

## NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Meeting:	Ecology Working Group
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023, 11:00-12:00
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	James Meyer (ESC)
Attendees:	James Meyer (ESC), Naomi Goold (ESC), Steve Mannings (SZC), Nick Stayt (SZC), Eleanor Wrigh (SZC), Andrew Murray-Wood (SCC), Eleanor Steward (Environment Agency), Ayden Hassan (Environment Agency), Patrick Robinson (Natural England), Sean Mahoney (Natural England), Adam Rowlands (RSPB) and Ben McFarland (SWT),
Apologies:	None

### Meeting Notes:

#### 1 INTRODUCTION AND ROLES

James Meyer (ESC)

Naomi Goold (ESC)

Steve Mannings (SZC)

Nick Stayt (AECOM on behalf of SZC)

Eleanor Wright (Quod – Secretariat role on behalf of SZC)

Andrew Murray-Wood (Suffolk County Council)

Eleanor Steward (Environment Agency)

Ayden Hassan (Environment Agency)

Patrick Robinson (Natural England)

Sean Mahoney (Natural England)

Adam Rowlands (RSPB)

Ben McFarland (Suffolk Wildlife Trust)

#### 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) / GOVERNANCE

East Suffolk Council (ESC) confirmed that minutes will be uploaded on the ESC website and accessible to public via the ESC Sizewell C (SZC) portal.

SMannings confirmed SZC Limited are responsible for secretariat role. This includes the provision of draft minutes to working group within 5 days of each meeting, for comment and agreement.

Related to the Draft ToR shared for review and comment, SMannings emphasised these are draft and any comments from working group are welcome. SMannings clarified that the drafts shared for comment have undergone a number of iterations following engagement with ESC and have been agreed with ESC and SCC prior to distribution.

Some queries were raised on the draft ToR raised by AMW: Page 1, 'quadrant survey' should be amended to 'quadrat survey'. It was agreed that this would be updated. AMW also raised a query over obligation regarding reporting of expenditure of contingency fund item within ToR and requested further explanation and understanding of what SCC are required to provide in support of this. SMannings confirmed contingency fund is £2m, as detailed within the Deed of

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Obligation and that it is to serve the two Monitoring and Mitigation Plans in context of recreational pressures of 'European Sites' which have been designated for Nature Conservation.

ES requested clarity on admin of the meetings, SMannings confirmed that ESC will chair meetings and SZC Limited will circulate agendas and are responsible for minute-taking.

AMW also queried why within the ToR only one point on specific requirements was included. SMannings and JM provided a joint response which clarified it had been pulled through from the Deed of Obligation and is reference to the available fund to be drawn down on in the future.

SMannings clarified that reference to maintaining effective working interfaces with other working groups, such as the Marine Technical Forum, has been included within the draft ToR.

**ACTION:** Members of the working group are to confirm agreement, subject to any comments, of the ToR document by Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**ACTION:** SZC Limited are to circulate annexes of draft ToR to members of the working group.

### 3 TOPICS OF INTEREST TO MEMBER PARTIES

If any members of working group change their preference of what areas they are interested in, it was confirmed that these can be changed in due course and are not fixed.

AR clarified that the RSPB have already provided a summary of interests in writing.

BM also confirmed that SWT have prepared a summary of interests in writing and confirmed focus on potential effects on the Sizewell Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (especially due to changes in water quality) rather than compensation sites, but are also interested in barbastelle (bats), natterjack toads and adder.

ES confirmed that the Environment Agency would want to be in attendance at all EWG meetings with a particular focus on aspects relating to the water environment. This position was seconded by SMahoney at Natural England.

**ACTION:** Natural England and Environment Agency representatives are to provide text on preferences for involvement in EWG meetings going forward.

### 4 PROJECT UPDATE

SMannings provided high level project update, confirming that the project is now a 50/50 ownership between EDF Energy and government. SMannings stated that negotiations are continuing with potential investors.

SMannings discussed works to date, confirming that some site clearance work has been completed in past year – including ecological, plantation, forestry, unexploded ordnance (UXO) works and archaeological works. Goose Hill woodland is 60-70% clear, with the rest to be cleared through the remainder of winter and next spring. SMannings stated that the MCA (land north of Sizewell B) is now completely cleared and works have started within Ancillary Construction Area (ACA). All the aforementioned works form pre-commencement works under the DCO. First commencement is currently anticipated to be early Q1 2024.

SMannings stated that all governance groups are being set up over next few months (by end of Jan/Feb). In parallel with this, all funds detailed within the Deed of Obligation, such as contingency and mitigation funds, are being set up. SMannings also stated that a planning application is to be submitted by SZC limited to ESC for recreational enhancements at wild Aldhurst.

SMannings stated that SZC Limited are firming up the programme of site establishment (i.e. circa first 2 years equivalent to "Phase 1" of construction programme as set out in Construction Method Statement appended to the Code of

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Construction Practice secured by DCO Requirement 2). The focus of project next year will be to put main strands in place to build main wall.

### 5 MATTERS ARISING

JM stated that this section of the Agenda was used to create space in standard agenda going forward for discussion of matters that may cross over into the permitting regime and planning mitigations (i.e. with Environment Agency).

BM clarified that SSSI water levels and water quality discussions is a good example of this as these are likely to overlap with other discussions in parallel working groups such as that on water, including the Water Level Management Group and the Water Management Working Group. It was agreed by members of the working that it will be useful to have an understanding on discussions and focus on these matters withing the parallel working groups.

AR queried how the group will operate in terms of interfacing. SMannings confirmed this working group will oversee all mitigation and take view on whether mitigation is being appropriately implemented and make any recommendations for changes if needed, then these will be reported to the Environmental Review Group.

The Terrestrial Ecological Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (TEMMP) will be a focus of the working group and will be covered further at the next meeting. SMannings stated that whilst most of the methods will be continuations of existing surveys there are some methods that need to be agreed by the EWG.

**ACTION:** SZC Limited are to circulate an inventory of TEMMP ahead of the next meeting to ensure meeting topics going forward align. This inventory is to include a list of actions where EWG approval is required.

**ACTION:** SZC Limited are to advise working group on any reports related to First Commencement that are near publishing/ in final draft so the members of the working group are aware of these and have indication of timescales.

### 6 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

Actions noted in the meeting were reviewed and a summary of these actions is provided at the end of these minutes.

### 7 AOB

None raised.

### 8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting to be scheduled for end of January 2024.

**ACTION:** SZC Limited to coordinate date and time of next meeting and send invites to working group members.

### Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	1	Confirm agreement, subject to any comments, of the ToR document by Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2023.	All members	18 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	2	SZC Limited to circulate annexes of draft ToR with the members of working group.	SZC	18 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024

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Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	3	Natural England and Environment Agency representatives to provide text for minutes re preferences for involvement in meetings going forward.	Natural England and Environment Agency members	20 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	4	SZC Limited to circulate an inventory of TEMMP ahead of the next meeting to ensure meeting topics going forward align.	SZC	19 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	5	SZC Limited are to advise the working group on any reports related to First Commencement that are near publishing/ in final draft version so the member of the group are aware of these and have indication of timescales.	SZC	18 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	6	SZC to coordinate next meeting and send invites to working group members. It was agreed that the meeting would be held at the end of January 2024.	SZC	20 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023

**Author: Eleanor Wright (Quod)**