



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

# REVIEW OF CONSENTED OFFSHORE WIND FARMS IN THE SOUTHERN NORTH SEA HARBOUR PORPOISE SCI/ CANDIDATE SAC

DRAFT HRA Consultation

Closing date: 13 December 2018

November 2018

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# Introduction

In January 2017 the Southern North Sea Site of Community Importance / candidate Special Area of Conservation (SCI/cSAC) was designated for the protection of harbour porpoise. When a new SAC is designated there is a statutory requirement for a review to be undertaken of certain projects. As part of the review, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to be undertaken by the competent authority, which in this case is the joint responsibility of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

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# General information

## Why we are consulting

The purpose of this consultation is to seek your views on the draft HRA.

## Consultation details

**Issued:** 01 November 2018

**Respond by:** 13 December 2018

**Enquiries to:**

Gareth Leigh  
Energy Infrastructure Planning  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
3rd Floor, Abbey Orchard 1  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SEW1H 0ET

Tel: 0300 068 5677

Email: [RoC@beis.gov.uk](mailto:RoC@beis.gov.uk)

**Consultation reference:** RoC SNS SCI draft HRA

**Audiences:**

We are seeking views from statutory nature conservation bodies, non-governmental organisations, offshore wind farm representatives and any other interested party.

**Territorial extent:**

The draft HRA extends to English waters and the Renewable Energy Zone and reports on transboundary effects.

## How to respond.

**Email to:** [RoC@beis.gov.uk](mailto:RoC@beis.gov.uk)

**Write to:**

Gareth Leigh  
Energy Infrastructure Planning  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
3rd Floor, Abbey Orchard 1  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation.

Your response will most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions posed, though further comments and evidence are also welcome.

## Confidentiality and data protection

Information you provide in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential please tell us, but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

We will process your personal data in accordance with all applicable UK and EU data protection laws. See our [privacy policy](#).

Processing will be carried by officials from BEIS and the MMO, and our contractor Genesis Oil and Gas Consultants Ltd.

We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on [GOV.UK](#). The summary will include a list of names or organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

## Quality assurance

This consultation has been carried out in accordance with the government's [consultation principles](#).

If you have any complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, please email: [beis.bru@beis.gov.uk](mailto:beis.bru@beis.gov.uk).

## The proposals

The draft HRA informs the review of six offshore wind farm consents and considers representations made in a 'Call for Information' issued in October 2017. The conclusion of the draft HRA is that the consented offshore wind farms considered will not have an adverse effect on the SCI/cSAC either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, provided that the parameters of each wind farm as assessed by the HRA are not exceeded.

It is proposed that each relevant project's marine licence be modified by inserting a suitable pre-construction condition (requiring a Site Integrity Plan (SIP)). The effect of the SIP would be to limit the wind farms to the parameters that have been assessed by this draft HRA, leading to the conclusion that the wind farms will not adversely affect the site. Prior to construction, developers would need to provide a SIP demonstrating that these parameters would not be exceeded. If these parameters are exceeded, then further assessment would be required. In such a circumstance, the project could only proceed if the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), in consultation with relevant bodies, has satisfied itself that the site would not be adversely affected. It is proposed that this condition be inserted to modify the marine licences of all wind farm consents under review. This includes operational projects, as any capacity to build out further needs to be subject to assessment.

## Consultation questions

When providing your comments on the draft HRA, we ask that you consider the following questions:

- 1. What are your thoughts on the addition of a pre-construction SIP condition in the marine licences? Please set out risks and opportunities.**
- 2. What realistic alternatives to the imposition of a new Marine Licence condition should we consider? Please set out risks and opportunities.**
- 3. Based on the evidence provided in the draft HRA, we conclude that the consented offshore wind farms considered will not have an adverse effect on the SCI/cSAC either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Do you agree with this conclusion?**

## Next steps

All responses will be published on Gov.uk and will be considered in the final HRA.



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This consultation is available from: [www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis)

If you need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [enquiries@beis.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@beis.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.