



Meeting note

File reference	EN010056 and EN010057
Status	Draft
Author	John Pingstone
Date	11 July 2013
Meeting with	East Anglia Offshore Wind
Venue	Rivergate, Bristol
Attendees	<u>East Anglia Offshore Wind (EAOW)</u> James Donald – Head of Development Keith Morrison – Senior Project Manager <u>The Planning Inspectorate</u> Katherine Chapmen – Case Manager John Pingstone – Case Officer Tim Hallam – Legal Manager Laura Allen – Senior EIA advisor Hannah Nelson – EIA advisor David Watts – Consents Service Unit
Meeting objectives	Project update on both East Anglia 3 and 4 applications
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) explained its openness policy and the commitment to publishing any advice under Section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act). It was confirmed that the Inspectorate is unable to give legal advice on which developers or others can rely and that developers should seek their own legal advice.

EAOW explained that although East Anglia THREE (EA3) and East Anglia FOUR (EA4) share some areas of land with the East Anglia ONE (EA1) application that is currently being examined by the Inspectorate, they were aware that no discussion of the EA1 application should take place at the meeting.

Project Update

The latest position is that a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) has been consulted upon, and will be published around 5 August 2013 for approximately 30 days. This will be followed by public information days in line with the information given in the SoCC.

EAOW gave a presentation explaining their company structure and team structure. EAOW also presented a zone overview setting out the physical characteristics of Zone 5 (Norfolk). They pointed out that there is still ongoing zonal work, specifically in regard to cumulative issues.

They explained their approach to the Zone Appraisal and Planning (ZAP) process, which aims to maximise the generation capacity of the zone whilst minimising impacts on sensitive receptors. This involved a number of surveys including aerial surveys, bird surveys, geophysical surveys, geotechnical surveys and benthic surveys.

The Inspectorate queried whether the ZAP process had been initiated prior to the publication of the East of England Marine Plan. EAOW confirmed that this was the case, but that they had been part of a Working Group that had been consulted on the contents of the plan, which meant that they were aware of any relevant information.

EAOW explained that EA3 and 4 are separate DCO applications, but with a shared cable route and grid connection point. In regard to the grid connection EAOW pointed out that they are an OFTO (Offshore Transmission Owner) meaning that they have an obligation to review the grid connections within the zone; to this end they have been in discussion with National Grid. The intention is that the cable route will not transect the area used by the EA1 wind farm. The Inspectorate queried whether the cable route would be AC or DC, EAOW confirmed that it would be DC.

The Inspectorate queried whether EAOW had considered submitted EA3 and 4 as one DCO application. EAOW said that they had decided to submit separate applications for various reasons, including the business risk and level of work involved in submitting one large application.

MIEU/HRA Evidence Plan

EAOW explained that they have engaged with the Major Infrastructure Environment Unit at Defra, who are assisting them in producing an Evidence Plan. The draft plan is at an advanced stage and will shortly be finalised. EAOW explained that the engagement with the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies had been very positive. The Inspectorate suggested that it would be appropriate for the Evidence Plan to be submitted with the application documents and published on the Planning Portal website. It was also suggested to EAOW that it is important to link the Evidence Plan with other documents such as the consultation report, Environmental Statement and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

EAOW queried how much involvement and interaction the Inspectorate has with MIEU in producing the evidence plan. It was suggested that direct involvement has been quite minimal, but that this would be looked into and a definite answer would be given to EAOW after the meeting.

Consents Service Unit

The Planning Inspectorate gave an overview of the Consents Service Unit, including detailing its purpose, remit and functions. The Unit began in April 2013, and is focussed on facilitating and co-ordinating the various non-planning consents that sit alongside the DCO process. The final product would be a Consents Management Plan, which has some similarities to the MIEU Evidence Plan in its structure and purpose.

EAOW queried how much cross-over there was between the Consents Service Unit and MIEU. It was suggested that there are ongoing discussions between the two units in regard to how certain functions will be handled within these cross-over areas, so no definitive answer can be given at this stage.

EAOW asked whether the services of the Unit could be engaged after a decision had been made on a DCO, in regard to those consents that are still yet to be obtained. It was suggested by the Inspectorate that it could be used at this stage.

The Inspectorate suggested that it is often the case that a 'letter of comfort' is submitted to the Examining Authority during an examination which sets out what stage has been reached in obtaining a consent. The completion of a Consents Management Plan can help in this regard by being a central point for the Examining Authority to consider in appraising the likelihood that the applicant will obtain the consent. It can also serve to identify dependencies between consents.

Preliminary Environmental Information and Consultation

In regard to Preliminary Environmental Information EAOW explained that they had attempted to make this information as comprehensive as possible, given previous experience of consultees requesting further information. The Inspectorate explained that Advice Note 7 is currently being revised to give better advice on this subject. The PEI does not need to be a draft ES but more detail is preferable to less. There is no standard format or requirements for content. In regard to advice notes in general, the Inspectorate informed EAOW that they should be aware of the upcoming publication of other revised advice notes and guidance, including an advice note on compulsory acquisition and pre-application guidance.

The Inspectorate queried whether there is potential for conflict with the EA1 application as consultees and the public may become confused between the three applications. EAOW explained that they had put considerable effort and thought into explaining this as clearly as possible in their consultation material.

The Inspectorate suggested to EAOW that they should be aware of the changes brought in by the The Infrastructure Planning (Prescribed Consultees and Interested Parties etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, particularly the transitional arrangements. Also to note that several bodies have been abolished or merged (for example Natural Resources Wales) and that this should be taken into account when carrying out consultation.

Submission Date

EAOW thought that the EA3 and 4 applications may now be spaced 6 months apart to prevent any resource issues from occurring.

The Inspectorate suggested that regular meetings would be beneficial, and that it would be helpful if EAOW could submit the draft SoCC for review. In addition it would be helpful to have sight of any other draft documents at the first opportunity, including the draft consultation report, plans, and DCO.

Specific decisions / follow up required?

- The Inspectorate to ascertain the level and nature of involvement with MIEU in compiling Evidence Plans
- EAOW to send the Inspectorate the draft SoCC and any other appropriate draft documents