



THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITAT, &c.) REGULATIONS 1994 (AS AMENDED)

LICENCE TO DISTURB MARINE SPECIES

Public Case Handling Report for Licence Number: BS-00011332

Site	Mainland Shetland and the Moray Coast Inshore areas
Company	Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc Inveralmond House 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ
Brief Description of Project	Shetland HVDC link 2 project
Associated Licences	

Inshore/Offshore	Inshore
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TEST 1	Purpose of licence
	Social, economic or environmental purpose
Comments	
<p>Imperative reasons of overriding public interest (including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment). Is a specific need being met?: The Applicant, SHET, intend to carry out a campaign including geophysical, surveys in order to facilitate the development of a subsea cable route between mainland Shetland and the Moray Coast in mainland Scotland. SHET, as the licensed electricity Transmission Owner for this region has a statutory duty to provide an economic and efficient system for transmission of energy and to ensure that all its assets are installed and maintained to enable safe, secure and reliable transmission of power.</p> <p>What benefit does the activity provide or what need does it address?: The proposed surveys are to facilitate to the development of transmission infrastructure between mainland Shetland and mainland Scotland. This in turn will facilitate the substantial increase in renewable energy production in the area and the increasing demand for improved renewable energy connections. Why is the activity essential?: The purpose of the surveys is to: gather data on the condition and profile of the seabed to better inform decisions on Project design (eg installation techniques) and cable routing for the project; gather data on the benthic environment to inform the Marine Environmental Assessment that will support the Marine Licence Application for the Project; and Inform requirements for future survey works including the nature and extent of future surveys. In summary, the purpose of the surveys is to ensure that future works to install cabling infrastructure are done in the most appropriate, safe and environmentally sensitive manner. What public interest is served?: The surveys are to inform electricity transmission infrastructure development which is in the public interest. Is the activity in relation to government targets or policies?: The activity will support the increase in renewable electricity which is in line with government policy. Is the applicant undertaking a statutory function? The proposed surveys do relate to the statutory function of the Applicant to provide an economic and efficient system for the transmission of energy, and to ensure that all its assets are installed and maintained to enable safe, secure and reliable transmission of power.</p>	
Test 1 satisfied?	YES

TEST 2	Satisfactory alternatives
Comments	
<p>Consideration was given to two alternatives, these were to carry out the surveys or not to carry out the surveys. By not carrying out the surveys SHET would be unable to develop the design for transmission cable routes between mainland Scotland and mainland Shetland or to conduct the environmental assessments necessary to support future licence or consent applications. As such, the development of the transmission cable could not go ahead. This could hamper the transmission of renewable energy and potentially reduce the ability of the UK to meet net zero targets by 2050. The alternative, to carry out the surveys with appropriate mitigation would enable SHET to identify subsea conditions to allow project design specification to be finalised to ascertain a suitable cable route, and collect data to inform the environmental assessments, whilst minimising environmental impacts. This will contribute to the UK's ability to reach net zero targets by 2050. Although a very limited number of alternatives were presented, this is acceptable here as the purpose of these surveys is to inform the development of infrastructure. The surveys will seek the best route, in terms of safety, efficiency and the environment for the planned cables. The surveys will dictate the alternatives available at the next stage of the process.</p>	
Test 2 satisfied?	YES

TEST 3	Favourable conservation status
Comments	
In its response dated 22 January 2026 NatureScot highlighted that the mitigation outlined for cetaceans is also appropriate for basking shark and will avoid any adverse impact on the species. It also noted that SHET will adopt appropriate mitigation measures outlined in the Basking Shark Code of Contact (Shark Trust, 2024) for all relevant survey activities for the duration of the survey campaign.	
Test 3 satisfied?	YES

Date application received: 07/07/2025

Consultation start date: 23/09/2025

Consultation end date: 16/01/2026

Notes

Date	title	Text
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National Marine Plan considerations:

The decision is: In accordance and no further action required
Comments:

Date document generated: 23/03/2026