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Indian seafarers delay homecoming amid 21-day lockdown

INDIAN SEAFARERS ARE facing a precarious situation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has imposed a nationwide lockdown for a minimum of 21 days, starting Wednesday, in an attempt to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The government has advised Indian seafarers working overseas either on Indian or foreign ships not to sign off after completing their contracts and return to India — except in an emergency — citing restrictions imposed by the government on international and domestic travel to check the spread of coronavirus.

"In view of the rapid spread of the coronavirus, the process of sign-off and repatriation of seafarers has been affected the world over due to travel restrictions imposed by various countries," director general of shipping Amitabh Kumar said in a statement.

In India, the operation of international flights has been prohibited and restriction on domestic travel has also been imposed as a precautionary measure in the country.

"Under these circumstances, it may not be possible for seafarers who have completed their contract to travel to India or to move to their destinations within India," he said.

"It is, therefore, advised that Indian seafarers working either on Indian or foreign ships are not signed off and repatriated from their ships — except in an utmost emergent situation — as they are likely to face serious challenges in international and domestic travel, until further orders."

According to Indian ministry data, India has more than 210,000 seafarers, of which, close to 190,000 are employed on foreign flagged ships.

India's maritime administration had earlier advised seafarers to "avoid availing shore leave in infected regions and consider the risks involved before desiring to go ashore in other regions".

In relation to documentation, Indian seafarers who are currently sailing on board Indian-flagged vessels or foreign flagged vessels are almost certain to hold either the Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Equivalency for seafarers. If these either of these key documents are about to expire, the lifespan of the document will be extended for a maximum period of one month or until they sign off, whichever is earlier.

What is more, where a crew member has to sign off from a ship due to restrictions at some ports and travel restrictions and the shipowner or the operator is unable to repatriate them, exemptions to safe manning documents will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such a request should be supported by risk assessment from the company concerned.

Anglo Eastern training managing director Pradeep Chawla said the shipmanagement company is following the regulations and no changeovers are being carried out at present. "We are working with industry bodies to exempt seafarers," he added.

Noting that it had already halted all crew changes some two weeks ago due to growing travel restrictions, Fleet Management head of business development Vikas Grewal said: "The Indian lockdown now puts a seal on that move for Indian seafarers. We will have to look to other crew nationalities for any exigencies that may arise over the next three weeks."

Fleet Management staff across its offices in nine cities across India are now working from home, he added.

Wallem Group chief executive officer Frank Coles said that in the past day, the group has managed to carry out crew changes in China, South Korea, Japan and the USA, but he added that the backdrop to be able to do this changes hourly.

In terms of the situation in India, he said: "Over 35% of our crew are of Indian origin and if they are relieved, they are stuck in the country of disembarkation because India has essentially abandoned them."

Mr Coles went on to slam the "blinkered" actions of some parties that are preventing seafarers from being relieved. "In this respect particularly, Wallem is concerned with the apparent abandonment of seafarers around the world by their governments," he said.

He said Wallem continued to do its best where possible to relieve crew, but noted that this was contingent on other factors such as whether the country is open, the planes are flying, and the port agrees with the transfer.

Meanwhile, the Indian Ministry of Shipping released an order clarifying that port-related activities are considered essential services and will not be suspended.

However, given that the lockdown suspends all activities and movements other than essential services, and district borders are sealed, difficulty can be anticipated in the movement of pilots, labour, personnel, vehicles, trucking, cargo evacuation and port agents.

WHAT TO WATCH

Hoegh LNG locks down vessels not due crew rotation

OSLO-based Hoegh LNG has imposed a lockdown on vessels with no crew rotation as part of its efforts to mitigate risks from the coronavirus pandemic.

"No visitors are allowed on board these vessels until further notice," the owner-operator of floating storage and regasification units said in a statement released overnight.

It clarified however, that there are no known cases of coronavirus infection among its employees so far.

"All charter parties remain in full force and effect. The revenues from the contracts are maintained as per their contractual terms," it added.

