

Intended for
Viking Energy Wind Farm LLP

Date
March 2025

Project Number
1620009158

VIKING ENERGY WIND FARM PLANNING MONITORING OFFICER AUDIT REPORT 049: 2ND DECEMBER 2024 TO 12TH MARCH 2025

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049: 2ND DECEMBER 2024 TO 12TH MARCH 2025**

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CONTENTS

1.	AUDIT DETAILS	1
1.1	Audit Details	1
1.2	Distribution	1
1.3	Terms of Reference	1
1.4	Role of the Planning Monitoring Officer	2
1.5	General Limitations and Reliance	3
2.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.1	Objectives of Audit	4
2.2	Scope of Audit	4
2.3	Site Personnel	4
3.	SITE SETTING, RECORDS AND OBSERVATIONS	5
3.1	Kergord	5
3.2	Mid Kame Ridge and Sandwater Track	5
3.3	North Compound	6
3.4	North Nesting	6
3.5	Main Compound	6
3.6	Nesting	7
3.7	Substation	7
3.8	Communication with SSER Clerks of Work	7
3.9	Communication with SIC	8
3.10	Scope of next audit	8
4.	AUDIT FINDINGS AND REQUIRED ACTIONS	9

1. AUDIT DETAILS

1.1 Audit Details

Audit Number	PMO 049
Location	Kergord Sandwater Road Nesting Main Compound North Compound
Weather Conditions	Sunny with clouds, dry with snow and rain showers, 3°C
Audit Date	12 th March 2025
Audit Period	2 nd December 2024 – 12 th March 2025
Audit Owner	Ramboll UK Ltd

1.2 Distribution

Position	Action
Ramboll Project Director Planning Monitoring Officer	For information
SSE Renewables Development Manager	For information
SSE Renewables Consents Manager	For information
SSE Renewables Environmental Advisor	For information
SSE Renewables Vestas Package Manager	For information
RJ McLeod Design Management Engineer	For Information
Shetland Islands Council Planning Enforcement Officer	For information
Shetland Islands Council Natural Heritage Officer	For information

1.3 Terms of Reference

This audit has been completed with reference to the following key documents:

- Application under Section 36C of the Electricity Act 1989 to vary the consent granted under Section 36 of that Act on 4 April 2012 to construct and operate the Viking Wind Farm located in Shetland Islands Council Planning Authority Area and for a direction under Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 for planning permission to be deemed to be granted in respect of the proposed development (i.e. the 'Variation Application').

The Viking Wind Farm project will comprise the construction of 103 wind turbines with a turbine tip height of 155 m; development of a temporary construction compound; construction of associated access tracks; development of a substation; development of a convertor station; erection of permanent Met Masts; and the excavation of borrow pits.

The project was consented as detailed above, receiving Section 36C Consent and deemed planning permission on the 24th of May 2019.

Separate planning consents are in place for the following specific aspects of the development:

- Construction of the Kergord Access Track¹ (consented on the 29th of April 2019).
- Re-alignment of Sandwater Road² between the Burn of Weisdale and the junction with the A970 to facilitate construction access for the Viking Wind Farm (consented on the 26th of May 2020).
- Formation of temporary construction compounds at two locations; Sandwater (Main)³, consented on 22nd June 2020; and North (South of Voe)⁴ consented on the 9th of September 2020.

1.4 Role of the Planning Monitoring Officer

Condition No. 3 of the Variation Application states that:

“No development shall commence unless and until the Planning Authority has approved in writing the terms of appointment by the Company of an independent and suitably qualified environmental consultant to assist the Planning Authority in monitoring compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to this consent (a Planning Monitoring Officer (“PMO”). The terms of the appointment shall:

- Impose a duty to monitor compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to this consent;
- Require the PMO to submit a monthly report to the Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site; and
- Require the PMO to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to this consent at the earliest practical opportunity.

The PMO shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of post construction restoration works.

In order to discharge the above requirements, the PMO undertakes site-based audits at monthly intervals to monitor the compliance with the conditions of the consent. The primary documents used for compliance monitoring are the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); and the Pollution Prevention Plan (PPP). Additional documents will be referenced as required for specific detail.

The following traffic light system is used to indicate action status:

	Green – activities appear to be compliant with the CEMP, PPP and other applicable environmental management procedures and plans and there are no other issues.
	Amber – in general activities are compliant with the CEMP, PPP and other applicable environmental management procedures and plans but there are minor actions required.
	Red – activities may not be compliant with the CEMP, PPP and other applicable environmental management procedures and there are critical actions.

