



# Preliminary Meeting Note

**Application:** Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm

**Reference:** EN010112

**Time and date:** 20 September 2022, 10:00 am

**Venue:** Virtual event (Microsoft Teams) and the Studio Room, Venue Cymru, Promenade, Llandudno LL30 1BB

*This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.*

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

Jonathan Hockley (JH) welcomed those present and introduced himself as the lead member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors which forms the Examining Authority (ExA). Alex Hutson, Richard Morgan, Helen Cassini and Jason Rowlands introduced themselves as panel members. The panel will examine the Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm application.

JH explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 24 May 2022.

JH explained that the ExA would be examining the application made by Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Limited ('the Applicant') before making a recommendation to the SoS for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

JH explained the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and noted that the Examination will commence after the PM closes.

The ExA confirmed that all documents and submissions received and accepted during the Examination will be published on the project-specific page of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

## 2. Audio recording

The full audio recording of this PM is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed [here](#).

## 3. General Data Protection Regulation

The ExA explained the Planning Inspectorate's duties under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Further info relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Privacy Note](#).

#### **4. Examination Process**

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), further info can be found in the [Advice Note 8.4](#)

#### **5. Initial Assessment of Principal Issues**

The ExA explained the purpose of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAP I) (section 88 of the Planning Act 2008), which can be found in [Annex C](#) of the [Rule 6](#) letter of 23 August 2022 and asked for any observations on them.

In regard to IAP I point 2 (Biodiversity, Ecology and Natural Environment), the Applicant noted biodiversity net gain is not recognised the same in Wales as in England. It should be noted as biodiversity benefits.

In regard to various subsections of IAP I points 4 (Construction) and 6 (Flood Risk and Water Quality) the Applicant considered that they were not issues raised of concern as far as it is aware.

The Applicant considered that in regard to the 'Community Benefits' subsection of IAP I point 17 (Socio-Economics), it is being dealt with outside the Development Consent Order (DCO) process as it legally cannot be part of the DCO process. The Applicant stated it will update on progress as it progresses.

The ExA noted all comments made.

#### **6. Examination Timetable**

The ExA noted the request from the Applicant, already received in writing, to amend the draft Examination Timetable contained in [Annex D](#) of the Rule 6 letter and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance.

All comments received were duly noted by the ExA and considerations will be reflected in the Rule 8 Letter.

The Examination Timetable can be found in the Rule 8 letter to be published on 27 September 2022.

#### **7. Hearings and Site Inspections**

The ExA clarified the purpose of:

- Issue Specific Hearings
- Compulsory Acquisition Hearings
- Open Floor Hearings
- Accompanied Site Inspections
- Unaccompanied Site Inspections

The ExA sought comments on the arrangements for the above events. These were duly noted and considered by the ExA.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found in our [Advice Note 8.5](#)

## 8. Procedural decisions

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made under section 89(3) of the PA2008 and asked for any observations.

Procedural decisions can be found in [Annex H](#) of the Rule 6 Letter.

The ExA noted topics for Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) are set out in [Annex H](#) of the Rule 6 Letter.

The Applicant explained it is prioritising SoCG with Local Authorities (LAs) and is in the process of negotiating agreements with other parties. In some instances, SoCG may not be needed, as such agreed position statements may be submitted instead. The Applicant advised Natural Resources Wales (NRW) marine licensing team does not currently want a SoCG but it will re-confirm its position. The Applicant confirmed it will be providing a SoCG tracker at each deadline.

The Applicant explained submissions of SoCG at deadline 1 is not generally helpful unless it has been agreed with the relevant party that this can be done as negotiations at this time can be sensitive. The LAs in attendance agreed.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council (IoACC) noted that there will be a joint SoCG between the relevant North Wales Planning Officers group (IoACC, Denbighshire County Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Gwynedd Council, and Snowdonia National Park) on landscape and seascape matters. Where relevant on other matters there will be separate SoCG.

The ExA noted it has accepted Additional Submissions and they have been published on the [project webpage](#).

The ExA requested the Applicant provides a comprehensive National Policy Statement (NPS) tracker for NPSs EN1, EN3 and EN5, to be submitted at each deadline as specified. The Applicant confirmed it will provide it at Deadline 1 and at the close of examination but will only submit an update if there are changes at each deadline.

The ExA requested the Applicant provides an update at Deadline 1 and subsequent deadlines where relevant if required on the Marine License with a final update provided at the final Deadline. The Applicant explained it has been working closely with NRW licensing team to work out how the separate processes can be aligned.

The ExA noted section 5 of [Annex H](#) sets out requests for Local Impact Reports (LIR).

The Applicant suggested, instead of updating the LIR at the final deadline, it might be more useful for LAs to comment on the LIR on matters resolved etc.

Conwy Council noted it is not envisaging to submit a separate LIR, but will rather rely on Written Representations and SoCG. Isle of Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council also stated that they did not intend to prepare a written LIR.

The preliminary meeting was closed at 11:40 am.