

# Response ID ANON-BP71-U2JA-C

Submitted to Consultation on the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan for Northern Ireland  
Submitted on 2023-03-16 13:23:26

## Introduction

1 What is your name? (optional)

Name:

Joanna Drennan

2 What is your email address? (optional)

Email:

Joanna.Drennan@rtpi.org.uk

3 Are you responding on behalf of yourself, or on behalf of your organisation?

My organisation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please state the name of the organisation:  
ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE

## Background

### Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan

### Indicative timeline for offshore wind development in Northern Ireland

### Principles of the OREAP

4 Do you agree with the principles of the Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan?

Yes

Please provide any further comments and, if possible, evidence to support your answer, additional comments, or suggestions. :

There is also the need to connect with local and regional land strategies for supporting sustainable offshore renewable energy. There needs to be cohesive land, coastal and marine planning.

### Themes, key objectives, and actions

#### Theme 1: Sustainability and Co-existence

5 Do you agree with the key objectives and actions in relation to Theme 1?

Yes

Please provide any further comments and, if possible, evidence to support your answer, additional comments, or suggestions. :

6 Are there any other areas that require further attention?

Yes

If yes, please provide evidence to support additional comments or suggestions.:

There is also the need to connect with local and regional land strategies for supporting sustainable offshore renewable energy e.g. with Local Development Plans. There needs to be cohesive land, coastal and marine planning in order to deliver economic growth that is sustainable and supported by local communities.

#### Theme 2: Enabling Frameworks

7 Do you agree with the key objectives and actions in relation to Theme 2?

Yes

Please provide any further comments and, if possible, evidence to support your response, additional comments, or suggestions. :

8 Are there any other areas that require further attention?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide evidence to support any additional comments or suggestions.:

### Theme 3: Electricity Network

9 Do you agree with the key objectives and actions in relation to Theme 3?

Yes

Please provide any further comments and, if possible, evidence to support your response, additional comments, or suggestions. :

10 Are there any other areas that require further attention?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide evidence to support any additional comments or suggestions.:

### Theme 4: Economic Growth

11 Do you agree with the key objectives and actions in relation to Theme 4?

Yes

Please provide any further comments and, if possible, evidence to support your response, additional comments, or suggestions. :

On actions 14 and 15:

Part of the role of the RTPI as a learned institution is to promote and advance the training and education of planners in terrestrial planning, but now there is the need to extend this training and education into the marine environment through Marine Spatial Planning. In terms of implementing the themes and actions from the draft OREAP, we must be mindful that we are operating within a brand new marine planning system that is underpinned through the Draft NI Marine Plan (DAERA, 2018), the NI Marine Act 2013 and the UK Marine Policy Statement 2011, and Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Our planners (across all aspects of planning: local planning authorities, DfI, Planning Appeals Commissioners, and private planning consultancies) will need to undergo significant training and working with specialists in the marine environment to deal with planning issues that they have never seen before. With the ambitious target to be met for NI, there will be significant opportunities for growth in the planning system and, most importantly, whilst we have lots of planning graduates coming through from our two RTPI accredited planning programmes in the University of Ulster and Queen's University Belfast, there is a significant skills gap for this type of work in implementing the types of projects coming forward from the OREAP. There is an increased need for knowledge, training, CPD and upskilling for existing terrestrial planners but also for the new graduates, who are just starting to look at these issues in their undergraduate degrees. There will be additional planning applications for the coastal planning authorities and DfI Strategic Team. It is also expected the PAC will have new work from appeals or public inquiries. Marine Spatial Planning is in all aspects of planning, development management, forward planning and enforcement and our current planners are not prepared for what is about to come out of the OREAP in terms of the skills and knowledge needed for the implementation of the large scale offshore renewable energy projects. This comes at a time when planning departments are under resourced and so planners and the planning system need the support and resources necessary to ensure that the OREAP can be delivered. All agencies will need to work with the accredited planning schools more closely to come up with CPD, Post-graduate qualifications and other training courses to prepare our planners for the future offshore renewable energy projects that the OREAP will bring.

12 Are there any other areas that require further attention?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide evidence to support any additional comments or suggestions.:

### Theme 5: Legislation and Regulation

13 Do you agree with the key objectives and actions in relation to Theme 5?

Yes

Please provide any further comments and, if possible, evidence to support your response, additional comments, or suggestions. :

As noted before, there needs to be cohesive planning policy for land, coastal and marine planning. Planning policy such as the Local Development Plans and regional spatial strategy need to be used as vehicles to plan, protect and promote the renewable energy sector in a sustainable way which is acceptable to local communities.

14 Are there any other areas that require further attention?

Not Answered

If yes, please provide evidence to support any additional comments or suggestions.:

## Monitoring and Reporting

15 Do you have any further comments on the Draft OREAP?

No

If yes, please provide evidence to support any additional comments or suggestions.: