

Gemma Lee
Forthwind Limited
The Boathouse Hawkcraig
Aberdour
Burntisland
Fife
KY3 0TZ

Date: 17 April 2024

Dear Gemma,

SCREENING OPINION UNDER THE MARINE WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017 AND THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

Thank you for your screening opinion request dated 08 February 2024 in regards to the proposed variation to Forthwind Limited's section 36 consent and marine licence for the Forthwind Demonstration Project at Methil, Fife. The proposed changes include an increase to the parameters of the single three-bladed horizontal axis Wind Turbine Generator ("WTG") ("the Proposed Works").

The Proposed Works form part of the Forthwind Demonstration Project whereby a section 36 consent and marine licence were granted in March 2023 ("the Consented Works"). The Consented Works are 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") with the Proposed Works meeting the corresponding threshold described in column 2 of schedule 2. The Scottish Ministers also consider the Proposed Works to fall under paragraph 3 of schedule 2 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 ("the 2017 EW 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 an EIA project under the 2017 MW Regulations and the 2017 EW Regulations.

Under regulation 10(5) of the 2017 MW Regulations and the regulation 8(5) of the 2017 EW Regulations, the Scottish Ministers have consulted with NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency ("SEPA"), the City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, Fife Council and Historic Environment Scotland ("HES") as to their view on whether the Proposed Works are an EIA project. Copies of the consultation responses received are attached for your review (at Appendix I).

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

Characteristics of the works

The Forthwind Demonstration Project is in the pre-construction phase of the project. The Consented Works include a single three-bladed horizontal axis WTG, meteorological mast and export cable. The Proposed Works will include

- Increasing the rotor radius of the WTG from 127.5 metres (“m”) to 140 m;
- Increasing the rotor diameter of the WTG from 255 m to 280 m;
- Increasing the hub height of the WTG from 156 m to 181 m; and
- Increasing the height to blade tip of the WTG from 280 m to 305 m.

No other changes are proposed to the parameters of the Consented Works.

Location of the works

The Proposed Works are located within the Firth of Forth, approximately 1.5 kilometres from the coast of Methil and are within close proximity to a number of designated sites. An Appropriate Assessment (“AA”) was carried out for the Consented Works and concluded there would be no adverse effect on the site integrity of these designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The screening report concludes that the Proposed Works would not alter the conclusion of the original AA and would not result in any additional likely significant impacts to offshore ornithology, marine mammals, fish and shellfish and benthic ecology receptors. NatureScot concluded that it is content that the impacts from the Proposed Works remain not significant for each of these receptor groups.

NatureScot advised that the increase in height to the WTG may alter the cumulative baseline in relation to the Seascape and Visual Impact Assessment (“SLVIA”) however, is content that the additional impacts would not trigger the requirement of an EIA. NatureScot concluded that an EIA for the Proposed Works is not required.

East Lothian Council advised that the increase in height of the WTG and subsequent increase in height to the proposed aviation lighting could increase potential visual impacts from the Proposed Works. However, East Lothian Council were of the view that the impacts would not be significant beyond those previously assessed for the Consented Works and therefore an EIA is not required.

Fife Council advised that the Proposed Works are likely to have very little impact on the level of visual impact arising from the Consented Works and therefore unlikely to require an EIA.

Characteristics of the potential impact

HES advised that the Proposed Works would not result in significant impacts on marine historic environment features and therefore an EIA is not required.

No comments on the Proposed Works were received from the City of Edinburgh Council. SEPA had no site specific comments to make in respect of the Proposed Works.

East Lothian Council noted that it was unable to comment on the significance of the Proposed Works in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, the Scottish Ministers are content that the Proposed Works are unlikely to have significant adverse effects on the environment in this regard.

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 and 2017 EW Regulations.

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

A copy of the screening opinion has been forwarded to the City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council and Fife 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 Directorate - Licensing Operations Team