¹ Shetland Islands Council Planning Reference No: 2018/096/PPF

² Shetland Islands Council Planning Reference No: 2019/079/PPF

³ Shetland Islands Council Planning Reference No: 2019/188/PPF

⁴ Shetland Islands Council Planning Reference No: 2019/210/PPF

1.5 General Limitations and Reliance

This report has been prepared by Ramboll UK Limited ("Ramboll") exclusively for the intended use by Viking Energy Wind Farm LLP (the "client"). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the services or the purpose for which the report and the associated agreed scope were intended, or any other services provided by Ramboll.

In preparation of the report and performance of any other services, Ramboll has relied upon site observations, publicly available information, information provided by the client and information provided by third parties. Accordingly, the conclusions in this report are valid only to the extent that the information provided to Ramboll was accurate, complete and available to Ramboll within the reporting schedule.

Ramboll's services are not intended as legal advice, nor an exhaustive review of site conditions and/or compliance. This report and accompanying documents are intended to form a record for the purpose of documenting compliance with Condition No. 3 of the Variation Application.

Ramboll neither owes nor accepts any duty to any third party, unless formally agreed by Ramboll through that party entering into, at Ramboll's sole discretion, a written reliance agreement.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Objectives of Audit

The purpose of the PMO Audit is to monitor the provision of appropriate environmental management at active work sites of the project, via desk-based review of relevant documentation and site visits to be undertaken on a monthly basis to ensure compliance with the conditions of the planning consent and associated environmental management plans.

2.2 Scope of Audit

The scope of the audit was as follows:

- Liaison with Shetland Islands Council (SIC) regarding public concerns or complaints received during the audit period (if any).
- A site visit attended by the PMO, SIC and SSE Renewables (SSER) Consents Manager as undertaken on the 12th March 2025. The site visit included the observation of the following locations:
 - Sandwater Road;
 - Kergord;
 - North Compound;
 - Nesting; and
 - Main compound.
- Update meetings between the PMO and SSER Geotechnical Clerk of Works (GCoW), Environmental Clerk of Works (ECoW), Archaeological Clerk of Works (AcoW), and SSER Operational Team. It is however noted that the GCoW has had limited knowledge of operations at the site since the construction phase has been completed, and outstanding geotechnical considerations have been handed over to the SSER operations team.

A selection of photographs taken during the audit are included in Appendix 1.

2.3 Site Personnel

The following site personnel were interviewed as part of this audit:

Company	Position
Tony Gee and Partners	Geotechnical Clerk of Works
MBEC	Environmental Clerk of Works
Headland Archaeology	Archaeological Clerk of Works
SSE	Consents Strategy Manager and Environmental Advisor

3. SITE SETTING, RECORDS AND OBSERVATIONS

Observations made during the audit are described in this section. Corresponding photographs are included in Appendix 1.

All wind turbine generators (WTGs) are commissioned and operational and temporary generators have been removed from site. The majority of civil engineering work is now complete, with localised activities ongoing to deliver reinstatement work, e.g. reinstatement of the main compound. The new Sandwater Road has been surfaced with a permanent asphalt running surface and is now in use by the public.

3.1 Kergord

3.1.1 Site Setting and Activities

Access to the Kergord Arrays is taken via the Kergord Access Track (KAT), which is accessed from the Sandwater track along the southern boundary of the central area of the development.

The borrow pit reinstatement is complete in the area.

Activities observed during the audit visit comprised fencing works.

3.1.2 Observations

The new design for permanent surface water management to provide attenuation and treatment of surface water draining to the Burn of Droswell from the KAT has been completed (photo 1). Following an observation that the water appeared silty in the November 2024 PMO visit, the permanent drainage appeared to be working and holding the silt from the Burn during the March 2025 PMO audit. Temporary silt fences remain near the Burn, and it has since been confirmed that these are from the construction phase of works. It has been confirmed that these will be removed in the spring / early summer.

The PMO audit included inspection of the temporary drainage treatment at KBP02 (photos 2 and 3). It is understood that SSER have taken on the monitoring and maintenance of the treatment system, with continued water monitoring and sampling. Further data is required in order to confirm the acceptability of water quality or the need for additional interventions. There are ongoing discussions with subject matter experts and SEPA on how the permanent treatment system will work. This area should be visited during future PMO audits.

KBP02 borrow pit reinstatement profiles were noted to be in keeping with the general landscape character and local topography, with successfully vegetated slopes through the previous year's hydroseeding (photo 4).

