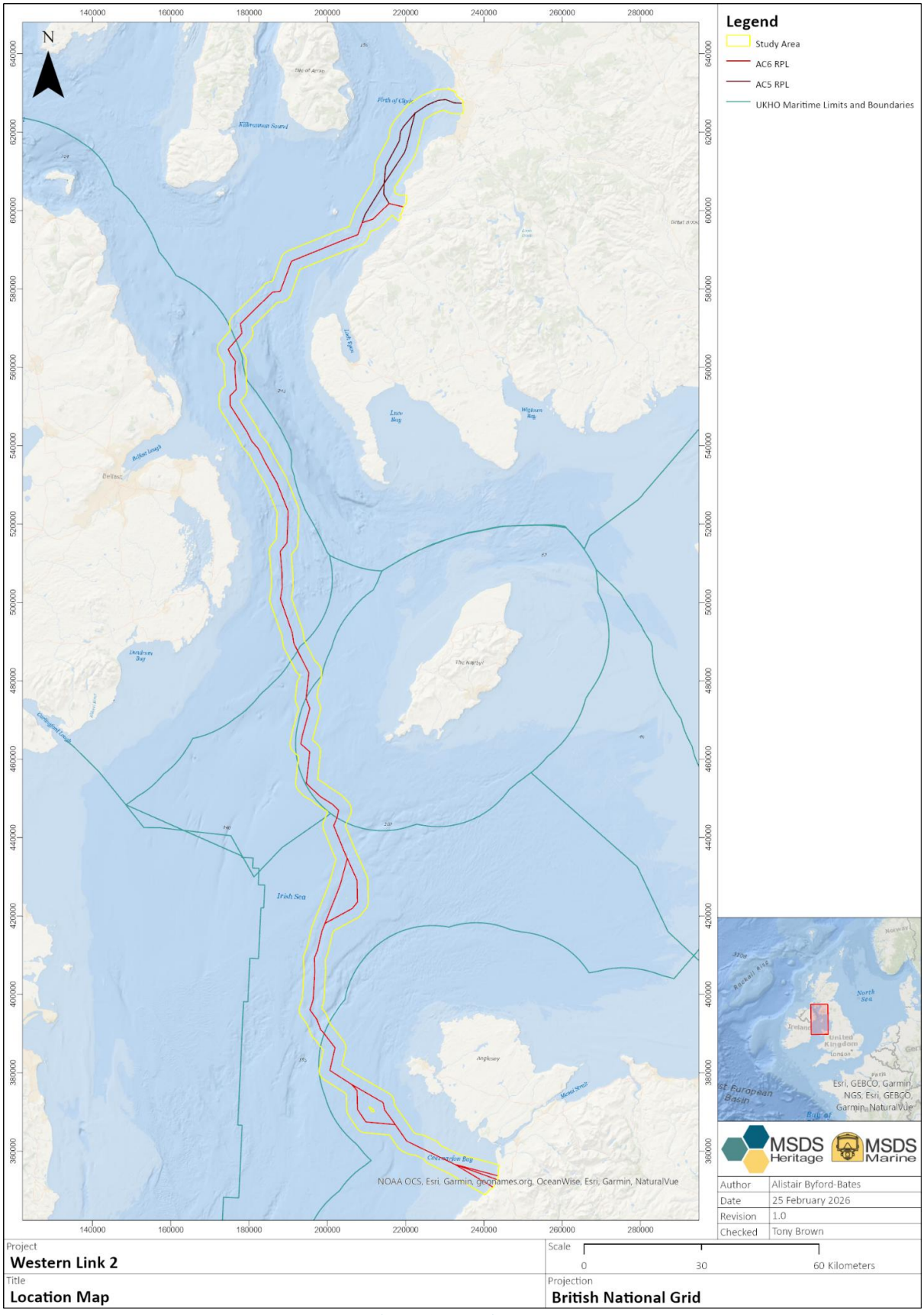


Figure 1: Location Map

2.0 Operation of the protocol

2.1 Overview of the PAD

2.1.1 The PAD has been designed to allow Project Staff to report unexpected finds of archaeological interest made on the seabed or in the intertidal zone during project works. A series of actions is defined for such cases, summarised below and in Figure 2.

2.1.2 The PAD anticipates discoveries being made by Project Staff who report to the Site Champion (Section 3.0) (for example the Vessel Master or Client Representative) on their vessel, who then completes a series of steps including stopping work and reporting the find to the Nominated Contact (Section 4.0) and Western Link 2 Project Manager. The Nominated Contact will provide specialist advice and technical support services relating to the identification of the find[7].

2.1.3 The Nominated Contact will liaise with the Western Link 2 Project Manager, or predetermined liaison, and the relevant Archaeological Curator, along with any additional relevant stakeholders depending on the nature of the find, and planned activities within the area. If the find or feature is determined to be of archaeological interest, then suitable mitigation measures will be devised in consultation with the Archaeological Curators.

2.1.4 Who the Archaeological Curator will be is dependent on the devolved jurisdiction in which a find is discovered, and reported on. The curators are as follows:

- Scotland: Historic Environment Scotland (HES);
- Northern Ireland: Department for Communities (DfC) Historic Environment Division (HED);
- Wales: Cadw; and
- Isel of Man: Manx National Heritage.

2.1.5 The Nominated Contact, along with the Western Link 2 Project Manager or liaison, and contractors shall draw to the attention of all relevant Project Staff the potential for archaeological material to be found and inform them of the possible importance of such finds through a series of 'toolbox' talks and supporting information.

2.1.6 Personnel working on the project will be briefed on the PAD and copies of this document and supporting literature must be available onboard all vessels carrying out works that are considered to interact with the seabed.

[7] Note, the Crown Estate (2014) Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries includes an additional step whereby the report is passed to the Implementation Service who provide additional support on identification and input into mitigation. This Service is run by an archaeological contractor. MSDS Marine, who has access to all project datasets and has a strong understanding of the archaeological potential of the area, along with specialists in maritime archaeology, is best placed to give this advice. As such there is no need for the inclusion of the additional step of corresponding with the Implementation Service, who do not have access to the up-to-date project data. They will therefore not be included within the Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries implemented by the Project.