Hoegh LNG has previously flagged two FSRUs, *Hoegh Gannet* and *Hoegh Gallant*, respectively coming off charters in March and April this year.

These two FSRUs have been operating as normal and are being marketed for work as liquefied natural gas carriers.

Lloyd's List Intelligence data showed *Hoegh Gallant* is due to arrive at Qalhat terminal in Oman on April 10 after sailing from Yokohama in Japan.

Hoegh Gannet, which last called at Caofeidian in China, is expected to arrive at Jayapura, Indonesia towards the end of this month, according to the data.

Hoegh LNG president and chief executive Sveinung J.S. Støhle said: "Despite the coronavirus crisis, the LNG markets are functioning more or less as normal and commercial activities are making progress.

"Even with major populations being quarantined, countries around the world need energy and electricity to function, where low-priced LNG and flexible LNG is an attractive solution."

ANALYSIS

Can dry bulk markets recover from coronavirus impact?

AS CHINA seems to be coming out of a coronavirus-led slump, the rest of the world is falling victim, with many lockdowns in place to contain the spread of the deadly infection.

Market participants have observed activity slowly resuming in the Far East, with the Atlantic basin now facing headwinds. It is a rapidly evolving situation and as such, predictions will vary about the precise impact on dry bulk shipments.

For the most part, analysts are downgrading forecasts, imagining a "worse-case" scenario, at least in the short-term. Most expect some sort of recovery in the second half of the year, depending on whether the virus is contained or not.

Brazilian mining giant Vale warned that its operations could be affected. It put its Canadian Voisey Bay operations in care and maintenance for four months, while it also ceased activity at its coal-processing in Mozambique. It has also temporarily halted its Malaysian iron ore distribution entre.

Mining operations in Brazil could also be at risk should the virus spread further. With South Africa and India in lockdown, there may be a knock-on effect on mining abilities there.

And it's not just physical product that may be unavailable. Port restrictions and quarantine efforts may impact the supply chain, although resultant delays and congestion may actually be a good thing for dry bulk rates as it takes vessels out of the market for longer.

According to Torvald Klaveness' head of research Peter Lindstrom, 13% of panamaxes have been idle for more than 14 days as of March 24, the highest level since 2017, while 9% of capesizes look to be idled, which is less than the amount idled after the Brumadinho event in Brazil last year, which sent rates spiralling to near all-time lows. The figures take into account vessels waiting for scrubber installations.

"The market has definitely soured, but we see stimulus measures supporting shipping, and we believe that there'll be a sustained recovery in the second half of the year," he said, adding that China's industrial activity is gradually returning, and has reached 80% to 85% of normal levels.

For Maritime Strategies International, no stimulus measures are expected from China until the government there knows that the virus is under complete control.

That could take up to a year or longer, according to the London-based consultancy's dry bulk specialist Will Fray, who expects a demand contraction of about 4% in 2020 as a result of the virus impacts.

Demand picture

Vital grain trades, which have been supporting smaller bulk carriers this year, may be in danger in what was tipped to be a strong South American export season. Problems will arise if trucks can't get to terminals or port workers refrain from shifts to lessen the risk of catching the virus.

Argentina's Timbues port was reported to have re-opened after all activity ceased on March 20 as union workers wanted to isolate themselves in line with government policy. Santos Port Authority in Brazil said operations were normal, with no restrictions to road and rail access, after stevedores there had requested exemptions to working amid coronavirus concerns.

How long operations can continue, though, remains to be seen.

In any case, there is the encouraging news that China will purchase quantities of wheat and corn from the US under the terms of the Phase One trade agreement. This development is holding some promise for a dry bulk recovery.

Coal shipments are also somewhat positive.

According to UK-based consultancy Shipping Strategy, seaborne coal imports into China are likely to increase after Mongolia closed its border, benefiting Indonesia and Australia. Volumes in the first quarter are projected to reach a record 79.6m tonnes, up from 64.8m tonnes a year earlier.

