

The logo for FIVE ESTUARIES OFFSHORE WIND FARM. The word "FIVE" is in a grey sans-serif font, with the 'V' colored purple and pink. To the right of "FIVE" are three wavy lines in blue, green, and yellow. Below "FIVE" is the word "ESTUARIES" in a larger grey sans-serif font, and below that is "OFFSHORE WIND FARM" in a smaller grey sans-serif font.

FIVE ESTUARIES

OFFSHORE WIND FARM

FIVE ESTUARIES OFFSHORE WIND FARM

5.2 EVIDENCE PLAN

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DEFINITION OF ACRONYMS

Term	Definition
AfL	Agreements for Lease
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CIION	Connection and Infrastructure Options Note
DCO	Development Consent Order
EACN	East Anglia Connection Node
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
ETG	Expert Topic Group
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LVIA	Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
MIEU	Major Infrastructure Environment Unit
North Falls	North Falls Offshore Windfarm Project
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
OWF	Offshore Wind Farm
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PINS	the Planning Inspectorate
RIAA	Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment
SLVIA	Seascape, Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
SNCB	Statutory Nature Conservation Body
SoCG	Statements of Common Ground
TCE	The Crown Estate
the Applicant	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Limited
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToR	Terms of Reference
VE	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 In February 2017, The Crown Estate (TCE) offered developers of operating Offshore Wind Farms (OWFs) the opportunity to apply for project extensions. Eight applications were received, including Five Estuaries OWF (hereafter referred to as 'VE'), which met the specified criteria. In August 2019, TCE published a plan-level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which assessed the potential impacts of the proposed projects on relevant nature conservation sites of the European Natura 2000 network. Seven of the eight extension projects, including VE, then known as the Galloper Extension, proceeded to the award of leasing rights as part of the 2017 extensions round. The Agreements for Lease (AfLs) for these projects were awarded in summer 2019.
- 1.1.2 On 5 October 2021, Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Limited (the 'Applicant') submitted a scoping report (VE OWFL, 2021) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and received a formal scoping opinion on 12 November 2021 (PINS, 2021). Prior to scoping, and since, the Applicant has engaged in consultation with both statutory and non-statutory consultees (including via the Evidence Plan process; a series of regular consultation meetings with key stakeholders on technical matters).
- 1.1.3 On 14 March 2023, the Applicant published a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) in the format of a draft Environmental Statement (ES), which formed the basis of project information submitted for statutory consultation, under sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008. The consultation period was open for eight weeks, closing on 12 May 2023.
- 1.1.4 The Applicant has reviewed feedback from the consultation, sought further engagement with stakeholders where needed, and implemented changes (including design changes) in preparation for the final application, including via the Evidence Plan process described by this document.
- 1.1.5 A comprehensive account of all consultation undertaken to assist in the development of VE, and how this has been taken account of, is included in the Consultation Report (Application Document 5.1).

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

- 1.2.1 The Project includes wind turbine generators that will generate renewable electricity, an offshore substation(s) that will collect the energy and transfer it to shore via electricity export cables located securely on the seabed., The electricity export cables will make landfall at Sandy Point between Holland-on-Sea and Frinton-on-Sea on the Essex coast. Once onshore, electricity export cables will transfer the energy to an onshore substation in Tendring, approximately 22 km from the coast, before final export to the National Grid Electricity Transmission network, at the grid connection point, which will be located within National Grids proposed East Anglia Connection Node (EACN) substation, which is part of the Norwich to Tilbury Reinforcement Project, subject to a separate consent application.
- 1.2.2 Further project information can be found in Volume 6, Part 2, Chapter 1: Offshore Project Description and Volume 6, Part 3, Chapter 1: Onshore Project Description.



1.2.3 It should be noted that the project design has evolved significantly since its first inception. This is described in detail in Volume 6, Part 1, Chapter 4: Site Selection and Alternatives.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.3.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the outcomes of the VE Evidence Plan process, which was developed as a mechanism for consultation and agreement between the Applicant and key stakeholders on the information and evidence required for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and HRA processes.

1.3.2 This report describes the background to the Evidence Plan process, the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved, and the activities that took place in order to complete the process prior to the Development Consent Order (DCO) and Marine Licence applications being made.