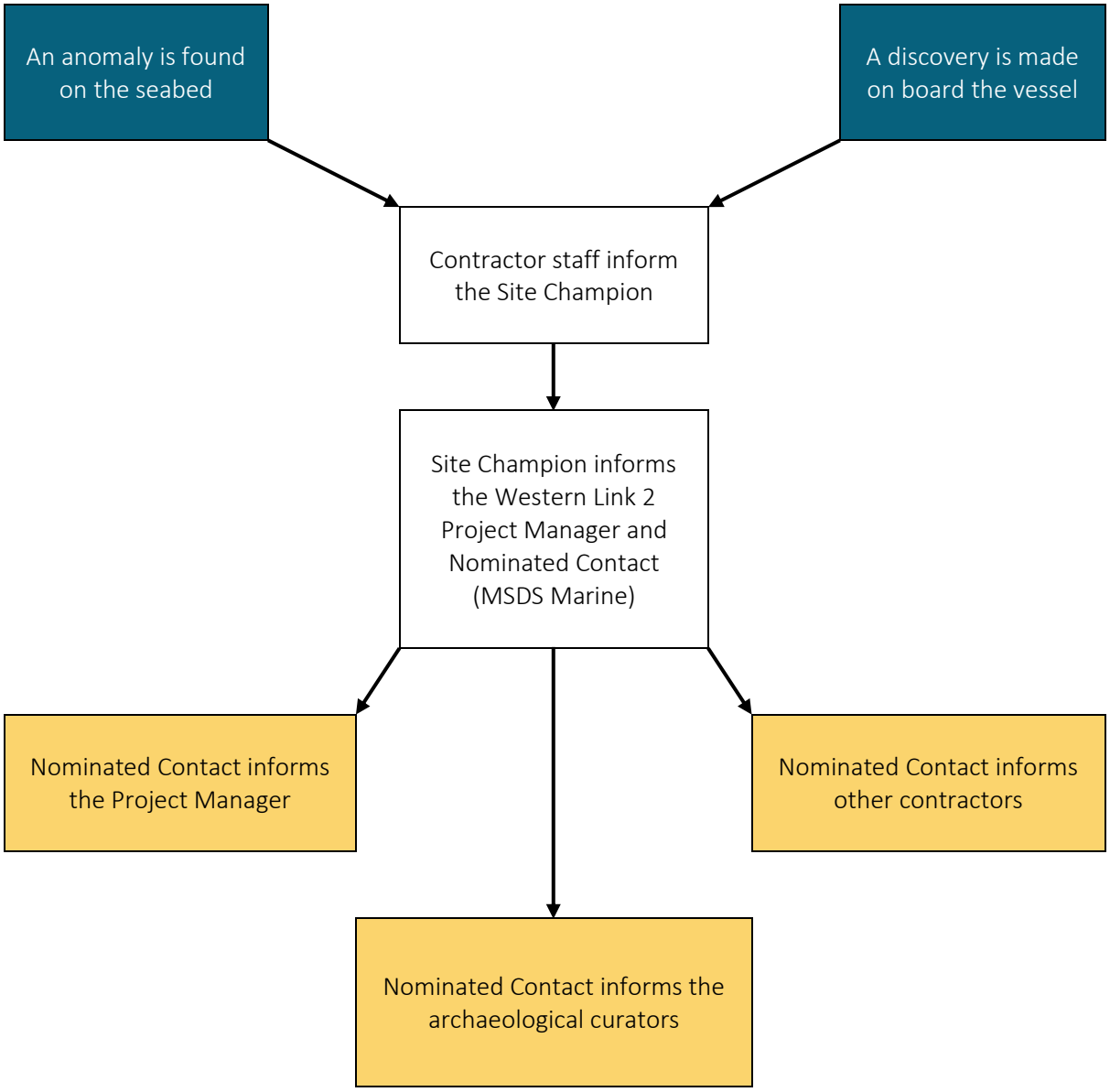


Figure 2: Summary of the key roles and chain of communication

3.0 Actions by the Project Staff and Site Champion

3.0.1 Actions required by the Project Staff and Site Champion are set out in Figure 2 and are discussed here.

3.0.2 If finds or features are identified by the Project Staff, they should then be reported to the Site Champion. The Site Champion will then undertake a series of actions: Stop; Record and Inform, as set out within Figure 3. For high potential finds (such as aircraft or wrecks) they should ensure works in the vicinity are stopped and a (Temporary Archaeological Exclusion Zone (TAEZ) is put in place. They should ensure that the find is recorded in the vessel log, navigational software and within the Preliminary Record Form (see Section 6.0). The Site Champion should inform the Nominated Contact and the Western Link 2 Project Manager and pass over any records. They should also ensure that if any finds have been recovered from the seabed, that they are stored appropriately. Advice on storage is set out within this document and can be sought from the Nominated Contact.