But, entry restrictions at Queensland ports are casting a shadow, as the region represents one of the largest for thermal and coking coal exports, according to shipping association BIMCO.

For steel, Braemar said the fact that inventories were starting to decline in China indicated a recovery in demand. It also suggested that logistical bottlenecks were easing.

Steel production in the rest of the world would, however, take a hit as automobile makers and other end-users were halting operations, it said.

Iron ore shipments could bounce back later in the year, if mining operations were not too badly affected. However, China's focus on electric arc furnaces using scrap metal could limit its need for high-quality imported ore.

Volumes from Australia to China in January and February reached 67.2m tonnes, almost 2% lower than the same period last year, statistics from Port Hedland show, while Brazilian sales were expected at 63m to 68m tonnes in the first quarter.

China has plenty of storage and "buying the dip" in commodity prices may keep iron ore on trend, according to Shipping Strategy's founder Mark Williams.

He expects "a good deal of" unusual trade disruption and volatility this year for the dry bulk market.

Coping with disruption

At the time of writing, dry bulk owners and operators said they were coping with virus-led disruptions, adapting to the evolving landscape.

Most had contingency measures in place, with employees largely working from home, and seafarers required to stay on board vessels until April at least in line with widespread advice.

But they were also worried about potential port closures should the virus situation worsen.

One idea was to "ringfence" vessels to avoid any contact between crew and port employees, to reduce any contamination risks, which needed greater co-ordination between owners and authorities.

Coronavirus will see shipping litigation spike, HFW warns

THE coronavirus pandemic is likely to generate an enormous amount of arbitration and litigation in the maritime sector, according to the head of one of the world's largest shipping law practices, with new instructions coming in at the rate of around one an hour at its London office alone.

Contractual disputes, particularly in relation to force majeure, and charterparty disputes are probably the main issues arising right now, he added.

Paul Dean of HFW said that the firm's number one concern at this time is for its own staff, who have switched to remote working, and who are managing to cope well on that basis.

It also intends to offer clients as much support as it can from a personal perspective, but also in relation to their businesses, which are all facing serious challenge.

"I think the first concern that clients have that we're seeing is whether coronavirus gives rise to force majeure event. That's really number one.

"And then following on from that — depending whether it's an owner or a charterer — there are questions as to whether a party can perhaps terminate the contract or charterparty or whatever it may be."

People often want to know how much room there is for a renegotiation of the terms where, for example, a vessel can't continue a project because of government intervention, or where they are seeking to renegotiate agreed rates.

Issues in sale contracts also arise, not just in the movement of cargo from A to B, but also in the sale and purchase of cargoes covering the full spectrum of international trade.

While pragmatism and a willingness to cut other people some slack right now is often on display, attitudes can and do vary.

"It varies. You have different ends of the scale. What I'm seeing so far is that people want to work together. They see this as a short-term event, and they want to continue to do business once it's over, so they're really trying to work together to provide solutions.

"It's probably also fair to say that there may be some who are using it as an opportunity to get out of contracts which they no longer happy with, which is not unusual when there are any type of sharp market changes."

Other instructions are coming in from the cruise industry and the offshore sector, particularly centred on government restrictions on their activities, and from owners facing de facto vessel quarantine restrictions in countries such as Australia and South Africa.

Litigation is a slow-moving process even in normal times, and it often takes years to reach a settlement. While Mr Dean believes that that is where some big contracts are now almost certainly heading, arbitration should be considered as an alternative.

"I was instructed on one case yesterday that could lead to long-tail litigation, with many, many millions [of dollars] involved. So I think that could happen.

"But also I think, if people want things done urgently, there's no reason why you can't have a quick arbitration, which can done in in a week if the parties are willing to co-operate.

"And it can all be done. You can maintain your social distancing, do it all on paper and have a sole arbitrator. It could be done within a week."

Emissions rules

The other big issue for shipping law firms right now is the new emissions rules. Mr Dean reports widespread anxiety in the run-up to the January 1 sulphur cap deadline, and further anxiety ahead of the March 1 fuel carriage ban, particularly in relation to the quantities of compliant fuel available.

