Ein cyf/Our ref: SC1817
MMO ref: EIA/2018/00059
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Sent via email

28 March 2019

Dear Nicola Simpson,

THE MARINE WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2007 (as amended)

ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2017

MARINE ENERGY TEST AREA (META)

I am writing further to your request for a scoping opinion, dated 16 November 2018, made in accordance with The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 (as amended) ("The Regulations"). I am also writing on behalf of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) who received a scoping opinion request in relation to a consent required under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended), which the MMO is currently responsible for administering within Welsh inshore waters as transferred under the section 12 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 ("the 2009 Act"). The MMO are responsible for consenting functions under section 36(1), (5) and (7) of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended), for the construction or extension of generating stations. From 1 April 2019 the MMO's consenting functions under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) will be transferred to Welsh Government. This scoping opinion is provided as a joint opinion on behalf of both Natural Resources Wales Permitting Service (NRW PS) and the MMO. Screening opinions have been issued individually by each organisation under the relevant regulations.

The purpose of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening procedure is to determine whether the proposed works require an Environmental Impact Assessment and submission of an Environmental Statement (ES). The purpose of the scoping procedure is to determine what information should be provided in the ES.

In reaching our Screening Opinion NRW PS have considered the proposed works against Schedule A1 and A2 of The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 (as amended). In reaching our scoping opinion NRW PS and MMO have had regard to the information provided in the "Marine Energy Wales, Marine Energy Test Area (META) Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report", dated 16 November

2018 and “Evidence Report” dated 15 March 2019, and considered the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Marine Works Regulations. We have also consulted with the bodies that we consider have an interest in the project by reason of their environmental responsibilities, or local or regional competences, as required by the above regulations, and had regard to their comments.

Screening Opinion

It is our opinion that Phase 2 of the META project falls within the categories of project listed within Schedule A2, paragraph 13 and/or 20 of the above regulations (see below), and therefore must be considered in terms of its size, nature and location having regard to the relevant criteria listed in Schedule 1 of the above regulations.

> *13. Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule A1).*
> *20. Installations for hydroelectric energy production.*

We have carefully considered the views of the consultation bodies alongside the criteria as set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations, and have determined, based on the information provided; that the project has the potential to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

We have come to this conclusion on the basis of the likely significant impacts of the project, specifically with regard to the scale of the project, split across three sites within and adjacent to Milford Haven Waterway, all of which are within designated nature conservation sites. We have also come to this conclusion due to the nature of the project which will involve regular installation, testing and removal of wave and tidal devices and components over a 25-year period, which is likely to have significant environmental impacts on seabed habitats and species, mobile species and other users of the sea.

Scoping Opinion

This letter sets out the additional information that NRW PS and MMO consider necessary to be included and/or assessed in the ES for this Project.

Please note our scoping opinion is based on the information available to us at this time. The information provided is not a definitive list of the ES / EIA requirements and further information may be required following an application for this project, to ensure a full assessment is carried out.

This Screening and Scoping Opinion will be provided to all those bodies that were consulted and will be publicised on our website and on our Public Register.

The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

Scoping Opinion (SC1817)

Summary of the proposal

The Marine Energy Test Area (META) Project consists of eight marine test sites within the Milford Haven Waterway and adjacent waters. This scoping opinion covers phase 2 of the META project which includes three of the test sites: Warrior Way (Site 6); Dale Roads (Site 7); and East Pickard Bay (Site 8). The META project aim is to provide a series of pre-consented, non-grid connected, marine energy test areas that will allow for the deployment and testing of devices, components and subassemblies, and ancillary activities and equipment, in support of marine energy testing.

The activities that will be supported at the phase 2 sites are:

- Scale wave device testing;
- Scale tidal device testing;
- Full scale wave device testing;
- Micro tidal device testing;
- Testing of remotely operated vehicle (ROV) or other monitoring equipment;
- Site preparation methodologies;
- Decommissioning methodologies;
- Salvage methodologies; and
- Tow, float and mooring solution testing for floating offshore wind technology.

Location

The phase 2 META sites are located within Milford Haven Waterway and adjacent waters in Pembrokeshire.

The Warrior Way site is located within the Waterway offshore from the Pembrokeshire Science and Technology Park, south east of Pembroke Ferry, and at the mouth of the Cosheston Pill. The Warrior Way site encompasses an area of 10,900 m^2 (10.9 Ha) and lies entirely within the Pembrokeshire Marine / Sir Benfro Forol Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Dale Roads site lies outside the Dale shelf anchorage within the Waterway to the west of Great Castle Head, and south of St Ishmael's. The site encompasses an area of 196,200 m^2 (19.62 Ha) and lies entirely within the Pembrokeshire Marine/ Sir Benfro Forol SAC.

The East Pickard Bay site overlaps with the southern boundary of the Waterway. It lies immediately south of Sheep Island and runs south-eastward parallel to the coast towards Freshwater West Bay. The East Pickard Bay site encompasses an area of 2,580,000 m^2 (258 Ha) and lies entirely within the Pembrokeshire Marine/ Sir Benfro Forol SAC.

Consultation Responses Received

In considering the scoping report, the NRW PS consulted with various consultation bodies. The consultation bodies that responded are listed below:

- Natural Resources Wales Technical Experts (NRW TE)
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
- Trinity House Lighthouse Service (THLS)
- Royal Yachting Association (RYA)
- Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Welsh Government (WG)
- Cadw
- Dyfed Archaeological Trust
- Chamber of Shipping
- NATS Safeguarding
- BEIS
- ABPmer (underwater noise and vibration)

0. General comments

0.1. Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 was submitted in order to provide clarification/changes to the project that was detailed within the Scoping Report submitted November 2018. The Evidence Report detailed the intention to scope out of the EIA/ES works associated with the onshore cable route and compound as these works will be progressed by another developer. We disagree that the onshore/terrestrial impacts can be scoped out of the EIA/ES. We consider that the onshore works and infrastructure are part of the same project as the offshore development and offshore cable and therefore must be considered within the EIA/ES.