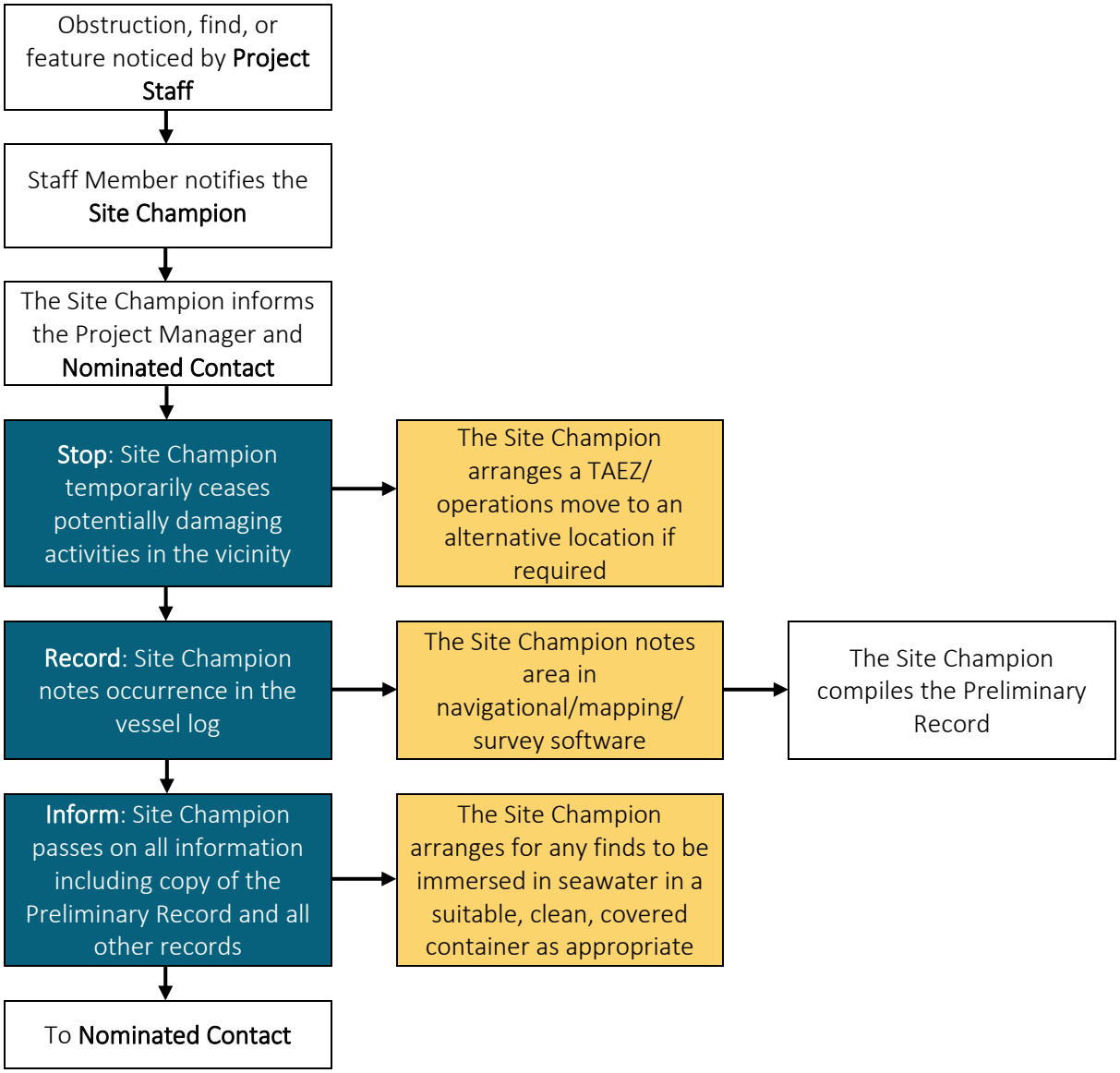


Figure 3: Actions by the Project Staff and Site Champion

4.0 Actions by the Nominated Contact

4.0.1 The Nominated Contact for this project is MSDS Marine. Actions required by the MSDS Marine are set out in Figure 4. MSDS Marine will confirm the details laid out in the Preliminary Record with the Site Champion and then discuss with the Western Link 2 Project Manager, or their liaison, and pass on the details of the discovery. The Project Manager will inform any other vessels working around the TAEZ.

4.0.2 MSDS Marine will then review the discovery to determine whether it is of low or high archaeological potential. Low potential finds may be isolated finds (including anchors) or peat deposits that do not contain prehistoric archaeological remains. High potential finds include finds that predate 1800 AD, finds that relate to an aircraft, multiple finds from the same area, reports indicating the presence of a wreck or other structural remains, or peat or other fine-grained sediments that contain worked flint, charcoal, or bone.

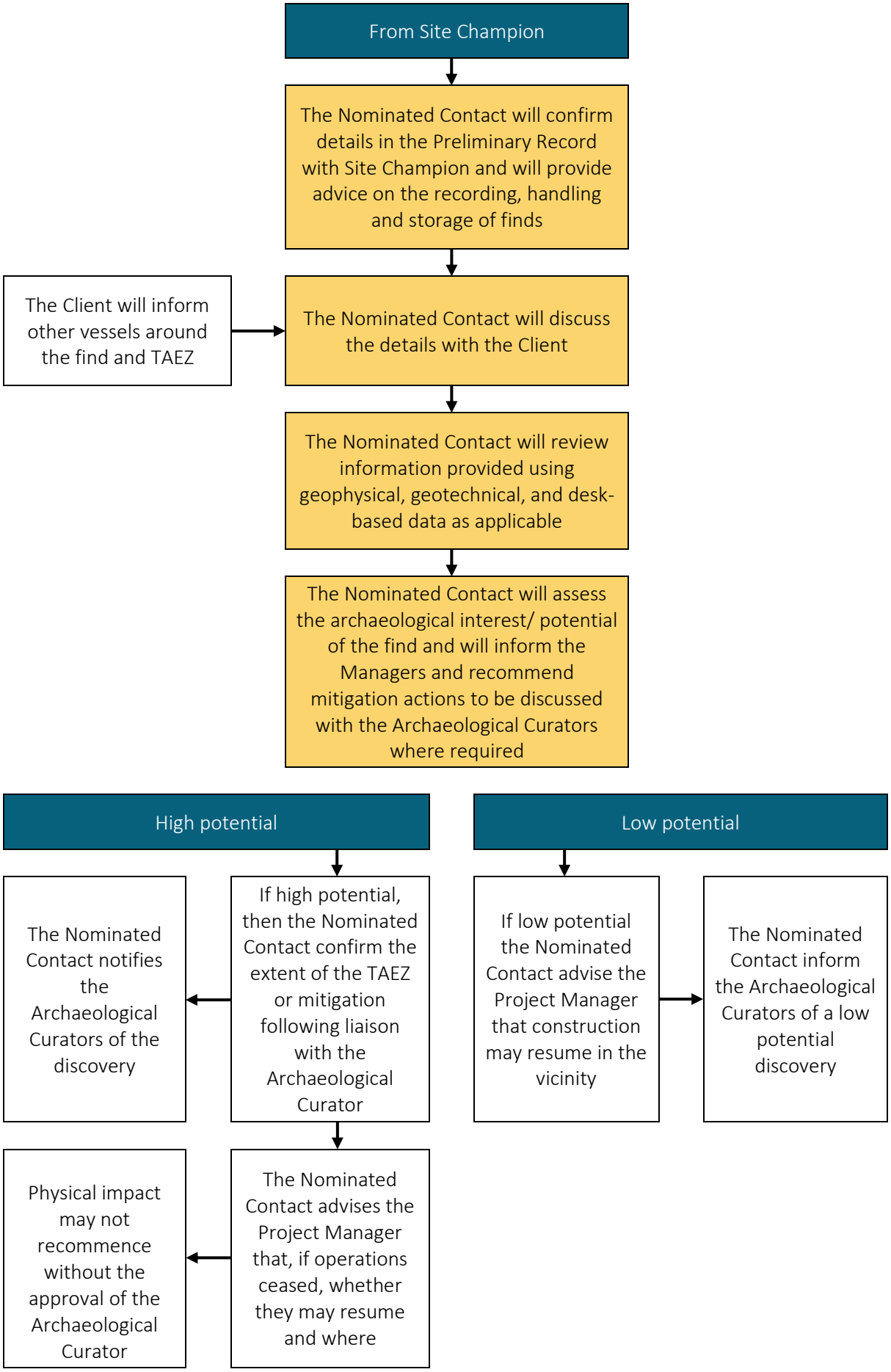
4.0.3 Once the potential has been established, MSDS Marine will inform the Western Link 2 Project Manager of this. As a PAD condition within the jurisdiction of Wales, all archaeological finds will be reported to the Cymru PAS.