1.3.3 Table 1.1 below provides a breakdown of the Annexes to this report. Annexes 2.1 to 2.3 contain information that supports and evidences the process undertaken, including the Terms of Reference (ToR), summary of meetings with Expert Topic Groups (ETGs) and selected minutes.

Table 1.1 Evidence Plan Report Annexes

Annex	Title
Volume 5, Report 2, Annex 2.1	Evidence Plan Terms of Reference
Volume 5, Report 2, Annex 2.2	Summary of Pre-application Meetings
Volume 5, Report 2, Annex 2.3	Selected Meeting Minutes
	ETG 1 Shipping & Navigation
	ETG 2 Offshore Ornithology
	ETG 3 Marine Ecology, Physical Processes and Water & Sediment Quality
	ETG 4 Seascape, Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA), Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), Onshore & Offshore Archaeology
	ETG 5 Onshore Biodiversity, Hydrology and Ground Conditions
	ETG 6 Traffic & Transport, Air Quality, Socioeconomics, Noise, Public Health
	ETG 7 Steering Group & Overarching



1.4 THE EVIDENCE PLAN PROCESS

- 1.4.1 The Evidence Plan process was developed by the Major Infrastructure Environment Unit (MIEU) of Defra as a formal process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) Applicants and statutory bodies to agree what information and evidence should be submitted in support of an NSIP application. The process was conceived for HRA initially, however, MIEU advise that broader EIA issues may also be included at the request of the Applicant. It is likely that overlap exists between some HRA and EIA topics, and that some of the potential issues encountered will be relevant to both. Therefore, the Project's Evidence Plan covered both HRA and relevant EIA topics.
- 1.4.2 The process followed in preparation of the Evidence Plan is aimed at producing a non-legally binding agreement between applicants and the relevant statutory authorities on:
- > The matters to be addressed in the EIA and the HRA (the scope);
 - > The baseline data that will be used to support the assessments (the evidence);
 - > The methods applied to the assessments (the methodology); and
 - > If possible, the outcomes of the assessments and any requirements for further mitigation and/ or monitoring (the conclusions).

1.5 THE FIVE ESTUARIES EVIDENCE PLAN

- 1.5.1 An Evidence Plan Process was adopted by the Applicant to ensure that key stakeholders were consulted on a regular and formalised basis. The process for VE commenced with the scoping process.
- 1.5.2 In 2018 the planned grid connection point was at Friston 400 kV substation in Suffolk and initial scoping phase studies and engagement with ETGs commenced. However, National Grid re-evaluated its grid connection offer as part of the Connection and Infrastructure Options Note (CION) framework and in 2020 an offer was made to connect to the EACN in Tendring peninsula in Essex (precise location to be determined at that time), scoping re-commenced on this basis. In 2022, National Grid provided a refined area of search for the EACN, allowing VE substation site selection and further development of the project design to continue. Further information on this is set out in the Site Selection and Alternatives Chapter of the ES (Volume 6, Part 1, Chapter 4 of the application).
- 1.5.3 The primary objective of the Evidence Plan Process has been to seek agreement with key stakeholders on the data and information to be included in the EIA and HRA. The process has also been used to communicate key project information, including the regular updates. The Evidence Plan has been a voluntary process that has provided a record of agreements and disagreements between the Applicant and key stakeholders. This is intended to help inform the Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) between the Applicant and those stakeholders, further detail on the projects approach to SoCG is set out in Application Document 9.33.
- 1.5.4 The ToR (Annex 2.1) for the VE Evidence Plan was provided at the outset of the process and discussed at the introductory meetings in 2021. The ToR were initially provided in draft format for comment and were subsequently updated and agreed with members of the Evidence Plan steering group.



- 1.5.5 This report presents the final outcomes of the Evidence Plan Process, reflecting the discussions and agreements made with its members throughout the pre-application process.
- 1.5.6 The ETGs were formed of experts from relevant organisations relative to the topics considered. They had the following responsibilities:
- > Agree methods for data collection;
 - > Discuss and agree the appropriateness and sufficiency of data for the assessments to be undertaken;
 - > Agree realistic worst case parameters (applying a Rochdale Envelope) for assessment (where appropriate);
 - > Discuss and agree the scope of the EIA and HRA assessments including sites to be screened in, analysis methods, appropriate thresholds, and terms for interpretation of impact and levels of significance;
 - > Following assessment discuss and agree any requirements for additional data; and
 - > If significant issues remain following assessment, discuss and agree the mitigation or management requirements to reduce adverse effects.

EARLY ADOPTERS SCHEME

- 1.5.7 It is worth noting that VE is part of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) Early Adopters Scheme. VE is taking part in three components of the scheme:
- > COMPONENT 1: Use of Program Planning;
 - > COMPONENT 5: Production of Policy Compliance Document; and
 - > COMPONENT 10: Use of multipartite meetings.
- 1.5.8 Most relevant to the Evidence Plan Process is Component 10: Use of multipartite meetings. From the launch of the Early Adopters Programme in September 2023, this has provided an opportunity for PINS to attend meetings on key topics as observers; providing them with insight into the Evidence Plan Process in action.

1.6 OUTPUTS OF THE EVIDENCE PLAN

- 1.6.1 The outputs of the Evidence Plan Process have aimed to:
- > Support the final ES and Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment (RIAA) that accompany this DCO application;
 - > Identify and agree any mitigation and/ or monitoring in respect of the issues considered, where likely significant effects are identified; and
 - > Identify, those areas of agreement relating to the sufficiency of the evidence provided and the assessment methods employed (and any disagreements that remain). The agreements are intended to form the basis of SoCGs between the Applicant and those statutory and non-statutory bodies involved.



2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1.1 The roles and responsibilities of the organisations included in the Evidence Plan Process for VE were presented at pre-scoping meetings in 2019 and again in 2020 re-introduction meetings (following an updated grid connection point from National Grid) and subsequently agreed through the ToR. The roles of the parties involved are briefly summarised in the sections below. Broadly, the Evidence Plan Process included the Applicant and a series of ETG meetings covering key topic areas.

2.1 THE APPLICANT

2.1.1 The Applicant team comprised RWE as lead developer of the VE project and its appointed advisors for HRA and EIA matters. The Evidence Plan Process has been overseen by the Applicant, whose role was to define the aims of the project, to develop the programme, and to ensure that this programme was adhered to.

2.1.2 In relation to the Evidence Plan Process, the role of the Applicant, and its advisors can be summarised as follows:

- > Draft the Evidence Plan Report, agreement logs and meeting minutes;
- > Collect, analyse, assess and present the evidence;
- > Coordinate meetings and other consultation activities with the Steering Group and ETGs;
- > Ensure that documents are provided in a timely manner to allow review/comment within agreed periods as set out in the ToR;
- > Work with the relevant authorities to resolve as many issues as possible at the pre-application stage, and to record the matters that are agreed (or not agreed); and
- > Finalise the ES and HRA in accordance with the evidence agreed through the Evidence Plan.

2.2 THE STEERING GROUP

2.2.1 The Steering Group's main intended function was to oversee the development of the VE Evidence Plan Process and ensure continual progress. The Steering Group was put in place to:

- > Oversee the resolution of issues that may arise during the development of the Evidence Plan and through the ETG discussions as recorded in the agreement logs, which may ultimately be used as the basis for SoCGs with each interested party;
- > Ensure that discussions taking place within the individual ETGs were consistent in their approach to EIA and HRA; and
- > Ensure that decisions made by either the Steering Group or individual ETGs were circulated to all participants in the Evidence Plan Process.

2.2.2 The Steering Group membership comprised the following:

- > The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) - An independent and impartial body;
- > The Applicant, together with input from their consultants will draft the Plan and any technical documents required as part of the process;
- > The Marine Management Organisation Representative (such as the Case Manager) - in relation to all offshore aspects of the Plan;



- > Natural England's Representatives (such as the Senior Responsible Officer and Case Officer) - provided feedback to the agreement of this Plan and supported the aims of the Steering Group;
- > Historic England's Representative (such as Case Manager) - attended both onshore and offshore aspects of the proposed development for topics as relevant to management of the historic environment;
- > The Environment Agency's Representative (such as Case Manager) - attended both onshore and offshore aspects of the proposed development for topics as relevant to management of the environment;
- > The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's Representatives (such as the Senior Responsible Officer and Case Officer); and
- > The Local Planning Authority (Essex County Council leading on behalf of Tendring District Council) - as well as organisations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Destination Management.

2.2.3 Once the Evidence Plan Process was working, with regular ETGs and good resolution of issues, no further Steering Group meetings were held. Stakeholders were kept informed of progress on the project evolution and via ETGs at appropriate intervals throughout the pre-application process. Further details of the evolution of the process are provided in Section 4.

JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE DELEGATED AUTHORITY

2.2.4 It should be noted that pursuant to an authorisation made on 9 December 2013 by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) under paragraph 17(c) of Schedule 4 to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England is authorised to exercise the JNCC's functions as a statutory consultee in respect of applications for offshore renewable energy installations in offshore waters (0 - 200 nm) adjacent to England. This project is included in that authorisation and therefore Natural England has provided statutory advice in respect of that delegated authority.

2.2.5 JNCC retains responsibility for the (joint) management of offshore designated sites, and therefore (where applicable) Natural England has consulted directly with JNCC to provide the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) advice to the Applicant/Examiners.

2.3 THE EXPERT TOPIC GROUPS

2.3.1 The ETGs comprised the Applicant and experts from relevant organisations with a clear statutory role or non-statutory interest in the topics to be considered. The roles of the ETGs were to:

- > Agree the scope of the EIA;
- > Agree the scope and methods for data collection where necessary;
- > Following collection of data, discuss and agree the appropriateness and sufficiency of data for the purposes of characterising the baseline environment;
- > Agree realistic worst-case parameters in the design envelope approach;
- > Discuss and agree the assessment and analysis method, including appropriate assessment thresholds and the terms for interpretation of impacts and the levels of significance attributed to them; and



- > If significant effects are identified following the assessment, discuss and agree the mitigation or management requirements to reduce or avoid significant adverse effects.

2.3.2 The ETGs and the membership of each of these groups are described in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 ETG Membership

ETG	Members
ETG 1 Shipping & Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Applicant; > The Maritime and Coastguard Agency; > Trinity House Lighthouse Service; > UK Chamber of Shipping; > Royal Yachting Association; > National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations; > Harwich Haven Authority; > Port of London Authority; > London Medway Port; and > London Gateway.
ETG 2 Offshore Ornithology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Applicant; > Natural England; > Marine Management Organisation; > Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; > The Wildlife Trusts; > Essex Wildlife Trust; > Essex County Council; and > National Trust.
ETG 3 Marine Ecology, Physical Processes and Water & Sediment Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Applicant; > Natural England; > Marine Management Organisation; > Cefas; > Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; > The Wildlife Trusts; > Essex Wildlife Trust; > Whale and Dolphin Conservation; > East Suffolk Council;



ETG	Members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Suffolk County Council; > Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Association; and > Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.
<p>ETG 4 Onshore Biodiversity, Hydrology and Ground Conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Applicant; > Natural England; > Environment Agency > Essex Wildlife Trust; > Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; > Essex County Council; and > Tendring District Council.
<p>ETG 5 SLVIA, LVIA, Onshore & Offshore Archaeology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Applicant; > Historic England; > Natural England; > Marine Management Organisation; > Essex County Council; > Tendring District Council; > East Suffolk Council; > Suffolk County Council; > Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB; and > National Trust
<p>ETG 6 Traffic & Transport, Air Quality, Socioeconomics, Noise, Public Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Applicant; > The National Health Service; > National Highways; > Essex County Council; > Tendring District Council; > Suffolk County Council; and > East Suffolk Council.
<p>ETG 7 Steering Group & Overarching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > See the Section 2.2 The Steering Group

Dates of evidence plan meetings and minutes are provided in Annex 2.1, Annex 2.2 and Annex 2.3.



3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVIDENCE PLAN PROCESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 This section presents the programme of evidence plan meetings, and how the outcomes of the process have been recorded.

3.2 EVIDENCE PLAN PROGRAMME

3.2.1 Table 3.1 sets out the key stages and milestones involved with developing and completing the Evidence Plan Process.

Table 3.1 Key stages and milestones of the VE Evidence Plan

Stage	Key Dates	Description
1	November 2019 to January 2020	Kick-off meetings with ETGs to introduce the project, the Evidence Plan Process and to introduce the draft ToR. Feedback was sought on the proposed approach to the Evidence Plan, key topic areas and the programme.
2	February 2020 to October 2021	Project re-introduction following updated grid connection point and comments on the ToR were addressed and agreed with ETG members.
3	February 2020 to September 2021	Provision of technical information to ETGs regarding the scoping process and the development of the Scoping Report, including characterising the receiving environment, communicating the scope of the EIA and the methodologies proposed for assessment.
4	November 2021 to September 2022	Follow-up ETGs and meetings to discuss formal feedback on the Scoping Report received through the Scoping Opinion and next steps.
5	October 2022 to February 2023	Further ETGs and meetings as required to discuss topic specific technical aspects of the EIA and HRA processes in development of the PEIR
6	July 2023 to October 2023	Follow-up ETGs and meetings to discuss the formal feedback on the PEIR received during the statutory consultation period under the Planning Act 2008.
7	November 2023 to February 2024	Further meetings providing key information and feedback as required to continue discussion on technical aspects of developing the ES and HRA. A number of these focussed on specific stakeholder meetings.
8	February 2024 to March 2024	Finalisation of the Evidence Plan prior to submission of the DCO and Marine Licence applications.

3.2.2 Annex 2.2 provides details of all VE Evidence Plan meetings and their associated key discussion points. The specific discussions of selected meetings are contained within the meeting minutes (Annex 2.3).



3.3 RECORDING THE EVIDENCE PLAN PROCESS

- 3.3.1 A record has been maintained of all Evidence Plan consultation that has been undertaken with consultees.
- 3.3.2 The records will inform the SoCGs with consultees as required by PINS, as the project moves into the DCO examination phase. The records of discussions provide a clear audit trail of discussions and decision-making with the intention that this should limit the need for any reiteration of previous discussion on matters considered and agreed previously through the Evidence Plan Process. It is stated within the Evidence Plan ToRs (Annex 2.1) that:
- “Evidence requirements should only change if new areas of concern are identified following initial assessment; if new relevant evidence or research comes to light that would affect what information is required; or there is a material change to the Project or new proposed nature conservation designations come to light prior to the agreed “cut-off” date.”*
- 3.3.3 The ETG membership and the Applicant have been responsible for agreeing the minutes which have been used to record statements of agreement and disagreement. Meeting participants have been required to review, comment on, and agree the final minutes in an iterative review process (selected meeting minutes are available in Annex 2.3).
- 3.3.4 The reports and draft documents issued as part of the Evidence Plan Process as well as details of stakeholder feedback on those documents submitted are detailed within ES chapters, the HRA and relevant application documents (specific documents that were submitted are available on request). These were supplied to the relevant ETG members as electronic copies via email.



4 EVOLUTION OF THE EVIDENCE PLAN PROCESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 This section presents how the working arrangements of the process have evolved through the pre-application process to adapt to the project programme, availability of information to discuss, availability of stakeholders, and a need to ensure efficient use of stakeholder and project resources. Through this evolution, the Applicant has sought to ensure the principles of the process and ToR were followed throughout pre-application engagement to ensure key issues were identified, discussed and resolved.
- 4.1.2 This section also sets out information regarding how the process has evolved to accommodate coordination with the North Falls Offshore Windfarm Project ('North Falls').
- 4.1.3 Stakeholders were kept informed of progress on the project evolution and ETGs have been held at appropriate intervals throughout the pre-application process.

4.2 KEY AREAS OF EVOLUTION

ROADMAPS

- 4.2.1 The Applicant had intended to maintain roadmaps that set out the schedule of planned ETGs. However, due to factors such as the programme of surveys and assessments varying from time to time, and securing the relevant ETG members availability, it was found that the ETG meetings naturally fell at the following milestones.
- > Pre commencement of offshore surveys;
 - > Pre EIA scoping;
 - > Post EIA scoping and ahead of PEIR production;
 - > Pre submission of the PEIR; and
 - > Post submission of the PEIR and ahead of ES production.
- 4.2.2 Significant resource was required to arrange and prepare for the meetings (both for the Applicant and stakeholders) – In addition, it often took several weeks to secure dates that all relevant stakeholders could make. Therefore, maintaining roadmaps was not adding value to the process.

STEERING GROUP MEETINGS

- 4.2.3 As outlined in Section 2.2 above, a limited number of steering group meetings were held. This is because once the Evidence Plan Process was working, with regular ETGs and good resolution of issues, further Steering Group meetings while providing a good framework for the process were not essential. The Applicant has been mindful of making effective use of stakeholder resources and time and it was considered that further steering group meetings would have limited value.



PRE-MEETING BRIEFING MATERIAL

4.2.4 At times, it was challenging to provide briefing material two weeks in advance of meetings and therefore an ETG meeting would often be held to present the information, with stakeholders having the opportunity to provide initial feedback, which then followed up with written feedback from stakeholders as needed. The Applicant found that even when briefing material was provided two weeks in advance, some stakeholders still preferred to have time following the meetings to consider their response and provide written feedback.

4.3 BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

4.3.1 The Applicant has held a number of bilateral meetings with Stakeholders alongside the Evidence Plan Process to discuss specific issues or areas of the application. As set out in the ToR, these have not been included in the Evidence Plan Process, but have been effective in resolving issues which were often specific to individual stakeholders. Where these specific issues or agreements were identified in meetings, they have been included in the consultation sections of the relevant ES chapters or other documents as relevant.

4.4 HRA MATTERS

4.4.1 Like the EIA process, the HRA process covers a variety of technical topics, which are often intertwined with the EIA topics. As such, rather than develop a separate ETG for HRA, HRA matters were incorporated into the relevant EIA ETGs.

4.4.2 The Applicant's Scoping Report (Volume 6, Part 1, Chapter 6), consulted on from September 2021, included a HRA Screening Report. This process is described in detail in the RIAA (Volume 5, Report 5.5).

4.4.3 The draft RIAA was prepared as the next step of the HRA process and was consulted on in June 2023. Consultation via the Evidence Plan Process has continued with particular regard to offshore ornithology, benthic habitats, fish and shellfish and onshore ecology as related to HRA in developing the final RIAA (Volume 5, Report 5.5) that accompanies this application.

4.4.4 Following consultation on the RIAA, a number of bilateral meetings were held with Natural England and RSPB and the details of these discussions are included in the HRA documents submitted with the application.

4.5 CO-ORDINATION WITH NORTH FALLS

4.5.1 VE and the North Falls have been allocated the same connection point and date to the national electricity transmission network. The proposed connection is the East Anglian Connection Node (EACN), which is part of National Grids Norwich to Tilbury Reinforcement Project.

4.5.2 In response to updated policy in the NPSs regarding co-ordination and feedback received to the consultations carried out by both projects, which asked for closer coordination, the two wind farm projects have worked together to align their landfall locations for their export cables to come ashore, developed a shared export cable corridor, and single site for both onshore substations. Working together to streamline design and minimise local impacts is important to both Five Estuaries and the North Falls. To support this, the projects put in place a 'good neighbour agreement' that enabled closer liaison, information sharing and joint planning in early summer 2023



- 4.5.3 Further detail on the co-ordination by the projects is contained in the Co-ordination Document (Application Document 9.30) This document provides an overview of the co-ordination achieved to date in the development phase of the two wind farm projects, and details ongoing coordination activities and the proposed co-ordinated approaches which could be implemented during construction.
- 4.5.4 Joint activities of particular relevance to the Evidence Plan Process, focussing primarily on onshore coordination, have resulted in:
- > Data exchange and shared surveys e.g. ecology and archaeology;
 - > Joint ETGs from early 2023 and where appropriate, on project changes. Thus, reducing duplication of effort and associated time burden on stakeholders. Where joint ETG's were held this has been identified in Annex 2.2.



F I V E
ESTUARIES
OFFSHORE WIND FARM



PHONE
EMAIL
WEBSITE
ADDRESS

COMPANY NO

0333 880 5306

fiveestuaries@rwe.com

www.fiveestuaries.co.uk

Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Ltd
Windmill Hill Business Park
Whitehill Way, Swindon, SN5 6PB
Registered in England and Wales
company number 12292474