0.2. Marine and coastal guidance produced by NRW that may provide useful information to help with your project is available here: https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/marine/marine-and-coastal-guidance/?lang=en

0.3. The Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) must as a minimum consider the cumulative effects of META phase 2 with:

- META phase 1;
- Dredging activities;
- Disposal activities
- Egnedol Wales Ltd 350MW land based green energy scheme
- Draft Welsh National Marine Plan

0.4. The following data sources may provide useful information for the assessment of cumulative effects:
- Marine Licence applications: http://lle.gov.wales/catalogue/item/MarineLicences/?lang=en
- The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects register: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/register-of-applications/
- The Developments of National Significance Register: http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/180312-dns-register-en.pdf
- Planning Policy e.g. Local Development Plans, Transport Plans (National and Local) and National Policy Statements.

0.5. The ES submitted must demonstrate consideration of the points raised in this scoping opinion. It is recommended that a table is provided in the ES summarising the scoping opinion comments and how they are addressed in the ES.

0.6. The EIA must be undertaken by a competent person and the ES must include a competent expert statement.

1. Non-Technical Summary

1.1. Page A-iii mentions licence applications that are required for the project. Consideration should be given to whether any other licences or consents are required, such as safety zone consent under the Energy Act, a Flood Risk Activity Permit, SSSI consent or a Species licences. It should be noted that some of these consents can be administered through the Marine Licence application.

1.2. Section 1.1 refers to the pre 2017 amended Marine Works EIA regulations, such as referring to the development falling under schedule 2 , 3a and 3c, rather than schedule A2 section 13 and 20. The EIA/ES must refer to the relevant provisions in the current (2017) regulations. The scoping report quotes incorrect provisions of the Marine Works EIA regulations (MWR) in other sections too. This must be corrected in the ES.

2. The Proposed Development

2.1. Section 2.2 – As set out in Schedule 3 paragraph 2 of the MWR, the ES must include a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the applicant, which are relevant to the proposed project, the regulated activity and their specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.

2.2. Section 2.3.1 - The paragraph makes reference to advice provided by NRW PS which was provided in relation to a request to review the phase 1 technical note, seeking advice from NRW PS on the marine licensable activities under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, proposed for phase 1. The technical note reviewed only covered phase 1 and the advice provided was specifically in relation to which activities were marine licensable, based solely on the information contained within that report, which was made clear in the response. NRW PS specifically asked whether the consenting strategy and/or site selection report should be reviewed and was advised to only review the technical note. Nowhere in the report or request was NRW PS asked to comment on the requirement for EIA (or any other

assessments such as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) or Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment. The procedure for obtaining a screening opinion is set out in Reg 11 and Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, and includes a number of procedural requirements such as consultation and the placing of information on the public register. As such, the advice provided by NRW PS to MEW regarding the phase 1 technical note cannot be taken to imply a negative screening opinion, as this section of the scoping report seeks to assert. However, having now received the Marine Licence application for the phase 1 works NRW PS has considered the application of the MWR to this project and determined that an EIA is not required for phase 1.

2.3. The description of the project as a whole is clear but there is some detail lacking on the following aspects which must be provided in the ES:

- scale of the devices;
- footprint on the seabed;
- type of devices;
- type of turbines;
- description of the wave devices;
- operational and maintenance activities
- monitoring activities such as any pre-deployment grab sampling
- decommissioning – it is unclear what the decommissioning phase will consist of.

2.4. Some of the terminology used in the description of the Project Design Envelope (PDE) has not been described sufficiently. For example “surface piercing structures” or “sub-surface testing” have not been explained further. It is also not clear what “pre-prepared foundations” are and what the potential impacts of using these would be. The EIA must include better definitions of the terminology used in order to be able to correctly assess the potential environmental impact.

2.5. For all three phase 2 test areas the frequency of deployment and retrieval operations in a 12-month period has been identified as up to 20 test deployments and retrieval operations in a 12-month period. In addition, the proposed project duration has been identified as 25 years. Due to the number of potential deployments and the size of the test areas it has to be assumed that a device with the maximum seabed footprint could be deployed anywhere within the mapped test area which could result in 20 different deployment locations over a year, multiplied over 25 years. This has implications when considering impacts to designated habitat features of Pembrokeshire Marine SAC. This is of particular importance for the Warrior Way and Dale Road test sites which fall within a number of Annex 1 habitat features including Estuaries, Large Shallow Inlets and Bays, and potentially subtidal Reefs.

2.6. We suggest that the potential for impacts under two different scenarios should be considered within the EIA/ES:

- Multiple deployments over the same area of seabed and cumulative impacts on the habitat over the length of the project
- Multiple deployments over different parts of the site with potentially shorter, but more extensive impacts over a wider area.

2.7. In light of this, we consider a more realistic scenario for Warrior Way and Dale Roads would be to define an area within the wider test area, no bigger than the

maximum footprint of two devices and moorings plus a buffer that could be utilised only for devices requiring seabed deployments of any kind. For other test deployments from floating platforms, vessels or existing moorings the wider test area could be utilised.

2.8. In order to determine the most suitable location within the wider test site, appropriate characterisation of the baseline environment is required in the EIA/ES. We recommend that multi-beam bathymetric surveys be conducted for each of the test sites, if suitable data is not available. This will allow identification of the broader habitats and help target areas where ground truthing (using drop down video or similar) can be used. The chosen area should present low sensitivities to the various impacts from the project as well as high resilience to habitat disturbance and temporary loss. Marlin's habitat sensitivity assessments[1] could be used for this purpose. We anticipate that by identifying smaller seabed deployment zones in the wider area that it would limit the amount of impact to the sensitive Annex 1 habitats in the Milford Haven Waterway.

2.9. The Warrior Way and Dale Roads test area include potential energy generation and grid emulation systems but no “installation of permanent infrastructure”. Further information must be provided in the EIA on this aspect, including consideration of the potential environmental impacts that could arise from any temporary infrastructures.

2.10. Section 2.4, Warrior Way - It would be useful to have examples of the kind of scaled devices that could be deployed here. More information on the likely device types and deployment methods must be provided in the EIA/ES.

