



## ENGLISH HERITAGE

Offshore Energy SEA 2 Consultation  
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11<sup>th</sup> May 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

**UK Offshore Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment 2: Environmental Report  
Future Leasing/Licensing for offshore energy: oil and gas, hydrocarbon gas storage, carbon  
dioxide storage and offshore renewables including wind, wave, tidal stream and tidal range**

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the consultation on scoping exercise for the Environmental Report of the UK Offshore Energy SEA (UKOESEA2) as notified by your letter of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Please consider this as our corporate response. For your information we provided a response to the first phase of this SEA exercise in our correspondence to you dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and a response to the Scoping Report (our letter to you dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010).

### Introduction

English Heritage is the UK Government's statutory adviser on all aspects of cultural heritage including the English area of the UK Territorial Sea, as provided for under the National Heritage Act 2002. English Heritage is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and we report to Parliament through the Secretary of State for DCMS. However, for activities that occur beyond the 12 nautical mile limit of the English area of the UK Territorial Sea any advice that we do offer is given informally and without prejudice.

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In the delivery of our duties we work in partnership with central government departments, local authorities, voluntary bodies and the private sector within the framework of our published Conservation Principles which can be summarised as follows:

- the historic environment is a shared resource;
- everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;
- understanding the significance of places is vital;
- significant places should be managed to sustain their values;
- decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent; and
- documenting and learning from decisions is essential.

Our responsibility under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, within the English area of the UK Territorial Sea, is to consider applications and recommendations for designation, re-designation and de-designation of shipwreck sites. On the basis of our advice the Secretary of State (DCMS) is responsible for designating restricted areas around sites which are, or may be, shipwrecks (and associated contents) of historic, archaeological or artistic importance. The Secretary of State is also responsible for the issuing of licences to authorise certain activities in restricted areas that otherwise constitute a criminal offence. At the end of the reporting year in March 2011 there were 46 sites designated within the English area of the UK Territorial Sea.

### **The Marine Historic Environment**

The number of protected historic shipwrecks is very small (ranging from possible prehistoric seafaring craft with associated cargoes through to prototype submarines) and they are only one aspect of English Heritage's interests in promoting the understanding, management and public enjoyment of the historic environment. It is therefore important for us to describe the marine historic environment as also comprising submerged and often buried prehistoric landscape areas and elements, together with archaeological sites and remains of coastal activities (e.g. fish traps) dating from all eras of history. However, we consider it essential to ensure the management and use of the full range of the historic environment, is conducted in a manner that best serves the public understanding and enjoyment of the whole, and not just of the designated and protected sites.

### **Comments in response to the SEA Environmental Report**

#### **1) General comment**

We appreciate the link the report provides in clarifying and supporting the role of the *High Level Marine Objectives* (published 2009), by the UK Government and Devolved Administrations and how these objectives state a commitment to an "effective, integrated and strategic management of human activities in the marine environment..." Consequently, we value how these objectives are reflected within the UK Marine Policy Statement (published March 2011) and should therefore inform this SEA exercise.

#### **2) Landscape/Seascape**

We offer the comment that the sections of the report directed at landscape/seascape (e.g. Table 3.1 – SEA Topics, Objectives and Indicators) should pay particular attention to an interpretation of seascape which is not specifically focused on visual assessment methodologies. We therefore recommend that this approach is qualified, in reference to the definition of 'landscape' in the

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Council of Europe European Landscape Convention (ELC), so that the concept of landscape 'character' is adopted to fully support action to implement ELC within the UK. We also noted in section 5.8.6 the statement: "...in keeping with the European Landscape Convention, all landscapes should be considered in seascape assessment"; this is an important matter which the report also identifies how: "England's seascape presently lacks a comprehensive characterisation or high level analysis with regards to the sensitivity or capacity of particular seascapes to offshore development". We therefore offer our Historic Seascapes Characterisation methodology as a mechanism to support action to address this matter.

### 3) Cultural Heritage

In further reference to Table 3.1 we noted the following: "Activities avoid adverse effects on the character, quality and integrity of the historic and/or cultural landscape, including those sites which are designated or registered, and areas of potential importance." In regard to this statement we consider it useful to refer to the UK Marine Policy Statement which clearly identifies that decision making should take account of designated cultural heritage sites or of sites that are of particular social significance and that such sites are finite and often irreplaceable. It is also an important matter to recognise that only a minority of sites at sea are afforded any form of statutory designation and that non-designated sites should be considered subject to the same policy principles as applied to designated heritage assets.

Yours faithfully,



**Christopher Pater**  
Marine Planning Unit

cc Duncan McCallum (Policy Director, English Heritage)  
Ian Oxley (Head of Maritime Archaeology, English Heritage)  
Annabel Houghton (DCMS – Sector Policy Adviser, Historic Environment)



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