There were question marks in relation to scrubbers and the stipulations imposed by some countries on the open loop type. But on the whole, legal aspects of the transition went smoothly, and the sulphur cap has since been overtaken by coronavirus in terms of top priorities.

Litigation has been limited, although there have been a handful of arbitrations, principally centred on who should pay for the installation of scrubbers.

Meanwhile, HFW has maintained its working relationship with BIMCO, for which it often undertakes pro bono work on drafting model clauses.

The main thrust at present is work on the draft a new ship management agreement for autonomous vessels.

The firm is also continuing its expansion, notably in Monaco, where it opened an office last year after hiring seven lawyers — led by partners Ian Cranston, Andrew Charlier and Marco Crusafio — from the old Ince & Co affiliate in the principality.

About one-third of the work is related to superyachts, but the majority still pertains to traditional shipping.

Growth in China remains very much of interest, where HFW is keen to tap the market for expertise in all shipping sectors. There have been nine recent corporate finance lawyer hires, including Matthew Wong at partner level.

The firm is also keen on gender equality, with a number of women recently promoted to partner or legal director.

MARKETS

Container freight rates set to slide as demand dries up

CONTAINER freight rates are likely to drop as demand falls of over the next few months, but there is still a chance that carriers will benefit from a "snap back" in the global economy next year.

Speaking in a webinar hosted by Informa Markets, Maritime Strategies International Asia regional director David Jordan said that the global economy looked set to see growth fall to a range between 0.5% and -0.5% this year due to the impact of measures being taken to control the coronavirus pandemic.

"When the coronavirus outbreak was limited mainly to China, the disruption in the container market was largely in the form of reduced supply of containerised goods," Mr Jordan said.

"In recent weeks, we've seen the epicentre of the outbreak shift from China to Europe and North America. What we're seeing is that as Chinese manufacturing is coming gradually back on line and the supply of containerised goods is recovering, it is now the demand for these goods that is being eroded. This is likely to continue moving forward."

Countries making up 50% of the Asia-Europe headhaul have now implemented quarantine measures. In the short term, with Chinese manufacturing coming back online, this could lead to an uptick in liftings to meet any pent up demand. In the second quarter, though, there could be severe downward pressure as the fall in demand started to feed through.

"Given the disruption, seaborne containerised trade is going to shrink in 2020 for the first time since the global financial crisis in 2009," Mr Jordan said.

To date, freight rates have remained largely stable, despite the reduction in volumes, as container lines resorted to "what amounts to the most significant programme of blank sailings in history".

Nevertheless, container lines had lost in the region of $2bn of revenue in February, and the slowdown in the global economy represented a huge threat to their continued profitability, Mr Jordan said.

But MSI is also forecasting higher growth in 2021 as economic activity returns.

"We think there is going to be great scope for policy response," Mr Jordan said. "I don't think anyone would deny that this is an unprecedented black swan event resulting from external forces, so governments are going to have a lot of freedom to implement stimulus packages."

Today, the US government announced it had committed to a $2trn package to support the US economy, and other governments have made similar pledges.

"Ultimately, we think the ability to snap back could be greater than in 2008-2009. This snapback argument is supported by the fact that the banks in most economies overseen by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development are in a much better position than they were in 2009."

Nevertheless, freight rates are likely to drop in the short term.

"The chances of a sharp correction in freight rates are now higher than they were," Mr Jordan said.

"We have to see whether container line companies will continue to lean on an aggressive programme of blank sailings to remove capacity as we have seen so far, and whether they can maintain this discipline across the alliances."

There was also a question about whether individual container lines would refrain from dropping rates in order to seek market share.

"When China was shut down, there was no point in dropping rates given the lack of production meant that lowering freight rates wouldn't attract any marginal cargo," he said. "But now production is returning, there could be that temptation."