2.11. Figure 2-1 of the scoping report shows the proposed test area lying over the SSSI boundary for the Milford Haven Waterway SSSI. Subsequent Evidence report dated 15 March 2019 detailed that the Warrior Way site boundary has been refined and figure 1-2 shows the proposed test area adjacent to the SSSI. Impacts on the SSSI features must be considered within the EIA.

2.12. Table 2-1 of Scoping Report and table 1.1 of Evidence Report- From the details provided it is difficult to envisage the scale of the maximum scenario provided. For example, the maximum dimensions stated of 25m x 15m (375 m^2) do not equate to either the sea area per device/component or the seabed footprint per device (both ≤ 200 m^2). This therefore raises the question of what dimension the applicant is referring to. This must be clarified in the ES.

2.13. Section 1.3.1.2 Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 details that the maximum number of devices that may be tested concurrently at Warrior Way and Dale Road has been reduced from two (as was stated in the Scoping Report) to a single device. However in East Pickard Bay it is stated that up to two activity tests could be occurring concurrently; the indicative footprint in Fig 2.1 shows a single area of 10,250m^2. Clarification must be provided in the ES as to whether both devices would be in the same footprint area or located further apart if this occurred. Habitat evidence for all areas likely to be impacted must be presented in the ES.

2.14. Table 2-1 - It is stated that a buffer area of seabed clearance of a 5m strip around the device footprint may be required. The ES must provide clarification of

[1] https://www.marlin.ac.uk/activity/habitats_report

why this would be needed. Any clearance of the seabed will widen the benthic footprint of the project and result in greater impact on seabed habitats.

2.15. Table 2-1 - the maximum scenario for the mooring attachment method states that a gravity base may be required at Warrior Way with a maximum area of 25 m². This does not appear to correspond to the maximum footprint described. This must be clarified in the ES.

3. Consenting

3.1. Section 3.2.1 - the policy considered in the EIA/ES must also include the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the requirements of this Act must be considered appropriately in the impact assessments.

3.2. The scoping report recognises and highlights the developing Welsh National Marine Plan (WNMP) and marine planning framework as key policy context and correctly identifies that the plan is not yet adopted. Once the plan has been adopted we must make decisions in accordance with the marine plan, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. In preparation for the adoption of the plan, we recommend that any EIA undertaken reviews the contents of the draft WNMP, and the EIA/ES considers how the project complies with the draft Policies, or the final policies once the plan is adopted.

3.3. Section 3.2.2 suggests that a separate Marine Licence application will be submitted for each of the three META phase 2 sites. It is unclear why separate licences are proposed and we would recommend that all three of the phase 2 sites are submitted on one marine licence application.

3.4. As set out in paragraph 1.2 above, there are other licences/consents that may be required for the project. The EIA/ES must include a full list of the licences/consents required for the project.

3.5. Page A-36 - The reference to the 2011 decommissioning guidance notes is welcomed. It should be noted that these guidance notes have recently been revised. The Offshore Renewable Decommissioning Guidance Notes for Industry (updated 2019) is now available on the GOV.UK website; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/decommissioning-offshore-renewable-energy-installations The EIA/ES must consider the relevant sections of the updated guidance. We recommend that you discuss the decommissioning of the META site(s) with the Offshore Renewables Decommissioning Team in BEIS at the earliest opportunity to ensure you are aware of any new requirements affecting test centres and the offshore renewables sector more generally.

3.6. Page A-37 – the text relating to responsibility for EPS licences is incorrect. NRW has been responsible for administering EPS licences in inshore waters (within 12nm) since it was formed in 2013. In April 2018 NRW obtained responsibility for EPS licensing in the Welsh offshore area. Also, EPS licences are handled by the Species Licensing Team, not Marine Licensing Team. This should be corrected in the ES.

4. Approach to EIA

4.1. The ES must include:

- A description of the likely significant effects of the project, whether direct, indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term,

long-term, permanent, temporary, positive and negative.

- A description of the methods used to make the assessment of the significant effects and difficulties encountered in compiling the information, and uncertainties involved.
- A description of measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset identified significant adverse effects, and proposed monitoring arrangements.
- A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the project on the environment resulting from the vulnerability of the project to risks of major accidents or disasters

4.2. Where possible, other environmental assessments should be coordinated with the EIA process. However, it is important to note that HRA and WFD (and any other assessment) are separate processes to the EIA.

4.3. The UK is due to leave the EU on 29 March 2019. –Regardless as to whether the UK leaves the EU with a deal or without a deal, all legal obligations relating to compliance with environmental licences/permits and legislation will continue to apply. NRW on behalf of Welsh Ministers will continue to issue licenses in line with our current practice.

5. Scope of the Assessment

5.1. The EIA/ES must consider the potential for impacts on other European States.

6. Technical Assessments

6.1. Coastal Processes

6.1.1. The description of the physical baseline environment within the three test areas is quite limited at present, as is the information on the future survey works proposed. More detailed information describing the baseline environment must be presented in the ES, informed by site-specific monitoring.

6.1.2. It would have been useful to include the recent multibeam bathymetry data within this scoping report in order to help inform the review of the project design envelope. We are aware that bathymetry data has been collected for East Pickard Bay but do not know the survey extent or the data products available. Similar coverage of bathymetry must also be included in the ES for both the Warrior Way and Dale Roads sites to better understand the benthic environment and inform micro siting of devices. This should be further supported by ground truthing of the areas with either drop-down video or grab samples. Without knowledge of this data we cannot advise whether the existing dataset will suffice.

6.1.3. Surveys should be undertaken in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Saunders, G., Bedford, G.S., Trendall, J.R., and Sotheran, I. (2011). Guidance on survey and monitoring in relation to marine renewables deployments in Scotland. Volume 5. Benthic Habitats. Unpublished draft report to Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland.[2]

6.1.4. We agree with the proposed approach to EIA which will draw upon desktop information combined with site specific data collection.

[2] https://tethys.pnnl.gov/sites/default/files/publications/SNH-2011-Volume-5.pdf

6.1.5. Section 6.1.5: Proposed approach to EIA it is stated in Paragraph 2 that: "Due to the relatively small scale of the devices and the temporary and short-term nature of the deployments at META it is anticipated that morphological beach response modelling will be required to support the EIA". We presume that this is supposed to read will not be required, and we are satisfied that beach response modelling will not be required.