Additional reinstatement work around the site to remove/block up or reinstate construction cut-off ditches that were used during construction to mitigate pollution risks is being undertaken (photo 5), with a number of ditches having already been reinstated in order to prevent these features contributing to the draining of the restored peatland.

3.2 Mid Kame Ridge and Sandwater Road

3.2.1 Site Setting and Activities

The Mid Kame Ridge (MKR) is accessed from the Sandwater Road and stretches northwards to Hamarigrind Scord. Activities included the creation of a temporary car park on Sandwater Road.

3.2.2 Observations

MKR was not observed during this PMO audit.

The Sandwater Road has now been surfaced and is being used by the public (photo 6). The former B9075 is currently being used for trafficable installation works by SSE networks. The former road will become a recreation route once a planning application has been submitted to 'Stop Up' the former BS9075 road. A temporary car park remains on the new Sandwater Road (photo 7) with an adjoining bus stop to be constructed in Spring-Summer 2025.

3.3 North Compound

3.3.1 Site Setting and Activities

The North Compound is located towards the northern limit of the site on the eastern side of the A970. The creation of a new recreational carpark is proposed for the North Compound, and a planning application has been submitted to SIC and is awaiting determination.

3.3.2 Observations

The North Compound is currently closed off and no works are being undertaken in this area, and was observed from the gate to the compound (photo 8).

3.4 North Nesting

3.4.1 Site Setting and Activities

The northern Nesting turbine arrays are located towards the northern limit of the site on the eastern side of the A970.

3.4.2 Observations

North Nesting was not observed during the audit visit. SSER however indicate that permanent foundations for the bird screens have been completed. These screens will be erected on the 1st of April and removed at the end of each breeding season.

SSER noted that ongoing restoration was being undertaken in the restoration areas across the site, which includes enhancing the habitat for nesting birds. The ECoW will undertake independent annual audits of the restoration areas.

3.5 Main Compound

3.5.1 Site Setting and Activities

The Main Compound is located at the southern extent of the site, accessed from the A970. The majority of the area has been reinstated and is awaiting seeding. A small area remains in the centre which is currently used as a parking area for operational vehicles as and when needed.

3.5.2 Observations

The site offices, laydown equipment and skips have been demobilised and the majority of the area has been reinstated with peat (photos 9 and 10). A small area remains for vehicle parking; however, this will be reinstated in the next few months. Seeding will be undertaken in the spring / summer months.

3.6 Nesting

3.6.1 Site Setting and Activities

The Nesting arrays are accessed from the A970. No activities were observed in this area during the audit visit.

3.6.2 Observations

NBP05 was observed to have been reinstated during the audit visit. The restoration area includes peatland, a small water body and trees have been planted across the south-western part of the restoration area (photos 11 and 12).

Drainage at T076 was observed (photo 13). The mitigation drains have been removed and the water was noted to run clear. Ongoing monitoring of groundwater and surface water levels are continuing in this area.

3.7 Substation

3.7.1 Site Setting and Activities

The Substation occupies the northern third of the HVDC Converter Station Platform located in the Kergord Valley, between Mid Kame Ridge and Kergord. Access to the Substation is taken via the KAT.

3.7.2 Observations

The substation has been handed over to operations, with no further construction works required, and no longer needs to be visited during PMO audits.

3.8 Communication with SSER Clerks of Work

3.8.1 GCoW

Condition 39 of the planning consent requires the appointment of a Geotechnical Clerk of Works (GCoW) to minimise the risk of peat failure arising from the development. An update was provided on the 5th of March.

The GCoW confirmed that the remaining items on the geotechnical risk register and geotechnical event remediation has been handed over to the SSER operational team. Later confirmation from the SSER team confirmed one geotechnical event is outstanding. A programme of monitoring and assessment is being put in place by the SSER operational team to monitor distinct areas such as drainage and track areas following periods of heavy rainfall.

3.8.2 ECoW

Condition 19 of the planning consent requires the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to ensure protection of the natural heritage of the area. An update was provided by the ECoW on 25th of February. The ECoW confirmed that a visit is planned for later in 2025, mainly to survey the peat restoration areas and areas of peat seeding across the site.

The ECoW has noted that further actions are being undertaken to reinstate construction stage surface water cut-off ditches. The construction team will continue to oversee the completion of this work.

3.8.3 ACoW

Condition 29 of the planning consent requires the appointment of an Archaeological Clerk of Works (ACoW) to ensure archaeological features are protected and recorded during the development. An update from the ACoW was provided on the 25th of February.

