

## **RSPB relevant representation to Navitus Bay Wind Park**

**23 June 2014**

The RSPB supports renewable energy, providing that adverse impacts on wildlife are avoided, e.g. through appropriate siting and design. The RSPB acknowledges the constructive pre-application discussions with the Applicant. As we note below, our concerns on certain key issues have been resolved. The RSPB will continue discussions with the Applicant with a view to resolving outstanding concerns, and to ensure that robust evidence is submitted to the Examination.

Subject to the specific comments below, the RSPB: (i) acknowledges and supports the survey and modelling work carried out by the Applicant in respect of the Project's potential impacts on birds, and the approach taken to assessing collision risk and disturbance; and (ii) based on the information submitted with the Application, the RSPB confirms it agrees with the Applicant that the offshore elements of the wind park will have no significant adverse impacts on bird populations.

We have outstanding concerns on the following matters.

The Applicant has committed to submit further information with the results of modelling work regarding the potential impacts on a suite of migrant bird species (as referenced in Volume B Offshore Environment Statement Chapter 12 paragraphs 12.4.55 and 12.4.62). The RSPB commits to work with the Applicant to investigate potential impacts with the intention of resolving concerns. However, consistent with our position at other examinations where additional material is submitted post acceptance, we request that such information is submitted as soon as practicable, ideally before the Preliminary Meeting, and subject to public consultation so that Interested Parties are not prejudiced. The RSPB will make submissions on this information at the appropriate point in the Examination timetable.

The RSPB has concerns over the methodological approach to the assessment of potential impacts on gannet. The RSPB commits to continue work with the Applicant to investigate potential impacts with the intention of resolving concerns.

The RSPB has concerns over potential habitat loss, due to the cable route, within the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA), Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation and Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site at West Moors Ministry of Defence site. Less damaging alternatives should be sought which do not lead to the potential loss of approximately 2 ha of internationally important habitat.

The RSPB has concerns relating to the risk of increased recreational disturbance to internationally designated heathlands due to construction of the cable within Hurn Forest, the resulting temporary loss of a car park and consequential displacement of visitor activity. Further assessment of possible impacts is required and appropriate mitigation identified. In relation to this, the RSPB has some concerns relating to the proposed mitigation for heathland birds.

The RSPB has some concerns over the effect of the Project on Atlantic Salmon but will defer to the Environment Agency's expertise on this matter.

The RSPB has some concerns over the effect of the Project on long-snouted seahorses and Black Bream but will defer to Natural England and The Seahorse Trust's expertise on this matter.

We will articulate any outstanding concerns in our written representations. We do not seek to participate in the Examination hearing, but will answer any questions from the Examining Authority.

The RSPB reserves the right to add to and/or amend its position in light of any new information and/or analysis submitted by the Applicant.