6.1.6. Table 6-1: Operational phase impacts assessed in the EIA must also include change in the hydrodynamic regime as the result of tidal device installation at the Warrior Way test site.

6.1.7. Table 6.1 - Impact 8: Given that the proposed test areas are all within designated sites there is the potential for direct impacts on designated habitat features as well as sediment disturbance. For example, direct loss of habitat extent due to the footprint of a device or associated moorings. This must be assessed in the EIA/ES.

6.1.8. Table 6-2 - We suggest Coastal lagoons can be scoped out. This is because the features are not within or adjacent to any of the test areas and we do not consider there to be any impact pathways to these features.

6.1.9. The proposed marine energy test area will provide a useful opportunity for studying the impact of various device types on the surrounding environment and we would encourage you to explore opportunities for collaboration with device developers and universities to learn from the deployments to assist with better understanding impact pathways, to reduce uncertainty.

6.2. Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology

6.2.1. The description of the baseline environment within the three test areas is quite limited at present. More detailed information on the baseline environment must be presented in the ES.

6.2.2. Sections 5.1 and 6.2.3 - There is no proposal to undertake subtidal work for the EIA. This section also states that the "most up-to-date contemporary evidence (i.e. within the last 5 years)" will be used for the EIA. As there is little recent evidence and the existing data is at a broad resolution and does not cover the test sites in their entirety, site specific subtidal survey data is likely to be required. We recommend that this survey work includes multi-beam bathymetry of Dale Roads and Warrior Way with ground truthing of the areas with either drop-down video or grab samples. The survey work should characterise the test sites to identify the habitats potentially affected by the project, in particular for areas encompassing Annex I habitats (all of Warrior Way and Dale Roads, partial for East Pickard Bay). Up to date evidence must be presented in the ES.

6.2.3. Benthic surveys should be undertaken in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Saunders, G., Bedford, G.S., Trendall, J.R., and Sotheran, I. (2011). Guidance on survey and monitoring in relation to marine renewables deployments in Scotland. Volume 5. Benthic Habitats. Unpublished draft report to Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland.
- Hitchin, R., Turner, J.A., Verling, E. (2015) Epibiota remote monitoring

from digital imagery: Operational guidelines[3].

6.2.4. Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 section 1.3.1.2 details that the East Pickford Bay site has been refined. It is unclear from the evidence report what has been refined. Based on the location of East Pickford Bay detailed within the Scoping Report dated 16 November 2018 we consider that the location of the East Pickard Bay test area should be amended. This is because it currently covers a large area that includes both circalittoral rock and mobile sand. In order to minimise the direct impact on designated (SAC) reef feature, which includes all circalittoral rock in the area, it would be beneficial to move the East Pickard Bay site to the South slightly to cover only areas of mobile sand substrate. This should be easily identified in the multibeam bathymetry as the boundary between rock and sand will be clear. The subtidal sand substrate in Freshwater West bay is not part of the subtidal sandbank SAC feature. It is unclear if these are the changes that have been proposed within the 'Evidence Report' however if these changes are made then we consider that further surveys of East Pickard Bay would not be required, because mobile sand is resilient to habitat disturbance and temporary loss of habitat; there would likely be a quick recovery of the habitats affected; and the habitat is not part of a SAC feature.

6.2.5. Milford Haven Port Authority (MHPA) undertake regular surveys of the Milford Haven waterway. MHPA may therefore have bathymetry data covering the Warrior Way and Dale Roads test sites that could be used to inform the EIA.

6.2.6. Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group (MHWESG) have previously commissioned a sediment profile imaging (SPI) survey of the Milford Haven Waterway (Germano, 2012[4]) which provides a detailed map of sedimentary habitats. The study is the most comprehensive assessment of sediment distribution and benthic habitat composition available for the Milford Haven Waterway. For access to the data contact the MHWESG directly.

6.2.7. Section 6.1.4 – Sea caves and Atlantic Salt-Meadows are also Annex I habitat features of the SAC. Please see NRW's 'Regulation 37 Advice' document[5] for this SAC for further information.

6.2.8. Table 6-3 There is not enough information at this stage to not include Atlantic Salt-Meadow feature within the EIA feature scoping. This must be included in the EIA/ES.

6.2.9. Table 6-3 - Dwarf eelgrass must be included for the Milford Haven Waterway SSSI as this habitat is found throughout the Milford Haven and there is not enough information at this stage to scope this feature out of the EIA.

6.2.10. The following impact pathways must be assessed in the EIA/ES:

- Loss of habitat (not just disturbance). This is especially important for sensitive habitats with low resilience and recoverability;
- Impacts from repeated device deposits and removals, including the

[3] http://www.nmbaqcs.org/media/1591/epibiota_operational_guidelines_final.pdf

[4] Germano (2012) Sediment Profile Imaging Survey of Milford Haven Waterway, Wales, UK (request report and data from Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group)

[5] https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/wildlife-and-biodiversity/find-protected-areas-of-land-and-seas/conservation-advice-for-european-marine-sites/?lang=en

repeated loss and disturbance of habitat;
- Cable impacts such as cable burial and protective measures (armouring, clam shell weights);
- Effects of accidental pollutants;
- Repeated vessel mooring and anchorage.

6.2.11. Research and monitoring carried out on other marine renewable energy developments should be reviewed and utilised in the assessments where appropriate. This may identify potential impact pathways which have not yet been identified.

6.2.12. We draw your attention to the HRA for the Draft Welsh National Marine Plan which was published in December 2017. This was unable to rule out Adverse Effect on Integrity for multiple SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites and features. These conclusions must be taken into account when screening relevant plans or projects under the Habitats Regulations that could have an in-combination effect on those sites and when considering cumulative and synergistic effects in the EIA.

6.3. Fish and Shellfish Ecology

6.3.1. Some fish species have not been included in the scoping report which are found in the Haven. However, the list of fish proposed for assessment in the EIA should be sufficient to provide a variety of fish species for which impacts can be evaluated against; these can act as proxies to other similar species. Should further literature reviews identify particular areas of importance for spawning or feeding of other species within the site areas that are not on the list, these fish species must be included within the assessment.