The ACoW works associated with the construction have been completed. The Heritage Strategy Condition has previously been discharged; however, a change to the community engagement strategy is required (regarding the dates and location). The ACoW have drafted the change to the plans associated with the Heritage Strategy and are awaiting approval from the Shetland Amenity Trust.

3.9 Communication with SIC

The PMO asked SIC if there had been any observations or complaints from members of the public regarding activities on site. SIC confirmed that no complaints or observations were received during this PMO audit period and discussed with SSER.

3.10 Scope of next audit

The next audit visit is scheduled for June 2025, as it was agreed with SIC that the PMO visits would continue on a quarterly basis for one year from September 2024 to September 2025. The PMO will liaise with the SSER operational environment manager and SIC to arrange future audit visits. Future audits will focus on the reinstatement of borrow pits and construction compounds, permanent surface water management, consideration of any issues raised by SIC, and handover of the new car park on the Sandwater Road for adoption by the local roads authority.

4. AUDIT FINDINGS AND REQUIRED ACTIONS

Issue	Auditor Comments	Required Action	Action Owner	Status
Materials Storage and Handling (e.g. oil/fuel storage and peat/mineral soil storage and handling).	<p>Peat restoration areas are managed through the project Habitat Management Plan and by a dedicated HMPO which balances the geotechnical and ecological objectives of the restoration.</p> <p>Potential risks relating to storage of peat are recorded on the PRRs and communicated to the SSER operations team to allow mitigation / monitoring to be undertaken. The PMO will request evidence in future audits to confirm compliance with requirements for GCoW and ECoW approval of proposed peat restoration areas.</p>	No action required.	SSER Operational Team	Green
Materials Storage and Handling (e.g. oil/fuel storage and peat/mineral soil storage and handling).	Minimal materials are being stored on site. No COSHH stores, fuel stores or similar were present on site at the time of the audit.	No action required.	SSER Operational Team	Green
Natural and Built Environment (e.g. ecology, biosecurity, protected sites, archaeology and site restoration).	<p>Ecological constraints identified by the ECoW team are communicated to the SSER operational team to allow mitigation measures to be implemented. The ECoW construction phase duties are now complete, albeit follow up surveys are proposed for 2025 to assess the success of reinstatement and the need for any remedial work. The construction phase duties of the ACoW are complete.</p>	No action required.	SSER Operational Team	Green
Pollution Prevention and Response (e.g. use of spill)	Additional reinstatement work is required around the site to remove/block up or reinstate	Continued reinstatement of cut off ditches	SSER Operational Team	Amber

VIKING ENERGY WIND FARM

Issue	Auditor Comments	Required Action	Action Owner	Status
kits, silt control, cement/concrete, water resources).	construction cut-off ditches that were used during construction to mitigate pollution risks. This is ongoing.			
Pollution Prevention and Response (e.g. use of spill kits, silt control, cement/concrete, water resources).	Temporary silt fences used during the construction works remain at the Burn of Droswell.	To be removed by the Principal Contractor in the Spring	Principal Contractor	Amber
Pollution Prevention and Response (e.g. use of spill kits, silt control, cement/concrete, water resources).	The SSE Renewables Environmental Manager notified the PMO in March 2023 that there have been some exceedances of Environmental Quality Standards of some trace metals in water quality sampling in the Burn of Lunklet.	Short-term mitigation measures have been implemented as per the SEPA accepted mitigation plan. Further monitoring is required to understand if the issue will require long-term mitigation. .	SSER Operational Team	Amber
Noise, Dust, and Air Quality	No complaints on Noise Dust or Air Quality had been received by SIC during the audit period.	Continued monitoring of dust conditions and implementation of control measures during dry periods.	N/A	Green

APPENDIX 1

PHOTOLOG



Photo 1. Permanent surface water management at the Burn of Droswell



Photo 2. Temporary drainage treatment at KBP02

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025



Photo 3. Temporary drainage treatment at KBP02



Photo 4. Hydroseeding in KBP02

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025



Photo 5. Ongoing reinstatement of cut-off ditches in Kergord



Photo 6. Sandwater Road

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025



Photo 7. Sandwater Road – temporary car park area and construction use of former road



Photo 8. North compound

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025



Photo 9. Main compound reinstatement



Photo 10. Main compound reinstatement

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025



Photo 11. NBP05 restoration



Photo 12. NBP05 restoration

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025



Photo 13. Drainage at T076

Title: Photographic Log	Client: Viking Energy Wind Farm
Site: Viking Energy Wind Farm	Date: 12 th March 2025