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Mr Ed Maxwell
Seagreen 1A Limited
No.1 Forbury Place,
43 Forbury Road,
Reading,
RG1 3JH

Date: 14 June 2022

Dear Mr. Maxwell,

Screening Opinion under The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

Thank you for the screening opinion request dated 07 April 2022 in regards to the proposed alternative cable landfall installation method for the consented export cable at Cockenzie, East Lothian (“the Proposed Works”). The Proposed Works form part of the Seagreen 1A Project whereby consent was granted for an additional export cable from the consented Alpha and Bravo offshore wind farms (“the Seagreen Project”).

The Seagreen 1A Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) project therefore the Scottish Ministers consider the Proposed Works to fall under paragraph 13 of schedule 2 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (“the 2017 MW Regulations”) on the basis that they constitute a change to schedule 2 works already authorised. Consequently, the Scottish Ministers are obliged to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the Proposed Works are or are not, an EIA project under the 2017 MW Regulations.

Under regulation 10(5) of the 2017 MW Regulations, the Scottish Ministers have consulted with the relevant local planning authorities (Angus Council, Dundee City Council, East Lothian Council, Fife Council and the Scottish Borders Council), NatureScot (operating name of Scottish Natural Heritage), Historic Environment Scotland (“HES”) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (“SEPA”) for their view on whether the Proposed Works are an EIA project. Copies of the consultation responses and the advice received are attached for your review (see Appendix 1).

When making a determination as to whether schedule 2 works under the 2017 MW Regulations are an EIA project, the Scottish Ministers must take into account the selection criteria set out in schedule 3 of the 2017 MW Regulations as are relevant to the Proposed Works. In this regard, the Scottish Ministers have considered the following:

Characteristics of the works

The Seagreen 1A Project was awarded a marine licence for the installation of one high voltage export cable that will transmit electricity from 36 of the consented wind turbine generators at the Seagreen Project to landfall at Cockenzie. The consented installation methodology is Horizontal Directional Drilling (“HDD”), however, further geotechnical assessments undertaken by Seagreen 1A Limited (“SG1A”) of the ground conditions near landfall have indicated that HDD installation may pose technical challenges.

The Proposed Works comprise an alternative installation methodology of ‘open cut’ ploughing or mechanical trenching between the original proposed landward entrance point of the HDD (approximately 10 metres (“m”) above charted Mean High Water Springs across the beach and intertidal zone. This will involve the excavation of a single trench approximately 825 m (700 m long x 12 m wide x 3 m deep through the intertidal zone, and 125 m long x 5 m wide x 3 m deep onshore) at the cable landfall. No other aspect of the Seagreen 1A Project is to be varied. The Proposed Works will occur over a short term (up to five months).

Location of the works

The Proposed Works are located at the proposed landfall between Prestonpans (to the west) and Cockenzie (to the east) forming part of the existing Seagreen 1A Project corridor. This overlaps and is adjacent to a number of designated sites, including the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex Special Protection Area (“SPA”) and the Firth of Forth SPA, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsar site. The Proposed Works could cause disturbance and temporary loss of habitat to the qualifying bird interests of these sites.

However, NatureScot advised that potential impacts could be addressed through the Habitats Regulations Appraisal process as part of any marine licence application and concluded that an EIA was not required in respect of the Proposed Works.

East Lothian Council also did not consider impacts on issues of biodiversity to be significant.

HES advised that the Proposed Works are unlikely to cause significant impacts on marine historic environment features and therefore an EIA is not required. They have, however, recommended that an archaeological mitigation scheme to account for potential impacts on undesignated archaeological remains should be submitted in support of any marine licence application.

Characteristics of the potential impact

Fife Council were of the view that there were no new or materially different significant impacts on the environment beyond those previously assessed for the consented Seagreen 1A Project. East Lothian Council agreed that the Proposed Works are unlikely to have significant environmental effects given the nature and the size of their location and supported the view that an EIA is not required.

Angus Council similarly considered that the Proposed Works would unlikely have a significant effect on the environment and would have no direct impact on Angus itself. Dundee City Council, the Scottish Borders Council and SEPA had no comments to make in respect of the Proposed Works.

Conclusion

In view of the findings above, the Scottish Ministers are of the opinion that an EIA is not required to be carried out in respect of the Proposed Works under the 2017 MW Regulations.

The Scottish Ministers support SG1A's proposal to submit an Environmental Appraisal alongside any marine licence application for the Proposed Works and refer SG1A to the consultation responses in Appendix 1 for advice on the content of this document.

If you increase, alter or extend the Proposed Works, you are advised to contact Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team again to confirm if the screening opinion is still valid.

A copy of the screening opinion has been forwarded to Angus Council, Dundee City Council, East Lothian Council, Fife Council and Scottish Borders Council Planning Departments. The screening opinion has also been made publicly available through the [Marine Scotland Information](#) website.

If you require any further assistance or advice on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Taylor
Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team