6.3.2. It is stated that operational testing could be “throughout the year (will not be seasonally restricted) and will not be restricted to daylight hours”. Some species could be vulnerable to turbine movements, and this must be considered in the EIA/ES. For example, herring migrating to spawning grounds further up the Haven in early spring could be vulnerable to turbine passage.

6.3.3. Section 6.3.3 - The section on shellfish is not entirely accurate. There are no current permits for carpet clams, razor or native oyster fisheries. Oysters were historically widespread in the Haven but are now depleted and there is no current oyster dredge fishery in the Haven. There are however still important oyster bed habitats within the Haven which have high sensitivity to certain benthic impacts such as disturbance and habitat loss.

6.3.4. Table 6-6 includes some of the species found within the Waterway and identifies those of primary conservation importance. Seahorses must also be considered as they are Schedule 5 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, with *Hippocampus guttulatus* recorded in the Milford Haven.

6.3.5. Basking sharks have been included in the marine mammals chapter of the scoping report rather than fish ecology. Basking sharks should be considered in the fish ecology chapter of the EIA/ES.

6.3.6. Section 6.3.5 - The same impacts identified within the benthic section (Table 6-4) must be assessed in the EIA/ES for shellfish.

6.3.7. We disagree with scoping out all operational effects on fish (table 6-8). There is not enough information at this stage on types of device or worst-case

scenario proposed to scope out impacts 2,3,4 and 5. Impacts from the operation of the turbines must be included for fish species and this must include assessment of disturbance, injury and mortality.

6.3.8. Injury and mortality impacts from wave devices must be considered in the EIA/ES. It is acknowledged that the majority of wave devices present little concern for impacts on fish, however, some devices have the potential for fish ingress within the device. Other unforeseen impacts may also occur. A review of existing wave devices would help to identify potential other impacts which may be relevant to the EIA.

6.3.9. The fish ecology section of the scoping report states that potential effects of marine noise on fish and shellfish are proposed to be scoped out of the EIA on the basis that the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of marine renewable devices will result in noise levels lower than ambient noise levels experienced within study area. This does not correspond with the underwater noise section of the Scoping Report (Section 6.7) which presents a proposed approach to assessing the effects of the installation and operation of devices on fish and benthic ecology. The potential effects of noise on fish and shellfish must be assessed in the EIA (see comments in section 6.7 of this scoping opinion).

6.3.10. The assessment of underwater noise and vibration on fish receptors must consider the potential for disturbance, avoidance and barrier effect impacts.

6.4. Marine Mammals

6.4.1. We generally agree with the species identified within the scoping report as present within the area, and the relative importance of these species. However, the baseline description fails to note that the study area overlaps with the largest and most important breeding colony of Grey seals in the Celtic & Irish sea. This must be addressed in the ES.

6.4.2. The following data sources should be considered in the assessment of marine mammals:

- Bottlenose Dolphin Monitoring in Cardigan Bay 2014 - 2016, NRW Evidence Report No: 191[6]
- Skomer MCZ Grey Seal Survey[7]
- Grey seal breeding census Skomer Island[8]
- The identification of discrete and persistent areas of relatively high harbour porpoise density in the wider UK marine area, JNCC Report No.544[9].

[6] • Lohrengel, K., Evans, P.G.H., Lindenbaum, C.P., Morris, C.W., Stringell, T.B. (2018) Bottlenose Dolphin Monitoring in Cardigan Bay 2014 - 2016, NRW Evidence Report No: 191, 162pp, Natural Resources Wales, Bangor. [Soon to be available on NRW website - available on request from NRW]

[7] https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/686245/eng-report-195-skomer-mcz-grey-seal-survey-marloes-peninsula-1992-2016.pdf

[8] https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/687317/eng-evidence-report-252-grey-seal-breeding-census-skomer-island-2016.pdf

[9] • Heinänen, S. & Skov, H 2015. The identification of discrete and persistent areas of relatively high harbour porpoise density in the wider UK marine area, JNCC Report No.544 JNCC, Peterborough.

- The use of harbour porpoise sightings data to inform the development of Special Areas of Conservation in UK waters, IAMMWG. 2015[10].
- Guidance to Inform Marine Mammal Site Characterisation Requirements at Wave and Tidal Stream Energy Sites in Wales. Report by Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU)[11].

6.4.3. Table 6-9 'Designated sites' has omitted Cardigan Bay SAC – this appears to be a typographical error as it does appear in the preceding list of sites for consideration.

6.4.4. Consideration must be given to all marine mammal SACs within the relevant management unit. While most sites have been included in the assessment, for completeness the assessment should also list North Anglesey Marine SAC. Potential impacts should be considered on harbour porpoise from all 3 SACs within the management unit.

6.4.5. Potential disturbance effects on marine mammals as a result of increased underwater noise due to vessels involved in installation, operation and maintenance activities are proposed to be scoped into the EIA. The proposed approach for further assessment is to determine the potential increase in baseline levels of vessel traffic during these activities and to undertake a desk-based review of the types of vessels to be utilised and the potential for noise disturbance. Given the likely scale and nature of vessel activity associated with the META Project, this proposed approach is considered appropriate.

6.4.6. The scoping report states that potential effects on marine mammals from the noise generated during the installation and decommissioning of devices are proposed to be scoped out of the EIA on the basis that the expected sound pressures levels of drilled piling (which are lower than expected from miscellaneous small vessels) are unlikely to result in injury to marine mammals. Potential effects on marine mammals during the operation of tidal turbines are also proposed to be scoped out on the basis that available data suggest the levels of noise generated by these devices is low and, in the context of existing high levels of baseline noise present within the Waterway, are unlikely to be a significant issue. This does not correspond with the underwater noise section of the Scoping Report (Section 6.7) which presents a proposed approach to assessing the effects of the installation and operation of devices on marine mammals. We disagree with the proposed scoping out of installation and decommissioning activities, and tidal turbines during the operational phase. The potential effects of noise on marine mammals during installation, operation and decommissioning must be assessed in the EIA (see comments in section 6.7). If geophysical surveys are proposed, then a noise impact of these activities should be considered.

