



# Preliminary Meeting Note

<b>Application:</b>	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
<b>Reference:</b>	EN010115
<b>Time and date:</b>	Tuesday 17 September 2024 10:00 am
<b>Venue:</b>	Wivenhoe House Hotel, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3FA and virtually via Microsoft Teams

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

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

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

Grahame Gould welcomed those present and introduced himself as the lead member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors, and Mark Harrison, Matthew Heron, Rebecca Norman and Felicity Webber as panel members to examine the Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm application.

The Examining Authority (ExA) explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 7 June 2024.

The ExA explained that they would be examining the application made by Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Ltd ('the Applicant') before making a recommendation to the SoS for Energy Security and Net Zero who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

The ExA 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. Recording

The video recording of this Preliminary Meeting 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 information 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 information can be found [here](#). This was also explained in [Annex B](#) of the [Rule 6 letter of 20 August 2024](#).

Mrs Fellows raised a point about the ExA's decision to not hold the Open Floor Hearing week commencing 28 October 2024, to which the ExA explained that no requests for an Open Floor Meeting were made by the deadline of 9 September 2024 and parties will have the opportunity to attend the Issue Specific Hearings going forward.

Mrs Fellows also raised a point about no deposit locations in Suffolk, Suffolk County Council will consider this matter further and will come back with a response in a post meeting submission.

### **5. 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 have been noted and considered by the ExA.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found [here](#).

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

The ExA explained the purpose of the **Initial** Assessment of Principal Issues (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in [Annex C](#) of the [Rule 6 letter](#) of 20 August 2024 and asked for any observations on them.

There were written and oral submissions made by several parties including National Highways, The Port of London Authority, Essex County Council and members of the public. This guided discussion on some of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues.

### **7. 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 D](#) of the [Rule 6 Letter](#).

No comments have been made by any of the parties in attendance.

## **8. Examination Timetable**

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

The ExA advised that any changes/revisions to the Examination Timetable would be reflected in the Rule 8 Letter.

The Port of London Authority raised a point about the overlap of the next round of hearings with the half term. The ExA clarified that there is variation in half term weeks and that it would be difficult to move those dates and it has been considered while timetabling along with other factors like Inspectorate's internal resourcing and other project work.

The Applicant commented that the deadline for submitting Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) on 7 January 2025 would be challenging around the Christmas and New Year holiday period. The ExA advised that it had already moved the deadline for submitting SoCGs having regard to the holiday period but would consider this matter further when finalising the Examination Timetable.

The ExA also advised that it has received written submissions from the Marine Management Organisation and Natural England regarding resourcing pressures and responding to the timetabling for the Five Estuaries' Examination.

The Examination Timetable can be found in Annex A of the [Rule 8 letter](#) published on 25 September 2024.

## **9. Handling of potential commonality issues for the proposed Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and North Falls Offshore Wind Farm applications**

The ExA commented on the handling of potential commonality issues for the examination of both the proposed Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and North Falls Offshore Wind Farm applications.

The ExA made clear that it is the responsibility of Interested Parties or Affected Persons to submit any written or oral submissions they may wish to make and which would be common to each of these wind farm projects to the ExAs for the respective Examinations.

The Applicant and others in attendance made their comments and discussed the commonality issues and how these might be addressed going forward.