4.0.4 For reports that are deemed low potential, MSDS Marine will generally advise that isolated finds be moved to wet storage and request an 'as found' record and an 'as left' record with photos and positions. MSDS Marine should be contacted prior to moving any find using the PAD process.

4.0.5 For reports that are deemed high potential, MSDS Marine will conduct a review of geophysical data and recommend the extent of the exclusion zone. They may also recommend other mitigation such as further archaeological investigation. Mitigation strategies will be devised in liaison with the Western Link 2 Project Manager and the Archaeological Curators. MSDS Marine will also advise when and where operations can continue. Physical impacts may not occur within exclusion zones without the approval of the Archaeological Curators.

4.0.6 MSDS Marine will then make arrangements for any finds which have been recovered to be held in the possession of the developer. They will also produce a summary record and provide this to relevant stakeholders. A summary record will include advice on the identification of finds and the character of their seabed locations, an assessment of the archaeological potential of the report which will include the rationale for the conclusion reached, and advice on actions to be taken in respect of the discovery, including any recovered finds.

4.0.7 Any further actions taken are the responsibility of the developer and are to be agreed with the Regulator and Archaeological Curators with the assistance of MSDS Marine.


From Site Champion
The Nominated Contact will confirm details in the Preliminary Record with Site Champion and will provide advice on the recording, handling and storage of finds
The Client will inform other vessels around the find and TAEZ
The Nominated Contact will discuss the details with the Client
The Nominated Contact will review information provided using geophysical, geotechnical, and desk-based data as applicable
The Nominated Contact will assess the archaeological interest/ potential of the find and will inform the Managers and recommend mitigation actions to be discussed with the Archaeological Curators where required
High potential
Low potential
The Nominated Contact notifies the Archaeological Curators of the discovery
If high potential, then the Nominated Contact confirm the extent of the TAEZ or mitigation following liaison with the Archaeological Curator
If low potential the Nominated Contact advise the Project Manager that construction may resume in the vicinity
The Nominated Contact inform the Archaeological Curators of a low potential discovery
Physical impact may not recommence without the approval of the Archaeological Curator
The Nominated Contact advises the Project Manager that, if operations ceased, whether they may resume and where

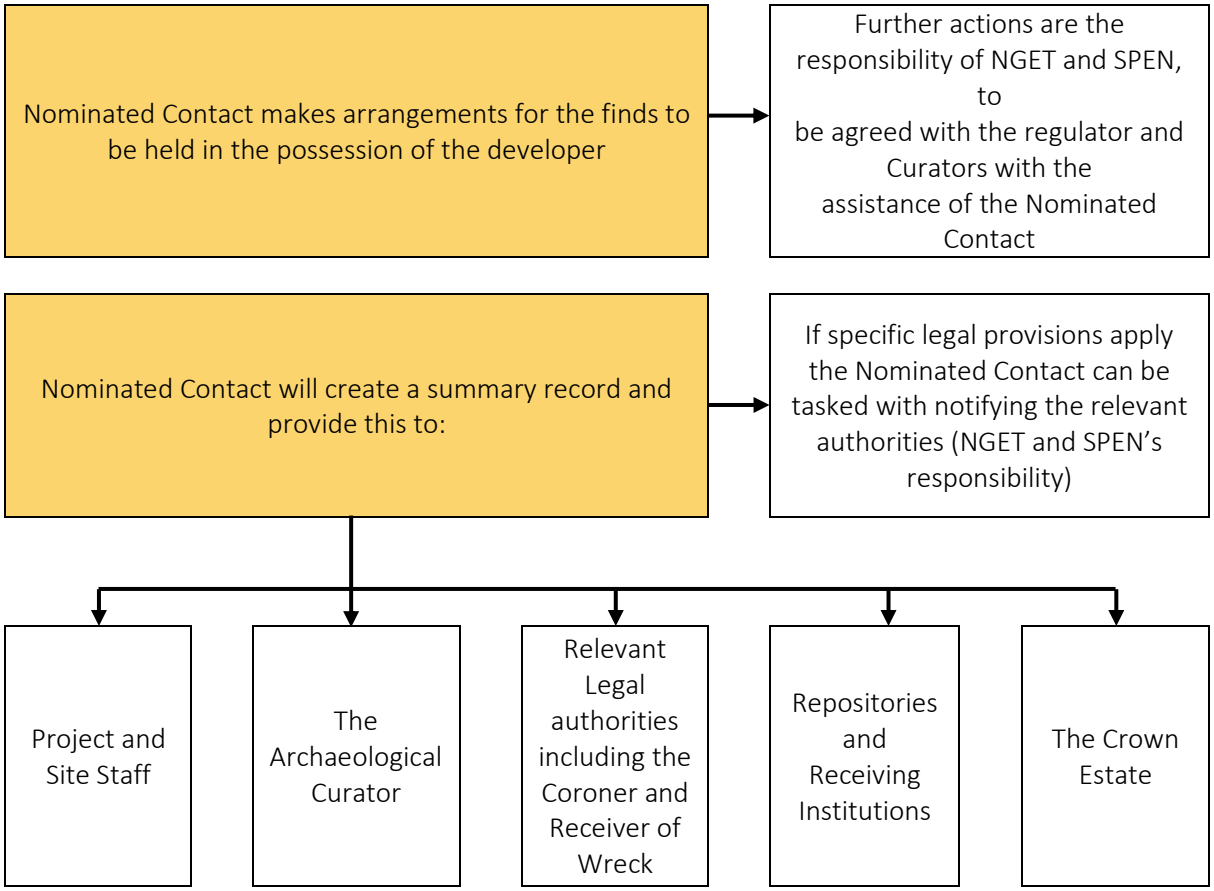


Figure 4: Actions by the Nominated Contact

4.1 Legal implications

4.1.1 It should be noted that if the wreck of an aircraft is encountered it is automatically protected as a protected place under the terms of the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 and it is an offence to tamper with, damage, or move the wreck or to remove items.