India lockdown to slow Asia LNG demand

INDIA'S buying spree for cheap liquefied natural gas cargoes may soon run out of steam as the world's second-most populous country enters into several weeks of lockdown in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

"We are hearing Indian buyers have declared force majeure on some suppliers because of the potential steep decline in demand as a result of the lockdown," Poten & Partners Asia Pacific head Sophie Tan told Lloyd's List.

These force majeure declarations likely relate to long-term offtake arrangements.

Opportunistic Indian buyers have been seeking spot cargoes being offered at multi-year low prices ranging below $4 per million British thermal unit.

News broke last week that Gujarat-focused Torrent Power was seeking 12 LNG cargoes for delivery during 2021.

Buyers there moving in to absorb inexpensive supply has so far lifted the country's LNG demand by an average of 27m cu m per day on year since, Platts Analytics data showed.

Still, observers have forewarned that India's appetite for spot purchases will not last.

Europe's natural gas storage, which has been running at record highs through the preceding winter season from the end of October to February, is one factor supporting LNG tradeflow to the larger Asia region.

It has also helped that the east-west arbitrage has widened in favour of spot cargoes sent to Asia rather than to Europe.

Jeffrey Moore of Platts Analytics pointed to freight rates also benefiting from netbacks favouring Asia and pulling volumes into the region.

But as freight rates climb, Ms Tan warned that the east-west arbitrage, which still appears to work in favour of sending cargoes to Asia in May, may turn "uneconomical" in June.

She also suggested that LNG prices in Asia have drawn support from plants entering maintenance earlier than scheduled this year though they would eventually restart operation.

"We would see weakness in Asian prices as demand is likely to fall after India announced a national lockdown for three weeks," she added.

Others point to bottlenecks holding back India's LNG expansion.

AG&P LNG terminals and logistics president Karthik Sathyamoorthy said: "There is a limit to how much India can take in given the constraints from its import and distribution infrastructure."

Seasoned broker and LNG Easy founding chief executive He Yiyong concurred with this observation.

"It remains to be seen how much LNG India can absorb in light of its limiting pipeline network and that liquid-to-liquid distribution in the country has not really taken off."

Mr Sathyamoorthy noted that India's LNG demand mainly stems from requirements of its power sector, industrial and fertiliser plants.

With oil prices seen collapsing to the $20-$30 band recently, Mr Moore flagged the possibility of India's LNG demand growth easing in the coming months as end-users — particularly in the industrial sectors — may switch back to crude products.

Coronavirus: West coast ports remain operational

US west coast ports remain open for business even as they undertake measures to disinfect cargo handling equipment in an effort prevent dockworkers from being infected by the coronavirus.

Pacific Merchant Shipping Association vice-president Michele Grubbs said California ports are "fully operational and open for business" despite disruptions across many industries because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The PMSA represents owners and operators of marine terminals as well as US and foreign vessels operating throughout the world.

Ms Grubbs said the PMSA does not anticipate that cargo availability will be adversely impacted as marine terminal operators clean cargo handling equipment under guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control.

"We fully support this temporary modification of hours to ensure that all port workers are protected from any potential risk of viral spread," she said, referring to new gate hours announced by the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The PMSA said the second labour shift will begin at 7:00 pm and end at 4:00 am Pacific Time to allow for the cleaning and spraying of equipment. The first shift will remain with a start time of 8:00 am Pacific time, it said.

The changes, approved on March 22 by industry marine terminal operators, will allow for thorough equipment cleaning protocols and procedures during the coronavirus outbreak in an effort to protect worker health.

The Port of Los Angeles executive director Gene Seroka yesterday underscored the importance of longshore workers, telling Lloyd's List he is ensuring that "our longshore labour folks and the people that work on the docks are as safe and healthy as possible".

The announcement by the PMSA comes a week after dockworkers at the Port of Oakland threatened to stop working at a terminal they alleged was not properly sanitising the equipment and facilities for employees.

Members of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union, Locals 10, 34, 75 and 91, wanted SSA Marine to clean equipment at its Oakland terminal between shifts, following the example of other terminal operators who employ separate staff for cleaning.