6.4.7. Overall we are satisfied with the identification of impact pathways, and the

[10] IAMMWG. 2015. The use of harbour porpoise sightings data to inform the development of Special Areas of Conservation in UK waters. JNCC Report No. 565, JNCC Peterborough

[11] • Sparling, C.; Smith, K.; Benjamins, S.; Wilson, B.; Gordon, J.; Stringell, T.; Morris, C.; Hastie, G.; Thompson, D.; Pomeroy, P. (2015). Guidance to Inform Marine Mammal Site Characterisation Requirements at Wave and Tidal Stream Energy Sites in Wales. Report by Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU). pp 88 https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/686187/eng-report-082-guidance-marine-mammal-site-characterisation-for-wave-and-tidal-energy-sites.pdf

environmental features (marine mammals) that could potentially be affected. However, changes to hydrodynamics resulting in potential impairment of foraging opportunities for marine mammals must be included in the EIA/ES as an impact pathway. This should be informed by an assessment of coastal processes.

6.4.9. Table 6-10 Collision risk – Although a review of available evidence, and swept area of operational tidal turbines will allow a broad assessment of the likely risk of the project, it will not be possible to conduct a detailed collision risk assessment without data on local densities of marine mammals. However, given the small scale, and inshore location resulting in likely low level of risk from the project, we are satisfied that this level of detail is unlikely to be necessary.

6.4.10. Basking Shark should be assessed in the fish and shellfish ecology section of the ES, not the marine mammal chapter.

6.5. Marine Ornithology

6.5.1. The list of species and sites currently in scope for assessment is incomplete. The list of species and sites must be updated in the EIA/ES. This must include all sites for which the foraging range of their designated feature intersects the proposed site boundaries. For example, the following sites have been omitted and must be included in the EIA:

- Carmarthen Bay / Bae Caerfyrddin SPA (designated for wintering common scoter)
- Northern Cardigan Bay / Gogledd Bae Ceredigion (designated for wintering red-throated diver)
- Grassholm SSSI/SPA

6.5.2. The EIA/ES must establish the presence of vulnerable species of bird. All species of birds need to be considered as part of the screening process for the EIA (and HRA). Possible adverse impacts may be applied to a range of birds (including bird features of SSSIs and SPAs) both breeding and non-breeding populations over a wide area of search; to include seabird features within their mean maximum foraging ranges.

6.5.3. The scoping area for the EIA should be denoted by mean-maximum foraging ranges from seabird SSSIs and SPAs. Thaxter et al (2012) initially set the standard of mean-maximum foraging ranges based on seabird tracking data. However, further tracking data has become available, in particular from the Future of the Atlantic Marine Environment (FAME) and Seabird Tracking and Research (STAR) projects. Seabird biotelemetry is a fast moving field and the EIA should consider data that becomes available on foraging range throughout the timespan of the assessment. See footnote for some seabird tracking data that is available from RSPB[12].

6.5.4. It is noted that 1 year of site specific ornithology surveys are planned to be undertaken (section 5.1). The nature of the surveys proposed are not clear, but

[12] https://rspb.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d6c3aa1ec7184a2895a01cebf451c7b3&utm_source=rspb.org.ukseabirdtracking&utm_medium=shorturl

we anticipate that one year of surveys should be sufficient to inform the EIA. It should be noted that further operational surveys may be required in future if deemed appropriate following review of the survey data and additional information.

6.5.5. The EIA must identify the extent of the offshore test sites and provide a defined site boundary and appropriate buffer as a basis for undertaking baseline surveys.

6.5.6. Owing to the distance of the test sites (including the application buffers) from the shore, boat based or aerial surveys may be required, in accordance with Guidance on Survey and Monitoring in Relation to Marine Renewables Deployments in Scotland Volume 4: Birds (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2011).

6.5.7. To assess the potential impacts of the scheme on ornithology the surveys must take account of all the ancillary components of the project. These may include the cable landfall, access tracks, control station, construction compounds, or other structures required by the scheme.

6.5.8. In addition to bird surveys, a desk study should be completed. On the whole, the data sources proposed to be used appear reasonable. The following data sources should be considered in the EIA:

- Historical at sea surveys for birds such as the ESAS and WWT combined seabird data for Welsh waters;
- BirdTrack data;
- Bird data from the Pembrokeshire county recorder[13]
- Terrestrial bird data for the general vicinity, including chough data is available from the RSPB.

6.5.9. Possible adverse impacts have been identified for a range of wildlife. However, impacts associated with floating wind devices have been overlooked in relation to barrier effect and collision risk for birds. Operational risks may need further consideration through robust modelling. Guidance is available from SNH.

6.5.10. Potential disturbance effects on seabirds as a result of increased underwater noise due to vessels involved in installation, operation and maintenance activities are proposed to be scoped into the EIA. The proposed approach for further assessment is to determine the potential increase in baseline levels of vessel traffic during these activities and to undertake a desk based review of the types of vessels to be utilised and the potential for noise disturbance. Considering the scale and nature of the proposed activities, the proposed approach is considered appropriate.

6.5.11. The proposed cumulative impact assessment (CIA) appears to be limited to direct impacts within the near vicinity and it lacks a list of potential projects and plans for consideration. The CIA must consider all relevant plans and projects – see paragraphs 0.3 and 0.4 of this scoping opinion for plans/projects to be considered and suggested information sources for identifying other relevant projects.

6.6. Onshore Ecology

[13] https://birdsin.wales/counties/pembroke/

6.6.1. Table 1.11 of the Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 proposes that onshore ecology can be scoped out. We disagree that the onshore/terrestrial impacts can be scoped out of the EIA/ES. We consider that the onshore works and infrastructure are part of the same project as the offshore development and offshore cable and therefore must be considered within the EIA/ES.

6.6.2. In reference to section 6.6 of the scoping report; A lack of terrestrial surveys has been undertaken to support the proposals; for example, no ecological walkovers have been completed, and further surveys are not proposed. Without knowing the species and habitats that are present it is not possible to undertake a meaningful impact assessment. An appropriate baseline must be established in the EIA/ES for onshore ecology.

6.6.3. The proposed location of the terrestrial elements may fall within the Freshwater West (North) Geological Conservation Review Site, the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC, Castlemartin Coast SPA or Broomhill Burrows SSSI. Ecological surveys are required to inform the assessment of potential impacts on these sites. An assessment of the potential impact on these sites must be presented in the ES.

6.6.4. There is insufficient survey work to assess which habitats, species and features are present and thus identify potential cumulative impacts. Further surveys and assessments are required to identify cumulative impacts.

6.7. Underwater Noise

6.7.1. The underwater noise assessment must follow the latest guiding principles for assessing the impact of underwater noise[14]. This includes applying an appropriate acoustic model, and relevant noise sources and model input data[15]. The limitations and constraints of any approach must be clearly set out. The acoustic thresholds that are referenced in the Scoping Report consider potential injury effects only and there is a need to consider available published criteria or indicators of behavioural responses in marine mammals[16] and fish[17].

6.7.2. The underwater noise assessment must include a desk-based review of the latest available scientific evidence of the observed responses of marine fauna (fish, marine mammals and benthic invertebrates) to different types of underwater sounds for context. Although scientific research on the potential effects of underwater noise on invertebrates is relatively underdeveloped[18],

[14] Faulkner, R.C., Farcas, A., Merchant, N.D. (2018). Guiding principles for assessing the impact of underwater noise. Journal of Applied Ecology: 1-6.
[15] NPL (2014). Good Practice Guide for Underwater Noise Measurement, National Measurement Office, Marine Scotland, The Crown Estate, Robinson, S.P., Lepper, P. A. and Hazelwood, R.A., NPL Good Practice Guide No. 133, ISSN: 1368-6550, 2014.
[16] Southall, B. L., Bowles, A. E., Ellison, W. T., Finneran, J. J., Gentry, R. L., Greene Jr, C. R., Kastak, D., Miller, J.H., Nachigall, P.E., Richardson, W,.J., Thomas, J.A and Tyack, P.L. (2007). Marine mammal noise exposure criteria: initial scientific recommendations. Aquatic Mammals 33: 411–521.
[17] Hawkins, A.D., Roberts, L., Cheesman, S. (2014). Responses of free-living coastal pelagic fish to impulsive sounds. The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, 135.
[18] Hawkins, A. D., Pembroke, A., and Popper, A. 2015. Information gaps in understanding the effects of noise on fishes and invertebrates. Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries, 25: 39–64.

there is increasing evidence to suggest that invertebrates are sensitive to noise, in particular particle motion[19],[20],[21].

6.7.3. The Scoping Report states that the cumulative impacts of the META Project with the MOD firing range located to the south of East Pickard Bay will be considered as part of the underwater noise assessment and fed into the EIA topic specific Chapters, including Fish and Shellfish, and Marine Mammals. The potential cumulative underwater noise effects from other activities (e.g. shipping) and projects that might generate underwater noise must also be considered as part of the EIA.

6.7.4. The potential for transboundary impacts has not been considered in the Scoping Report. The nearest other Member State to the META Sites is the Republic of Ireland. We consider that it is unlikely that there will be any transboundary effects in relation to marine noise given the scale and nature of the activities proposed at the Phase 2 sites. The potential for cross-border impacts with England is also considered unlikely.

6.8. Onshore Noise and Vibration

6.8.1. Table 1.11 of the Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 proposes that onshore noise and vibration can be scoped out. We disagree that the onshore/terrestrial impacts can be scoped out of the EIA/ES. We consider that the onshore works and infrastructure are part of the same project as the offshore development and offshore cable and therefore must be considered within the EIA/ES.

6.8.2. No comments were received from consultees in relation to onshore noise and vibration detailed within the Scoping Report dated November 2018 and we have no comment to make on this section of the report. The ES should however include an assessment of impacts on onshore noise and vibration, as set out in the scoping report.

6.9. Commercial Fisheries

6.9.1. No comments were received from consultees in relation to commercial fisheries and we have no comment to make on this section of the report. The ES should however include an assessment of impacts on commercial fisheries, as set out in the scoping report.

6.10. Shipping and Navigation

6.10.1. We agree that navigation should be scoped into the EIA and recommend engagement with the MCA, UKHO and Trinity House. The navigational assessment should use sources such as IMO routeing measures, Trinity House AIS Data, UKHO charts and aids to navigation.

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[19] Roberts, L., Hardig, H.R., Voellmy, I., Bruintjes, R., Simpson, S.D., Radford, A.N., Breithaupt, T., and Elliott M., 2016. Exposure of benthic invertebrates to sediment vibration: From laboratory experiments to outdoor simulated pile-driving. Proc. Mtgs. Acoust. 27. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1121/2.0000324

[20] Spiga, I., Caldwell, G.S., and Bruintjes, R., 2016. Influence of Pile Driving on the Clearance Rate of the Blue Mussel, Mytilus edulis (L.). Proc. Mtgs. Acoust. 27. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1121/2.0000277

[21] Tidau, S., and M. Briffa, 2016. Review on behavioral impacts of aquatic noise on crustaceans. Proc. Mtgs. Acoust. 27. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1121/2.0000302

6.10.2. The EIA/ES must assess potential impacts on navigational issues for both commercial and recreational craft, covering:

- Collision Risk
- Navigational Safety
- Visual intrusion and noise
- Risk Management and Emergency response
- Marking and lighting of site and information to mariners
- Effect on small craft navigational and communication equipment
- The risk to drifting recreational craft in adverse weather or tidal conditions
- The likely squeeze of small craft into the routes of larger commercial vessels.

6.10.3. A Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA) must be submitted in accordance with MGN 543 and the MCA Methodology for Assessing the Marine Navigational Safety & Emergency Response Risks of Offshore Renewable Energy Installations.

6.10.4. The shipping and navigation study must include radar and manual observations in addition to AIS data to ensure vessels of less than 300gt are captured. MGN 543 requires that traffic studies should be completed within 24 months prior to the ES submission or a new traffic study should be undertaken.

6.10.5. The cumulative and in combination effects on shipping routes must be assessed taking into account the proximity to other activity or proposed developments in the area.

6.10.6. The NRA must relate to a safe Under Keel Clearance (UKC), which should address the maximum drafts of vessel both observed and anticipated, from which a realistic UKC assessment should be undertaken. Further guidance is available on the MCA website[22].

