



Meeting note

File reference	EN010084
Status	Final
Author	Karl-Jonas Johansson
Date	17 August 2016
Meeting with	Vattenfall
Venue	The Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate: Tom Carpen (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Richard Kent (EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Karl-Jonas Johansson (Case Officer) Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd: Helen Jameson (Project Manager) Andrew Paine (Head of Offshore Development) (by phone)
Meeting objectives	Introduction to the Thanet Extension project
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Introduction

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) case team introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Inspectorate continued by outlining its openness policy and ensured those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Inspectorate's website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008). Further to this, it was made clear that any advice given did not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant (or others) can rely. It was clarified to the Applicant that the publication of the initial meeting note could be delayed up to six months or until a formal scoping request had been submitted, if the project information was regarded commercially sensitive by the Applicant.

Project details

The Applicant gave an introduction to the project and the drivers behind it. The project is an extension to the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm with the capacity to generate up to 285MW of electricity. The project would consist of up to 34 wind turbines which will be located around the existing wind farm which comprises 100 no. 3MW turbines. It is intended that the new wind farm's turbines would, individually, have a greater capacity than the existing turbines and therefore be taller and spaced

further apart. At this stage, the applicant is considering turbines with a generating capacity of up to 8.4MW each.

Post meeting clarification: The applicant has advised that this may be revised slightly within the scoping report once produced, as the design freeze for Scoping is underway at the moment.

Consultation

The Applicant confirmed that they have started non-statutory consultation with key stakeholders such as the relevant local authorities, Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA), Natural England (NE) and Thanet Fishermen's Association. The applicant has subsequently confirmed that they have also started non-statutory consultation with Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Historic England (HE), Port of London Authority and Thanet Fishermen's Association. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that they have yet to start consulting with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Wildlife Trust and the RSPB but has subsequently confirmed that consultation with these bodies has commenced.

The Applicant was advised to keep a record of all statutory and non-statutory consultation for the consultation report. It was further advised that the consultation report should demonstrate how the Applicant has had regard to these responses, and that the Applicant should be confident that no relevant party had been prejudiced against participating in the pre-application process.

The Applicant is currently consulting with the authorities above on the projects redline boundary with the intention of fixing this for Scoping by the end of August 2016. The Applicant intends to submit its scoping request in December 2016 with the intention to submit an application for DCO (Development Consent Order) in January 2018.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that, if requested, the Inspectorate could chair an outreach meeting with key stakeholder post-statutory consultation to aid parties to resolve outstanding issues.

The Applicant intends to engage a land agent shortly to aid them with its s.42(1)(d) consultation with persons with a land interest.

Crown land

No Agreement for Lease is in place for the Thanet Extension project, however The Crown Estate are aware Vattenfall are considering progressing development of the project in its absence.

The Applicant was advised to consult the Department for Communities and Local Government's [guidance on compulsory acquisition](#) and the Hornsea Offshore Wind Farm (Zone 4) – Project Two [decision letter](#) regarding Crown consent for any compulsory acquisition of Crown Land. The applicant was advised that if it required such consent, this would need to be secured before the Secretary of State could grant development consent. Past practice had been to secure a requirement enabling acquisition consent to be granted at a later date; however the most recent Secretary of State decision sought Crown consent prior to development consent being granted.

The Applicant advised that it would submit its scoping request as soon as a positive internal governance decision had been made by Vattenfall in relation to continued development of the project.

Grid Connection

The Applicant is considering options for intertidal cable installation to minimise potential impact on coastal habitats. The landfall location is being selected to minimise cross-over with the existing cables. The applicant has subsequently advised that two options are under consideration. It is expected that the onshore cable route will follow public highways wherever possible.

The Applicant has subsequently confirmed that an application has been submitted to National Grid for connection at 400kV to the transmission network at the soon to be installed Grid Supply Point at Richborough substation. The Applicant is anticipating a formal grid connection offer from National Grid in October 2016.

The Applicant is considering various options for the offshore cabling specification including those which may not trigger the Offshore Transmission Owners (OFTOs) regime or require an offshore substation platform.

Surveys

The Inspectorate asked for details of surveys being planned or considered. The applicant advised on its discussions to date with NE and has subsequently advised that it has commenced a campaign of aerial bird and marine mammal surveys, having taken the advice provided by NE regarding their preference for aerial surveys over boat based surveys. The previously chartered boat based campaign, commenced in January 2016, was cancelled. The Applicant will provide NE with a 12 month survey report in Q2 2017 and discuss the need for further surveys beyond this date. To avoid delay to the consenting programme in the event 24 months of surveys are required by NE, the applicant is seeking to submit an application for DCO ahead of the completion of the full campaign. The Applicant has requested in discussions with NE that ~3 months data be submitted following submission of the application for DCO. The Applicant briefly explained the level of survey effort (including post construction monitoring) that had been ongoing at the site of the existing wind farm up until 2013.

The Applicant is in discussion with NE to see how this can work within the project's timescales. The Applicant sought Inspectorate advice regarding the possibility of submitting the application for DCO before 24 months of surveys had been completed, should NE determine that a full two years' is required.

The Inspectorate advised of the risk that the outcome of the bird surveys might result in changes to the project and that the Applicant would need to have a level of confidence in the surveys carried out and the mitigation proposed, based on discussion with NE.

It was agreed that the Inspectorate would provide post-meeting advice regarding this issue. The Inspectorate offered also to hold tripartite meetings with NE if requested. The Inspectorate also advised that this issue could form a key point of the evidence plan process.

Evidence plan

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it would like to produce a focused Evidence Plan to inform its Habitats Regulations Assessment information. It intends to hold its first evidence plan meeting in October 2016 with key statutory consultees.

The Inspectorate advised that subject to the agreement of NE, it could facilitate the steering group meetings and that the Applicant should seek the views of potential participants on either working or steering groups.

The Inspectorate's experience was that the main steering group participants were statutory parties such as NE, and Local Authorities, with parties such as Wildlife Trusts participating on working groups. However each Evidence Plan is different and dependent on available resources and interests, so the Applicant should seek the views of respective parties.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that, based on its experience so far, it considered that the focus should be to secure clear views on the evidence to inform the examination, rather than push for all encompassing agreement of issues.

The Inspectorate agreed to send its Evidence Plan terms of reference document to the Applicant.

Turbines

The proposed wind farm's turbines are expected to be larger and spaced further apart than the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm turbines and therefore there is potential for visual impact around the Broadstairs/Ramsgate area particularly in relation to the scale of the new turbines when viewed alongside existing, smaller turbines. The Scoping report will include some visualisations to enable consultees to assess the potential visual impact of the larger turbines. The Applicant is currently working on the spacing of the turbines to minimise the impact on shipping and search and rescue services.

Marine noise registry

The Applicant was advised to review the Hornsea Offshore Wind Farm (Zone 4) - Project One requirements regarding marine noise and to speak to the JNCC regarding the recently launched Marine Noise Registry Service.

AOB

The Applicant was advised to ensure that the Environmental Statement had assessed what the DCO authorised them to build and operate. It was further mentioned that following acceptance the Inspectorate cannot accept any new information only documents that signpost where the information can be found.

The Inspectorate advised that it could give advice on the drafting of the DCO and recommended the Applicant to consult the Secretary of State's decision letters for similar projects. It was highlighted that all articles and requirements need to be justifiable.

The Inspectorate recommended its draft document review service. The Applicant was advised to programme 3 weeks into its project programme for an initial review of

draft documents and up to 3 months if it wanted to provide further iterations. If possible, the Inspectorate would like to review the consultation reports appendices at the same time as the report.

The Applicant was advised to submit a GIS shapefile of the proposed DCO site boundary at least 10 working days before submitting the scoping request and that it should include all route options for the cable route corridors. The Inspectorate agreed to review the Applicants GIS shape file prior to submission.

Specific decisions / follow up required

- The Inspectorate to give further advice regarding submitting the DCO application before the final bird surveys has been completed.
- The Inspectorate to send its evidence plan terms of reference document to the Applicant.
- The Inspectorate to give advice on how to include cable options in the shape file
- Applicant to send the Inspectorate the necessary information to set up a project page and to create an account for the SI template.
- Applicant and the Inspectorate to set up a contact plan