4.1.2 Furthermore, all items of 'wreck' are reportable to the Receiver of Wreck under the terms of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.

4.1.3 Other acts may apply in certain situations, depending on the nature of the find. Reporting under the PAD will result in advice from the Nominated Contact regarding specific legal requirements for different types of find.

5.0 Guidelines for identifying and handling finds

5.0.1 The following guideline can be used to identify any discovered material and must be referred to when planning appropriate handling and storage. Advice on the identification of finds has been provided following the accepted advice provided by The Crown Estate[8].

5.0.2 Archaeological material can come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and materials. Materials can degrade in different ways, so it is important that they are handled with care and that the appropriate handling and storage techniques are applied.

5.0.3 Finds are vulnerable to deterioration at all times, whether they are recovered or not. Fragile material, such as wood, can be damaged by the force of passing machinery. It is crucial that all finds be treated carefully and interfered with as little as possible.

5.0.4 Leaving finds in situ is the best way to manage them. Once a find is recovered to the surface, it requires conservation which can be difficult and expensive to administer.

5.1 General advice for finds handling and storage

- ✅ Handle all finds carefully;
- ✅ Photograph all sides of a find with a scale;
- ✅ Take close photographs of any markings, glazing, or imagery;
- ✅ Keep finds wet and ensure the water is changed regularly if biological growth is detected;
- ✅ Keep finds cool and ideally in the dark;
- ✅ Keep finds in protective containers where possible;
- ✅ Label any finds with a Unique Find Identifier[9];
- ✅ Contact MSDS for advice on finds storage;
- ⛔ Do not remove any sediment build up, concretion, or marine life;
- ⛔ Do not allow finds to dry out; and
- ⛔ Do not handle finds more than necessary.

[8] The Crown Estate. 2014.

[9] This number should also be written on the preliminary record form (see Section 6.0). It should be a unique number which can be used to correlate the find and records for the find. The Unique Finds Identifier therefore needs to be written on both the find and the preliminary record form.

5.2 Metals

5.2.1 Metal is likely to survive in marine environment, though it may corrode when in water or form concretions of material (a hard mass of material which typically has a mineral matrix, commonly formed around ferrous objects in particular). Typical metal finds might include ingots, ballast, coins, ornaments, tools, weapons, aircraft or ship parts, and personal items. If potential unexploded ordnance (UXO) is encountered this should be dealt with under the UXO protocol.

5.2.2 The Crown Estate guidance[10] for the identification of metals is as follows:

Iron and Steel

5.2.3 The potential range and date of iron and steel objects is so wide that it is difficult to provide general guidance. In broad terms, iron and steel objects which are covered by a thick amorphous concrete-like coating ('concretion') are likely to be of archaeological interest and should be reported. Pieces of metal sheet and structure may indicate a wreck and should be reported. Specific operational measures are likely to apply in respect of ordnance (cannonballs, bullets, shells) which should take precedence over archaeological requirements. However, discoveries of ordnance may be of archaeological interest, and they should be reported.

Other Metals

5.2.4 Items made of thin, tinned or painted metal sheet are unlikely to be of archaeological interest. Aluminium objects may indicate aircraft wreckage from World War Two, especially if two or more pieces of aluminium are fixed together by rivets. All occurrences should be reported' and remains of this nature may be subject to the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986. 'Copper and copper alloy (bronze, brass) objects might indicate a wreck, or they may be very old. All occurrences should be reported. Precious metal objects and coins are definitely of archaeological interest because they are relatively easy to date. All occurrences should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 19).

Actions to take:

5.2.5 If possible, do not recover metal. It can be difficult and expensive to conserve and some types of sites, such as aircraft, are covered by specific legislation which prohibits recovery without appropriate licences.

5.2.6 For metals which are lifted, lifting should be carried out carefully and the find should be photographed. All metals should be stored in cool seawater. Different metals should not be stored together. The shape of the concretion can be used to identify the item and as such concretions should not be removed. If the find is too large to cover in seawater, wrap it in soaked material and keep wet. Some metal products e.g., lead, pewter and copper salts can be toxic, so handle with gloves or wash hands thoroughly after contact.

5.2.7 Metals can sometimes be identified the colour of their corrosion. Table 1 below aims to help identify the type of metal used.

[10] The Crown Estate. 2014.

Gold	Corrosion
Silver	No corrosion
Copper/Copper Alloy e.g., Bronze	White, waxy layers that turn lilac in the light
Iron/Steel	Dark red/purple/green/blue
Lead	Black or rusty with a crust of concretion.
Pewter/Tin/Lead Alloy	Grey or white crystals
Aluminium	Grey surface, possibly crystalline, soft or friable
Gold	Little corrosion

Table 1: Guidance on the identification of metals

5.3 Ceramics

5.3.1 Pottery can be made from china, porcelain, terracotta, earthenware and other clay-based materials. Typical finds might include crockery, ornaments, clay pipes, lamps, containers and tableware.

5.3.2 Any fragment of pottery is potentially of interest, especially if it is a large fragment. Items which look like modern crockery can be discarded, but if the item has an unusual shape, glaze or fabric it should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 19). Additionally, clay pipes should be reported.

Actions to take:

5.3.3 Photograph finds with a scale, especially if they have any glazing or markings. Store in saltwater.

5.4 Ceramic Building Material

5.4.1 Ceramic building material can be in the form of bricks, building blocks, mudbricks, and tile. Bricks and tile can appear unusually shaped. Ceramic building material can be evidence of a ship, or submerged settlement.