SSA quickly resolved the dispute with the ILWU on Monday, according to Port of Oakland spokesman Mike Zampa. "SSA has agreed to use the same cleaning protocols as other terminals," said Mr Zampa.

To the north, in Washington State, the Northwest Seaport Alliance last Friday said its terminals have "enhanced and increased their cleaning and disinfecting services" and were providing "extra cleaning supplies, including hand cleaning stations".

The NWSA, comprised of the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma, said it is working in close co-ordination with the ILWU and terminal operators "to ensure our gateway's critical services continue to operate in a safe manner".

Earlier in March, the ILWU and the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents ocean carriers and terminal operators in labour contracts, issued a joint statement.

It noted that "operations at the ports have been increasingly impacted by the reduction of cargo flow from Asia as a result of the coronavirus outbreak".

It said: "Our goal is to work cooperatively to ensure worker safety, keep cargo flowing and share credible and timely information that is relevant to ILWU, dockworkers, PMA members, shippers, local communities and other stakeholders who rely on west coast ports."

Concerns about the safety of dockworkers mounted last week when the Port of Houston had to close two of its container terminals after one worker tested positive for the coronavirus.

The two terminals were reopened within 24 hours after the worker was hopitalised, but the industry has now taken note of the need to operate proactively to protect workers from being infected by the virus.

IN OTHER NEWS

Hamburg defers fees to support port users

AS THE coronavirus pandemic tightens its grip on supply chains, the port of Hamburg has announced it is to defer lease and fee payments for any port user that requests assistance.

Tenants of the Hamburg Port Authority can apply for the interest-free moratorium of the building and land lease for April-June, the port said in a statement. Payments can be deferred until December 31, 2020.

"The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg furthermore supports the port industry in the current difficult situation by deferring charges," the port said.

Cargill adapts to evolving coronavirus situation

CARGILL, the global grains producer and trader, said its ocean transportation unit has so far not experienced any major disruptions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The unit said it was working with shipowners and customers to “find solutions and adapt to the changing circumstances”.

“Operational complications, such as loading/unloading restrictions and a 14-day quarantine for vessels and crews in certain ports, are introducing some inefficiencies, but we are working with our partners, customers and local authorities to find solutions that minimise the impact on our business,” it said in an emailed statement.

Coronavirus: Prominent maritime figures face measures
GREEK shipowner Simos Palios, the founder and chief executive of New York-listed companies Diana Shipping and Performance Shipping, has tested positive for coronavirus.

Diana, the owner of 41 bulkers, announced the development in a US stock market statement, saying that the company's board has appointed Semiramis Paliou as acting chief executive “on a temporary basis”.

Last October, Ms Paliou, a daughter of Mr Palios, 79, was made deputy chief executive, and Diana's presumptive future leader, under a long-term transition plan put in place by the company.

China container line joins Singapore's Calista platform
CHINA-FOCUSED intra-Asia line Sinotrans Container Lines has joined the Singapore-based Global eTrade Services' Calista supply chain platform, bringing its China connections to the table.

Customers on the open and neutral global supply chain orchestration platform can leverage on Sinolines' extensive port network in China and access to warehousing, terminal and yard services with multimodal freight options including cross-border rail transhipment services, GeTs said in a press release.

Sinolines, meanwhile, will harness Calista to expand its business footprint and its customers can tap on the platform's global connectivity to more than 60 customs nodes to fulfil their compliance requirements as well gain access to the financing suite on the same platform.

Coronavirus: Prominent maritime figures face measures
MOL reports $146m extraordinary losses amid virus fallout

MITSUI OSK Lines says it expects to record $146m in extraordinary losses as the challenging market conditions cause damage to its bulker and containership units.

The two affiliates involved are Gearbulk Holding AG and Ocean Network Express.

The former, controlled by Norwegian ship-owner Kristian Jebsen, operates a mixed fleet of about 70 vessels, including dry bulkers, general cargo carriers and liquid tankers.

Port operators in Shanghai and Ningbo Zhoushan bolster partnership
SHANGHAI and Ningbo-Zhoushan ports, two of the world's largest trade hubs, have entered a strategic co-operation agreement as Beijing pushes for port and regional economic consolidation.

The partnership will be developed in several aspects, the foremost of which is for the Shanghai International Port Group to acquire a 5% stake in Ningbo-Zhoushan Co. The deal was proposed in January this year and has already been approved by the buyer's board.

SIPG and NZC are the main operators of their respective harbours — both are located in the Yangtze River Delta region, the key economic powerhouse in East China.

Maersk VP becomes Port of Long Beach commercial operations director
THE Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners has appointed Kenneth W Duncan, currently Maersk lifestyle and apparel vice-president, as managing director of commercial operations at the Port of Long Beach.

Port executive director Mario Cordero said Mr Duncan's “vast experience and insight into the complex global supply chain” will be valuable to the port as it improves its infrastructure and strengthens “the best customer service in the Americas”.

For classified notices please view the next page.

VATTENFALL

APPLICATION FOR A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

THE PROPOSED NORFOLK VANGUARD OFFSHORE WIND FARM ORDER (Application Reference EN010079)

NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 20 OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that further information has been published in relation to the application made by Norfolk Vanguard Limited (the **Applicant**) of First Floor, 1 Tudor Street, London, EC4Y 0AH for a Development Consent Order (**DCO**) under sections 14, 15 and 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (the **Application**). The Application was made on 26 June 2018 and accepted on 24 July 2018 (Reference: EN010079). The Secretary of State, by way of letter dated 6 December 2019, extended the deadline for a decision on the Application and requested information and comments from the Applicant, Interested Parties, and Other Parties by 28 February 2020. The Secretary of State considers the information provided by the Applicant in response to the 6 December 2019 consultation letter to contain further environmental information (**Further Information**) and therefore invites comments from interested parties on the Further Information no later than 27 April 2020.

The Further Information is set out in the following documents:

- Summary Overview on HRA
- Applicant's Response
  - o Applicant's Response Appendix 1: B1149 traffic management drawings
  - o Applicant's Response Appendix 2: Environmental assessment for trenchless crossing of B1149
- Additional Mitigation
  - o Additional Mitigation Appendix 1 Updated Collision Risk Modelling
  - o Additional Mitigation Appendix 2 Assessment of Additional Mitigation in HHW SAC
  - o Additional Mitigation Appendix 3 Cable Protection Decommissioning Evidence
  - o Additional Mitigation Appendix 4 BT Cable Recovery Letter of Comfort
- Consultation Overview
- Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC Position Statement
  - o Outline Norfolk Vanguard Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton Special Area of Conservation Site Integrity Plan
  - o Outline Norfolk Vanguard Cable Specification Installation and Monitoring Plan for the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton Special Area of Conservation
- Ornithology Position Statement
  - o Ornithology Position Statement Appendix 1: Headroom Calculations
- Habitats Regulations Derogation Provision of Evidence
  - o Derogation Appendix 1: Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA In Principle Compensation Measures for kittiwake
  - o Derogation Appendix 2: Alde-Ore Estuary SPA In Principle Compensation Measures for lesser black-backed gull
  - o Derogation Appendix 3: Haisborough, Hammond & Winterton SAC In Principle Compensation Measures
- Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy
- Draft Development Consent Order
- DCO Schedule of Changes
- Guide to the Application
- Note on Requirements.

The Further Information also includes a number of consent envelope modifications, including (but not limited to):

- A decrease in the maximum number of turbines from 180 to 158;
- An increase to the minimum draught height of turbines to: 35m (above Mean High Water Springs (MHWS)) for turbine models of up to and including 14.6MW capacity, and minimum draught height of 30m (above MHWS) for turbine models of 14.7MW and above;
- A commitment to no cable protection in the priority areas to be managed as reef within the HHW SAC, unless otherwise agreed with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in consultation with Natural England; and
- A commitment to decommission cable protection at the end of the Norfolk Vanguard project life where it is associated with unburied cables due to ground conditions (where required for crossings this will be left *in situ*).