6.10.7. The mooring arrangements for floating devices must be carried out in accordance with the MCA and HSE Guidance 'Regulatory expectations on moorings for floating wind and marine devices', which also include Third Party Verification (see link in MCA website in footnote for further information).

6.10.8. Particular attention should be paid to cabling routes and where appropriate burial depth for which a Burial Protection Index study should be completed and, subject to the traffic volumes, an anchor penetration study may be necessary. If cable protection is required e.g. rock bags, concrete mattresses, a 5% reduction in surrounding depths referenced to Chart Datum is generally acceptable. This will be particularly relevant where depths are decreasing towards shore and potential impacts on navigable water increase.

6.10.9. Any application for safety zones will need to be carefully assessed and additionally supported by experience from the development and construction stages.

6.10.10. Particular consideration must be given to the implications of the site size and location on SAR resources and Emergency Response Co-operation Plans (ERCoP). Attention should be paid to the level of radar surveillance, AIS and shore-based VHF radio coverage and give due consideration for appropriate mitigation.

[22] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/offshore-renewable-energy-installations-impact-on-shipping

6.10.11. MGN 543 Annex 2 requires that hydrographic surveys fulfil the requirements of the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) Order 1a standard, with the final data supplied as a digital full density data set, and survey report to the MCA Hydrography Manager and the UK Hydrographic Office. Failure to report the survey or conduct it to Order 1a might invalidate the Navigational Risk Assessment if it was deemed not fit for purpose.

6.10.12. We support that buoys, other navigational features, Navigation Risk Assessment and Notices to Mariners should be used and that all measures will be taken to keep the risk of any obstruction/ obstacle to navigation and risk of collision as low as possible.

6.10.13. Potential impacts on cruising routes must be assessed in the EIA, particularly as regards East Pickard Bay.

6.11. Historic Environment

6.11.1. Table 1.11 of the Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 proposes that the terrestrial historical environment can be scoped out. We disagree that the onshore/terrestrial impacts can be scoped out of the EIA/ES. We consider that the onshore works and infrastructure are part of the same project as the offshore development and offshore cable and therefore must be considered within the EIA/ES. In addition, the impact on the offshore works on the setting of onshore heritage assets must be considered where relevant.

6.11.2. As Warrior Way (Site 6) and Dale Roads (Site 7) will not have any terrestrial components we agree that the Historic Environment (terrestrial archaeology) can be scoped out of the EIA for these areas.

6.11.3. The following designated heritage assets are located within 500m of East Pickard Bay (Site 8):

- Scheduled monuments
  - PE020 Devil's Quoit Burial Chamber
  - PE167 West Pickard Camp
  - PE494 Gravel Bay anti-aircraft battery
- Listed Buildings
  - 5954 Corse Bridge and attached Walled Channel
  - 16583 Seaweed Hut on foreshore
  - 17162 War Memorial
  - 17166 Rocket Cart House
  - 17167 Lookout Tower
- Historic Landscapes
  - HLW (D) 3 Milford Haven Waterway

6.11.4. These designated heritage assets have all been identified in the scoping report apart from scheduled monument PE167 West Pickard Camp which must also be included in the EIA. We consider that the proposed development is unlikely to directly affect any of the historic assets identified above but could have an impact on their settings. This potential impact must be assessed in the EIA/ES using the guidance given in the Welsh Government document “The Setting of Historic Assets in Wales”.

6.11.5. The proposed development is outside the boundaries of the registered Milford Haven landscape of outstanding historic interest and it is unlikely that

given the scale of the proposed terrestrial works that it will have more than a local impact, at worst, on the registered historic landscape. Consequently, we consider that the impact of the proposed development on the registered historic landscape can be scoped out of the EIA.

6.11.6. The scoping report has identified that the proposed works could have an impact on undesignated heritage assets and proposes to assess the impact on these in a desk-based assessment carried out in accordance with the standards and guidance set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. This would be an appropriate first stage of assessment for these assets, but further assessment may be required, including geophysical surveys and archaeological evaluation, in order to fully assess any impact on undesignated heritage assets.

6.12. Marine Archaeology

6.12.1. The scoping report has identified relevant data sources for marine archaeology in the vicinity of Sites 6, 7 and 8, and the approach to consider both the direct and indirect impact on the identified historic assets is appropriate. This work must be carried out to the standard outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)

6.12.2. The elements of the proposed developments that will be visible in the registered Milford Haven landscape of outstanding historic interest are anticipated to have no more than a local impact on the registered historic landscape. Consequently, NRW PS considers that the impact of the propose development on the registered historic landscape can be scoped out of the EIA.

6.13. Landscape, Seascape and Visual Impact Assessment

6.13.1. Table 1.11 of the Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 proposes that impact on the onshore works on landscape and seascape can be scoped out of the ES. We disagree that the onshore/terrestrial impacts can be scoped out of the EIA/ES. We consider that the onshore works and infrastructure are part of the same project as the offshore development and offshore cable and therefore must be considered within the EIA/ES.

6.13.2. No comments were received from consultees in relation to Landscape, Seascape and Visual Impact Assessment and we have no comment to make on this section of the scoping report. The ES should however include an assessment of impacts on landscape, seascape and visual.

6.14. Socio-economic and Tourism

6.14.1. No comments were received from consultees in relation to socio economic and tourism and we have no comment to make on this section of the report. The ES should however include an assessment of impacts on socio-economic and tourism.

6.15. Other Users

6.15.1. The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect in relation to the management of en route air traffic, and does not conflict with NATS safeguarding criteria.

6.16. Traffic and Transport

6.16.1. Table 1.11 of the Evidence Report dated 15 March 2019 proposes that impact on traffic and transport can be scoped out of the ES. We disagree that the onshore/terrestrial impacts can be scoped out of the EIA/ES. We consider that the onshore works and infrastructure are part of the same project as the offshore development and offshore cable and therefore must be considered within the EIA/ES.

6.16.2. No comments were received from consultees in relation to traffic and transport and we have no comment to make on this section of the report. The ES should however include an assessment of traffic and transport impacts.

Yours sincerely

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