

DIRECTION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO (“THE SECRETARY OF STATE”) UNDER SECTION 35 OF THE PLANNING ACT 2008 RELATING TO THE MORVEN OFFSHORE WIND FARM TRANSMISSION ASSETS

1. By letter to the Secretary of State received on 15 February 2024, Morven Offshore Wind Limited (“the Applicant”) formally requested that the Secretary of State exercise the power vested in her under section 35(1) of the Planning Act 2008 to direct that the transmission assets forming Grid Connection 1 – England (“the Proposed Project”), which are required to facilitate the development of the Morven offshore wind farm, be treated as development for which development consent under the Act is required.
2. The Proposed Project contains the following elements as set out in section 2.7 of the supporting statement included with the direction request:
 - Up to four offshore export cables, each approximately 260 km long and associated works;
 - A landfall site, comprising transition joint bays to connect the offshore and onshore cables, and associated works;
 - Up to four onshore cables, each up to approximately 16km long and associated works;
 - An onshore substation; and
 - Cables from the onshore substation to the Hawthorn Pit national grid connection point.
3. The Secretary of State is satisfied that—
 - The Proposed Project is within one of the qualifying infrastructure fields listed in section 35(2)(a)(i) (energy);
 - The Proposed Project will be wholly within England, waters adjacent to England up to the seaward limits of the territorial sea, and the Renewable Energy Zone (except for any part of the Renewable Energy Zone in relation to which the Scottish Ministers have functions);
 - The Proposed Project does not fall within the existing definition of a “nationally significant infrastructure project” and therefore it is appropriate to consider use of the power in section 35(1) of the Act; and
 - The Applicant’s request constitutes a “qualifying request” in accordance with section 35ZA(11) of the Act.
4. Having considered the details of the Applicant’s proposals as set out in their letter of 15 February 2024, the Secretary of State concludes that the Proposed Project is nationally significant, for the reasons set out in the Annex below.
5. The Secretary of State considers that if the details of the Proposed Project change, before submitting any application to the Planning Inspectorate, the Applicant may wish to seek confirmation from the Secretary of State that the development that is the subject of the proposed application is the same as that for which the Direction is hereby given.
6. The Secretary of State has taken the decision within the conditions as required by sections 35A(2) and (5) of the Act, and issues this Direction accordingly under sections 35(1) and 35ZA of the Act.

7. THE SECRETARY OF STATE DIRECTS that the Proposed Project is to be treated as development for which development consent is required.
8. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FURTHER DIRECTS in accordance with sections 35ZA(3)(b) and (5) of the Act that an application for a consent or authorisation mentioned in section 33(1) or (2) of the Act or similar to that described in the qualifying request to the Secretary of State for a direction under section 35 of the Act made by the Applicant on 15 February 2024 for the Proposed Project is to be treated as a proposed application for which development consent is required;
9. This Direction is given without prejudice to the Secretary of State's consideration of any application for development consent which is made in relation to the Proposed Project.

Signed by

John Wheadon
Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning
For and on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero

5 March 2024

ANNEX

REASONS FOR THE DECISION TO ISSUE THE DIRECTION

The Secretary of State is of the opinion that the Direction should be issued because—

- The Proposed Project is of national significance, noting that it comprises large scale, complex, co-ordinated and high value infrastructure works, including proposals for up to four offshore export cables, each approximately 260 km long; a landfall site, comprising transition joint bays to connect the offshore and onshore cables; and up to four onshore cables, each up to approximately 16km long.
- As an essential requirement to facilitate and deliver substantial offshore wind capacity from a proposed renewable energy project comprised of up to 191 wind turbines, the Proposed Project will play an important role in enabling an energy system that meets the UK's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and the Government's objectives to create a secure, reliable and affordable energy supply for consumers.
- Progressing the proposal through the Planning Act 2008 development consent process will provide the certainty of a single, unified consenting process and fixed timescales.