5.4.2 Bricks with modern proportions and V-shaped hollows ('frogs') are of no archaeological interest. Unfrogged, 'small', 'thin' or otherwise unusual bricks may date back to Medieval or even Roman times and should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 19). Occurrences of tile should also be reported.

Actions to take:

5.4.3 Photograph finds with a scale, especially if they have any glazing or markings on them. Store in saltwater.

5.5 Stone

5.5.1 Stone has been used by humans for thousands of years and it very durable underwater, making it a common find. There are different types of stone: quartz, limestone, marble, granite, obsidian, slate, sandstone, and flint. Typical finds might include ballast, anchors, millstones building material, shot, carvings, tools, sculptures, whetstones, flint or stone tools and other personal items.

5.5.2 Small to medium size stones that are shaped, polished and/or pierced may be prehistoric axes. All occurrences should be reported. Objects such as axe heads or knife blades made from flint are likely to be of prehistoric date and should be reported. Large blocks of stone that have been pierced or shaped may have been used as anchors or weights for fishing nets. All occurrences should be reported. The recovery of numerous stones may indicate the ballast mound of a wreck, or a navigational cairn. All occurrences should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 19).

Actions to take:

5.5.3 Photograph with a scale and then store in water or wrap in soaked towelling.

5.6 Skeletal Material and Faunal Remains

5.6.1 Skeletal finds and faunal remains can come in the form of bone, ivory, tooth, antler, baleen, tortoiseshell, tusk, or shell. Typical finds might include human, or animal remains, personal items such as combs or jewellery, carvings, and tool handles.

5.6.2 Discoveries of animal bone, teeth and tusks are of archaeological interest because they may date to periods when the seabed formed dry land and should be reported. Such bones, teeth, tusks etc. may have signs of damage, breaking or cutting that can be directly attributed to human activity. Large quantities of animal bone may indicate a wreck (the remains of cargo or provisions) and should be reported. Human bone is definitely of archaeological interest, and may, if buried and found within territorial waters, be subject to the provisions of the Burial Act 1857. Alternatively, it may be subject to the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986. Any suspected human bone should be reported and treated with discretion and respect.

5.6.3 Objects made from bone – such as combs, harpoon points or decorative items – can be very old and are definitely of archaeological interest. All occurrences should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 19).

Actions to take:

5.6.4 Skeletal finds are vulnerable to environment change, so if any are recovered, ensure they are photographed with a scale and then immediately submerged in seawater and sealed in a suitable container. Change the water if biological growth occurs e.g., algae mould.

5.7 Wood

5.7.1 Wooden finds could be evidence of a wrecked vessel. Typical wooden finds might include small personal items e.g., tools and bottle corks, or larger finds e.g., ships timbers, furniture, chests, barrels, dwelling posts, and wattle panels.

5.7.2 Light coloured wood, or wood that floats easily, is probably modern and is unlikely to be of archaeological interest. 'Roundwood' with bark – such as branches – is unlikely to be of archaeological interest, although it may provide paleo-environmental evidence. However, roundwood that has clearly been shaped or made into a point should be reported. Pieces of wood that have been shaped or jointed may be of archaeological interest, especially if fixed with wooden pegs, bolts, or nails – all occurrences should be reported. Objects consisting of dark, waterlogged wood – such as bowls, handles, shafts and so on – can be very old and are definitely of archaeological interest. All occurrences should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 19).

Actions to take:

5.7.3 Timber finds are often very fragile and so must be lifted with care. Photograph with a scale. Do not allow the wood to dry out and ensure that it has sufficient support to stop it falling apart and submerge it in seawater. Keep the find in a cool and dark area. Change the water if biological growth is detected e.g., algae or mould. If the find is too large to store in water, try to keep it damp and cool in a darkened area.

5.8 Peat and Clay

5.8.1 Peat is black or brown fibrous soil that formed when sea level was so low that the seabed formed marshy land, for example on the banks of a river or estuary. Peat is made up of plant remains, and may contains microscopic remains that can provide information about the environment at the time it was formed. This information helps us to understand the kind of landscape that our predecessors inhabited, and about how their landscape changed. It can also provide information about rising sea-level and coastline change, which are important to understanding processes that are affecting us today. Prehistoric structures (such as wooden trackways) and artefacts are often found within or near peat, because our predecessors used the many resources that these marshy areas contained. As these areas were waterlogged and have continued to be waterlogged because the sea has risen, 'organic' artefacts made of wood, leather, textile and so on often survive together with the stone and pottery which are found on 'dry' sites.

5.8.2 Fine-grained sediments such as silts and clays are often found at the same places as peat. These fine-grained sediments also contain the microscopic remains that can provide information about past environments and sea level change. Any discoveries of such material would be of archaeological interest, and their occurrence should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 20).

Actions to take:

5.8.3 Any sediments collected should be stored in a sealed container with seawater and keep cool. Do not try to break apart the deposits.

5.9 Fibre and Textiles

5.9.1 Fibrous finds are unlikely to survive in marine conditions, but occasionally they do. Typical fibrous finds might include ropes and rigging, weaving, sailcloth, sacks, clothing, basketry, fishing nets etc.

Actions to take:

5.9.2 Due to the incredibly fragile nature, once any fibrous or textile find has been recovered it must be dealt with quickly. Take photographs with a scale, but do not use flash. Carefully place it in a sealed container. Try to keep it out of the light. If possible, keep the find in its original burial deposit i.e., the sediment it was found in, and seawater. This will help to protect the material.

5.10 Plastic, Rubber etc.

5.10.1 In most cases, rubber, plastic, Bakelite and similar modern materials are not of archaeological interest and can be disregarded. One exception is where such materials are found in the same area as aluminium objects and structures, which may indicate aircraft wreckage from World

War Two. Such material should be reported (The Crown Estate 2014: 14) and should not be removed from the site.

Actions to take:

5.10.2 Do not bend or clean any plastic or rubber finds. Photograph the find with a scale and then store in seawater in a cool and dark area.

5.11 Resinous or Mineral Substance

5.11.1 These materials include amber, jet, coal, or bitumen. Typical finds might include ornaments, jewellery, beads, sealants, or caulking materials, all of which would be of archaeological interest and should be reported.

Actions to take:

5.11.2 These finds might appear stable, but if they are not stored properly, they may begin to deteriorate. Photograph a find with a scale, and then keep stored in seawater.

5.12 Glass

5.12.1 Glass artefacts are found on the seabed. Finds may include bottles, beads, panes of glass from ship's windows. Unless obviously modern (beer bottles etc) glass finds should be reported, particularly where it occurs alongside other finds as this may represent a wreck site.

5.12.2 Glass is likely to survive in marine conditions, but it does degrade; glass deterioration is usually categorised by leaching, with causes an iridescent pattern to form on the glass, it looks somewhat like an oil slick. It can also begin to flake away.

Actions to take:

5.12.3 Photograph with a scale before packing carefully to avoid breakage. Ensure it is covered in cool seawater in the dark.

6.0 Preliminary record form

Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (PAD) Preliminary Record Form			
Company Name			
Vessel / Team Name			
Site / Sea Area Name			
Date			
Time of compiling information			
Name of compiler (Site Champion)			
Name of finder (if different from above)			
Date and time Nominated Contact informed			
Unique Find Identifier			
Time of find		Datum if not WGS84	
As found Latitude		As left Latitude	
As found Longitude		As left Longitude	
As found accuracy		As left accuracy	
Is the position the original position or has the material been moved by operations?			
How was the position derived, i.e., ROV, Sonar, Diver, Collision, etc.			
Details of the circumstances and activity that led to the discovery?			
Description of the find /anomaly			

Apparent size /extents	
Details of any find(s) recovered	
Details of any photographs, drawings of other records made of the find(s) e.g., location figure	
Details of treatment or storage of find(s)	
General notes	
Extend of any deviation required	
Signed	Date

7.0 Annex A - Legislation applicable to marine archaeology

Legislation or policy document	Rationale	Jurisdiction			
		Wales	Isle of Man	N. Ireland	Scotland
The World Heritage Convention 1972	The Convention defines the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties, recognising the way in which people interact with nature and the need for balance between nature and culture. Signatories are required to preserve World Heritage Sites defined by the Convention and to identify and preserve national heritage through suitable planning programmes and measures.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Protection of Wrecks Act (1973)	The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 was enacted to safeguard wreck sites in United Kingdom (UK) territorial waters that are of historical, archaeological, or artistic importance, or pose a danger to navigation or public safety. The Act provides a legal mechanism for managing and preserving wreck sites in situ in alignment with international heritage principles (e.g. the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) and UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)). In Scottish waters, only Section 2 of the Act, concerning dangerous wrecks, is applicable.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979	Enshrines the protection and preservation of remains with high archaeological or historical interest. Operations or activities with the potential to disturb or damage the remains within the boundaries of the protected area may be permitted following the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State but any unlicenced operations that may disturb the site are illegal.		✓		✓
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982	The Convention establishes rules governing the use of the oceans and outlines both the traditional legal framework and introduces new additions. Provisions relating to the marine historic environment state how remains should be treated and that ownership of remains lay with the state of origin.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Protection of Military Remains Act 1986	Provides protection for the wreckage of military aircraft and certain military wrecks. Designations can be either as a Controlled Site or Protected Place where access may be permitted but any operations that may disturb the site are illegal, unless licenced by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). All military aircraft are automatically protected under this legislation; however, vessels must be designated individually.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Electricity Act 1989	Section 9 of the Act (as amended) sets out the statutory duty to preserve amenity, including cultural, historical and archaeological heritage when developing electricity infrastructure.	✓			✓

Legislation or policy document	Rationale	Jurisdiction			
		Wales	Isle of Man	N. Ireland	Scotland
The Electricity Order (Northern Ireland) 1992	Schedule 9 sets out the statutory duty to preserve amenity, including cultural, historical and archaeological heritage when developing electricity infrastructure.			✓	
Merchant Shipping Act 1995	The Act stipulates that the 'Receiver of Wreck' administers and is responsible for processing incoming reports of wreck and cargo.	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (revised) 1992 (the Valletta Convention)	The Convention sets out conservation and enhancement of archaeological heritage, both terrestrial and marine, as a goal of planning policy and sets guidelines for the funding of physical investigation and research, publication of research findings, public access and awareness and constitutes an institutional framework for pan-European cooperation on archaeological heritage.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995	Replaces the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 in Northern Ireland.			✓	
International Council of Monuments and Sites Charter on the Protection and Management of Underwater Cultural Heritage 1996 (the Sofia Charter)	The Sofia Charter is intended to encourage the protection and management of underwater cultural heritage in inland and inshore waters, shallow seas and deep oceans. The Sofia Charter should be read as a supplement to the International Council on Monuments and Sites Charter for the Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage (1990), which defines "…archaeological heritage…" as that part of the material heritage in respect of which archaeological methods provide primary information, comprising all vestiges of human existence and consisting of places relating to all manifestations of human activity, abandoned structures and remains of all kinds, together with all the portable cultural material associated with them.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Isle of Man Electricity Act 1996	Section 2.7 determines the need to preserve amenity during developments.		✓		

Legislation or policy document	Rationale	Jurisdiction			
		Wales	Isle of Man	N. Ireland	Scotland
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage 2001	The Convention provides a framework on how to better identify, research and protect underwater heritage while ensuring its preservation and sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	The main legislation that provides for the assessment of environmental effects of certain plans and programmes.				✓
Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009	The Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) forms key legislature underpinning the activities of the Marine Directorate Management Organisation (MMO), who are responsible for overseeing balanced and considerate marine development in UK waters11. The Act also sets out powers to designate Marine Protection Conservation Areas Zones (MCZPAs), including Historic MPAs.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marine (Scotland) Act 2010	This legislation aims to protect and enhance the marine environment and introduced the marine planning system and marine licensing for certain activities within the marine environment. This legislation also makes it possible to establish Historic Marine Protected Areas (HMPAs)				✓
UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)	Provides the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment.	✓	✓	✓	✓

[11] The Act has limited application outside of England and Wales. Only relevant to the Northern Ireland offshore waters (inshore covered instead by the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013

Legislation or policy document	Rationale	Jurisdiction			
		Wales	Isle of Man	N. Ireland	Scotland
Manx Marine Environmental Assessment (MMEA) Report	Forms the baseline assessment for the ongoing Manx Marine Environmental Assessment project. Does not form a policy document but provides key guidance that will inform the finalised overarching policy documents (Chapter 5.0 deals with the historic environment).		✓		
The Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013	Enacted to provide marine plans for the Northern Ireland inshore region (being drafted).			✓	
Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Act 2014	Sets out the role and legal status of HES, including changes in processes for the designation of monuments and buildings (scheduling and listing) and for consents relating to scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. A right of appeal against certain decisions by Historic Environment Scotland has also been introduced.				✓
Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014)	Sets out national planning policies; in particular stipulates that the planning system should support an integrated approach to coastal planning to ensure that development plans and regional marine plans are complementary.				✓
Scotland's National Marine Plan (2015 – NMP2 in consultation)	Sets out policies relating to the management and development within Scottish inshore (out to 12 NM) and offshore waters (12 to 200 NM).				✓
Welsh National Marine Plan (2019)	Policy SOC_5 recognises the importance of coastal and underwater heritage and encourages appropriate consideration of potential negative developmental impacts,	✓			
Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS) (2019)	Outlines how out duty of care for the historic environment can be fulfilled regarding any decision that may impact it. The policy supports good decision making.				✓
HES Circular 12 (2019);	Sets out the processes undertaken by HES to fulfil their regulatory and advisory roles; in particular the role of HES in in the planning system and procedures for consultation.				✓

Legislation or policy document	Rationale	Jurisdiction			
		Wales	Isle of Man	N. Ireland	Scotland
National Planning Framework 4 (Scotland) (2023)	Sets out the spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. It should be read as a whole and replaces NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy.				✓
Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023	Replaces the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 in Wales.	✓			
Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for energy (EN-1) (2025)	Sets out national policy for energy infrastructure. Whilst ultimate decision on infrastructure projects lies with the devolved governments, the NPS may also be a relevant consideration in planning decisions in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3) (2025);	This National Policy together with EN-1 (see above), provides the primary policy for decisions by the Secretary of State on applications they receive for nationally significant offshore renewable electricity generating stations in waters in or adjacent to England or Wales up to the seaward limits of the territorial sea, or in the UK Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)[TC17.1]. As above, may have some relevance for planning in areas overseen by devolved governments.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland	Sets out core policies governing approaches to development within marine environments, including consideration of known and newly discovered heritage assets. Underpins the overarching UK Marine Policy Statement.			✓	

8.0 Annex B - Technical guidance applicable to marine archaeology

Guidance	Outline
Aircraft Crash Sites at Sea (Wessex Archaeology, 2008)	Guidance regarding the management and understanding of sites that include aviation remains within marine environments
Archaeological Written Schemes of Investigation for Offshore Wind Farm Projects (The Crown Estate, 2021)	Guidance on the range of archaeological methodologies that may be required as part of the initial investigation stages or the mitigation phase of offshore projects (not exclusive to offshore wind projects).
Assessing Boats and Ships 1860-1950 (Wessex Archaeology, 2011)	Guidance on the assessment of shipwrecks from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries.
Code of Practice for Seabed Development (Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee (JNAPC), 2006)	The Code provides guidance to developers relating to risk management and legislative implications of developing within the marine environment in the UK. It also outlines the responsibility of developers in protecting the UK's marine heritage.
Conservation principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (Historic England (HE), 2008)	This guidance emphasises the importance of understanding and preserving the significance of heritage assets. It advocates for inclusive participation, transparent decision-making, and informed change that sustains cultural, historical, aesthetic, and communal values.
Collaborative Offshore Wind Research into The Environment (COWRIE) Historic Environment Guidance for the Offshore Renewable Energy Sector (COWRIE, 2007)	A generic guidance note on the survey, and appraisal and monitoring of the historic environment during the development of offshore renewable energy projects in the UK. The guidance is applicable to the marine environment and the coastal environment adjacent to any development, encompassing the inter-tidal area, coastal margin and those areas further inland likely to be affected by offshore renewable energy developments.
COWRIE Guidance for Assessment of Cumulative Impacts on the Historic Environment from Offshore Renewable Energy (COWRIE, 2008)	A guidance note on the assessment of cumulative effects on the historic environment during the development of offshore renewable energy projects in the UK. The guidance is applicable to the marine environment and the coastal environment adjacent to any development, encompassing the inter-tidal area, coastal margin and those areas further inland likely to be affected by offshore renewable energy developments.
International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties (ICOMOS, 2011)	The guidance provides a structured framework for evaluating how proposed changes, such as development, may affect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of cultural World Heritage properties. Rooted in the principles of the World Heritage Convention, the guidance emphasises the need for early, informed, and transparent decision-making to ensure that heritage values are preserved amid change. The guidance serves as a vital tool for balancing conservation with sustainable development.

Guidance	Outline
Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (HE, 2015)	This document provides practical guidance to support the implementation of national heritage policy within the planning system. It emphasises the importance of understanding the significance of heritage assets as a foundation for informed and proportionate decision-making. The document outlines best practices for assessing significance, engaging appropriate expertise, using Historic Environment Records (HERs), and considering the impact of development proposals. It encourages early engagement, structured analysis, and transparent justification of any changes, aiming to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their value while allowing for sustainable development.
National Grid's commitments when undertaking works in the UK (2016)	Sets out National Grid's approach to development and how it will comply with the principles of preserving amenity as set out within the Electricity Act 1989.
Marine Geophysics: Data Acquisition, Processing, and Interpretation: Guidance Note (HE, 2025)	Guidance on the archaeological requirements for the acquisition, processing and interpretation of geophysical and hydrological data.
Military Aircraft Crash Sites (English heritage, 2002)	Guidance document relating to the identification and management of aircraft crash sites.
Offshore Geotechnical Investigations and Historic Environment Analysis: Guidance for the Renewable Energy Sector (Gribble, J. and Leather, S., 2011)	A guidance note on the aims of offshore geotechnical investigations and the resulting analysis undertaken during the development of offshore renewable energy projects in the UK. The guidance is applicable to the marine environment and the coastal environment adjacent to any development, encompassing the inter-tidal area, coastal margin and those areas further inland likely to be affected by offshore renewable energy developments.
Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries: Offshore Renewables Projects (The Crown estate, 2014)	Guidance document relating to the reporting procedure of archaeological discoveries in the offshore environment.
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment (CIfA, 2020)	A generic guidance note on the assessment of the historic environment during the development projects in the UK. The Code of Conduct guides the practices and standards for archaeological assessment both onshore and offshore.