Summary of the Project

The Application relates to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm, with an electrical export capacity of up to 1,800MW and comprising up to 158 (previously 180) wind turbine generators and associated infrastructure, to be located approximately 47km offshore (at the closest point) (the **Project**). The DCO for the Project would, amongst other things, also authorise:

1. Up to two accommodation platforms and associated foundations;
2. Up to two meteorological masts and associated foundations;
3. Up to two LIDAR measurement buoys and up to two wave measurement buoys;
4. Up to two offshore electrical platforms and associated foundations;
5. Subsea array cables and fibre optic cables, including offshore cable crossings, between the wind turbine generators and offshore electrical platforms;
6. Up to four subsea export cables and fibre optic cables to transmit electricity from the offshore electrical platforms to shore;
7. Scour protection around foundations and on array cables and export cables as required;
8. Landfall at Happisburgh South with up to two transition jointing pits to join the offshore and onshore cables;
9. Onshore transmission works consisting of up to four cables to be laid in ducts and up to four additional cable ducts for the Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm, and associated fibre optic cables laid underground within cable ducts, running from landfall at Happisburgh South to the onshore project substation;
10. An onshore project substation to the east of the existing National Grid substation at Necton, Norfolk, to connect the onshore transmission works to the National Grid substation, together with surface water management, bunding, embankments, and boundary treatments at the onshore project substation site;
11. Up to 12 400kV underground interface cables between the onshore project substation and the existing Necton National Grid Substation, and an extension to the Necton National Grid substation;
12. Modification of the existing overhead line network in the vicinity of the existing Necton National Grid substation including the removal of one existing pylon and construction of two new permanent pylons and the installation of conductors, insulators, and fittings on the pylons;
13. Permanent access connecting the A47 to the onshore project substation and the existing Necton National Grid substation;
14. Temporary construction areas, working sites and mobilisation areas and access roads in connection with the cable route and onshore project substation and the existing Necton National Grid substation;
15. Jointing pits, manholes, kiosks, marker posts, link boxes and other works associated with laying ducts and/or cables and fibre optic cables and/or pulling cables through cable ducts;
16. The permanent and/or temporary compulsory acquisition (if required) of land and/or rights for the proposed Project;
17. Overriding of easements and other rights over or affecting land for the proposed Project;
18. The application and/or disapplication of legislation relevant to the proposed Project including inter alia legislation relating to compulsory purchase; and
19. Such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions, permits or consents as are necessary and/or convenient.

Environmental Impact Assessment Development

The proposed works are environmental impact assessment (EIA) development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and accordingly an Environmental Statement accompanied the Application.

Further Information

The Further Information can be viewed on the Norfolk Vanguard project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website:
https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/eastern/norfolk-vanguard/?ipcsection=docs

The Further Information and the Environmental Statement will also be available for inspection free of charge at Dereham Library, 59 High St, Dereham, NR19 1DZ until 27 April 2020, but in the light of the current public health situation surrounding coronavirus (COVID-19), if you are planning to attend the library please check with the library in advance. Planning Inspectorate guidance is also available on the government website in relation to site visits, hearings, inquiries and events:
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance

The documents are also available at http://bit.ly/NorfolkVanguard and paper copies of the Further Information can be provided on request from info@norfolkvanguard.co.uk for a charge of £686. USB device copies can be provided free of charge and are available on request.

Deadline for Response

Comments from interested parties on the Further Information must be received no later than 23:59 on 27 April 2020.

How to Respond

Consultation responses on the Further Information should be submitted by email to: NorfolkVanguard@planninginspectorate.gov.uk Please also send any hard copy response to Norfolk Vanguard Offshore Wind Farm, the Planning Inspectorate, 3D Eagle Wing, Temple Quay House, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN.