

Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm

Intrusive Site Investigations – what can you expect?

Addendum
January 2021



VATTENFALL

Below we provide some additional detail in relation to current and further pre-commencement works required ahead of our onshore enabling works. We previously have provided [information sheets](#) and [FAQ](#), aimed at outlining programmed and licensed activities. This is an addendum to the FAQ entitled "Intrusive Site Investigations – what can you expect?" (issued in August 2020). Additional information has been added in relation to Archaeological works which are part of the critical path in the project programme to start construction in 2022.

We are grateful to landowners and farmers who have already worked with us, under difficult conditions, not least arising from a global pandemic and the additional constraints, delays and mitigating safety measures and procedures being adopted as a result. We're grateful too, for the unifying desire to build on the learning from experiences of works that have already been completed, and below we share with you the result of discussions with many local land interests, the archaeology team, our EIA team, our Health and Safety specialists and others, and again ask for your ongoing collaboration. The Norfolk offshore wind farm projects represent more than ten percent of the government's target for offshore wind deployment by 2030, aimed at reducing our CO₂ emissions and aligned with national and regional policy. As well as a keystone of the UK decarbonisation plan, and green recovery programme, these projects will bring investment, jobs and skills to the region. Your role in enabling the delivery of these projects is fundamental, thank-you again for your ongoing cooperation.

The Archaeological Works is part of the critical path in the project programme to start construction in 2022.

Vattenfall survey works update

Further Non-Intrusive works

Some landowners will have received additional non-intrusive licences for badger assessment works over the coming months.

Archaeological Trail Trenching update

Archaeological works, as per all of the pre-construction works, are key parts of our critical path to construction and project delivery, and is a requirement of the Norfolk Vanguard Development Consent Order made by the Secretary of State.

The main duct installation construction works, specified in our Development Consent Order will be delivered and completed in sections in order to minimise the period of time that the land is affected – enabling duct installation and reinstatement to be undertaken at a rate of approximately 150m per week. Any delays in clearing archaeological areas of interest prior to the main works will result in delays to the programme and potentially prolong temporary land impacts and risk delays in the construction programme.

Headland Archaeology, part of the RSK group, won the trial trenching contract and commenced works on site in October. Works are progressing well but, on top of initial delays to the start-time (as a result of adapting working practices to ensure Covid-19 – safe-working), have been delayed by wet weather and of course accommodating landowner requests regarding contract grown crops and sporting days. These factors mean we are behind schedule on where we should be in this key requirement of our Development Consent Order.

In order to speed-up, Headland Archaeology have now mobilised four teams of Archaeologists and excavator operators spread across the route; these are focusing on areas where further exploration is likely to be required in the coming months. The trial trenching provides vital information for the subsequent larger scale excavations (including defining them better - size, density, complexity, programme and cost to excavate), see 'Archaeological Set Piece excavations' below.

Responding to land-interest's concerns, we have extended the team available on the ground for these works, to ensure that the works are undertaken swiftly and sympathetically to the soil structure. We are operating under strict codes of conduct from regulatory bodies and under a previously agreed survey-specific Written Scheme of Investigation, which has been approved by Norfolk County Council, as archaeological adviser to the local planning authorities (North Norfolk, Broadland and Breckland). As such it is imperative that trenches with Archaeological features within them are backfilled as swiftly as possible at this time of year (upon completion of the archaeological sample investigations) to ensure that the integrity of surviving remains is maintained and exposure to the elements is kept to a minimum. In addition, we have responsibilities in regards to health and safety (detailed below under Duty of Care) and therefore need to backfill as soon as possible.

We do not backfill trenches that are water logged and our contractor Headland Archaeology is a very experienced company on these works and have processes in place to be followed for backfilling trenches to ensure that conditions are satisfactory for backfilling. We will of course continue to liaise with the landowner, but in scenarios where they are not available to attend, should they wish to provide comment at the point of backfilling we will not be able to postpone works. Headland Archaeology take comprehensive photographic records of works being undertaken including excavation and backfilling and are more than happy to share those with landowners upon request.

You may note a considerable push in the coming weeks to complete this trenching works campaign as it is required to be complete ahead of the commencement of Set Piece Excavation works which must commence at the start of April 2021 (see below).

Archaeological Set Piece excavations

All archaeological findings in the initial trial trenching campaign, coupled with extensive geo-physical surveys have enabled and will continue to enable Vattenfall to work with the County Archaeologist to further define key areas where further excavations are required, because there is evidence that they represent archaeological sites of significance. These additional works are known as set piece excavations. Where set piece excavations are required, we will be approaching relevant landowners with licences for areas ranging from 1 to approximately 6 acres. Generally the depth of wider excavations (as per the archaeological trial trenching) is expected to be around 300-700mm. Certain investigations (slots and sections) within the wider areas may be excavated deeper depending on the remains found.

These works must start in April (with land access required in March) to ensure that all works that are required in 2021 are completed over the summer period to avoid works taking place over winter. The width of each individual set piece excavation extends to the maximum width of our Red Line Boundary under the Development Consent Order; the lengths vary depending on the archaeological features (and defined sites) believed to be present. These areas will be fenced off restricting access. We are making every effort to ensure that our works do not restrict access to field areas not affected.

Typically we will be in occupation of these areas for a period of approximately 8-12 weeks, although at this stage we are of course unsure as to what exactly we are likely to find and we may need to keep some areas open for extended periods; at times up to or beyond 20 weeks as the size, density and complexity of the archaeology found dictates procedures.

New licences for these works are to be circulated in the coming weeks. These are project critical works and we are reliant on receiving the documents signed, completed and returned within a short timeframe. Where we don't have responses within this period we will be serving Article 16 Notices under the Development Consent Order in order to secure access. In the event that we don't have signed licences by the required entry date at the start of March, we will rely on the powers of the Order and licence payments will not be provided.

Duty of Care

The trial trenching and future scopes of work fall under the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The appointed Principal Contractor under these regulations is required to apply the principles of prevention in mitigating any potential risk, so far as reasonably practicable which could arise out the work scopes being conducted. In line with the 'Code of Conduct' a logical and practicable step to backfill trenches as soon as possible should be considered as a priority to eliminate the hazard which could give potential rise to harm to a person/persons or animals. To date, the Principal Contractor, Headland Archaeology in conjunction with the client, Vattenfall, has undertaken versatile and pragmatic risk profiling and will continue to do so, in order reduce any risks, with the main emphasis on the prevention of harm to people. Headland Archaeology must be afforded the opportunity to access the sites that are under their custodianship at all times to ensure they can develop, implement and maintain safety controls throughout and until the site is closed. The risk of leaving any uncontrolled hazardous situations would increase the vulnerabilities of exposure to non-compliance for all parties involved under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984.

Thank-you again for your ongoing collaboration.