

Meeting note

Project name	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
File reference	EN010115
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	8 March 2023
Meeting with	Five Estuaries Ltd (the Applicant)
Venue	Microsoft Teams meeting
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project update

The Applicant provided a project update including details on the maximum parameters used in its environmental assessment for Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). This included maximum number of turbines and associated height above sea level. The Applicant explained the northern array boundary had been refined following scoping feedback to resolve some shipping and navigation concerns. This also reduced the visual 'curtaining effect'.

The Applicant provided an overview of the onshore information, regarding the size of the onshore substation compound, export cable corridor and the PEIR red line boundary. The Applicant explained that at the Landfall a trenchless technique, such as Horizontal Directional Drilling would be used. Currently there were two potential broad options for the landfall location. The Applicant summarised a number of mitigation measures which were identified through the PEIR regarding onshore impacts, including; outline construction traffic management plan, outline public access management plan, outline workforce travel plan, landscape and ecology design principles and the draft code of construction practice.

The Applicant highlighted Five Estuaries and North Falls are two distinct projects. However, in key areas, co-ordination is being explored where practicable and feasible, including a shared onshore land agent, co-ordinated onshore surveys and sharing of data, general

alignment, overlapping onshore substation search areas and regular meetings between the projects.

The Applicant summarised the key offshore focus areas; these included shipping and navigation and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The Applicant provided an overview of the offshore impacts requiring mitigation, identified through the PEIR, many of the mitigations have been set out in draft outline plans, which will be secured through the DCO. The Applicant explained how the marine mammal mitigation plan sets out the approach to mitigate piling noise and the offshore archaeological written scheme of investigation, protocol for archaeological discoveries and archaeological exclusion zones, set out how the project would identify and avoid features of archaeological importance. The Applicant highlighted ongoing engagement with the commercial fisheries working group on co-existence. The Applicant is also engaging with shipping and navigation stakeholders, including ports. In relation to HRA, the Applicant is preparing a derogation roadmap and a shortlist of compensatory measures in the event that adverse effects on the integrity of a European site cannot be excluded.

The Applicant confirmed ongoing engagement activities, these included seven expert topic group meetings held in Q4 2022, a monthly blog issued to email subscribers and regular monthly meetings with Essex County Council. The Applicant highlighted co-ordination with the East Anglia Green project. Monthly update meetings continue to occur involving National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and other projects connecting into the East Anglia Connection Node (EACN) substation. The Applicant clarified the PEIR included information on Five Estuaries works within the proposed EACN substation and the Applicant was involved with topic specific workshops, for example on substation access.

The project also provided an update on its ongoing involvement with the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) process.

Survey work

The Applicant summarised the onshore ecology surveys including but not limited to, wintering bird survey, plant species, bats, dormice, great crested newts and other species of principal importance.

Consultation

The Applicant described the planned the Stage 2 Consultation, with a start date of 14 March 2023, running until 12 May 2023. The consultation would include 10 public drop-in events, two webinars, promotion via press adverts and includes an interactive map and guide.

Compulsory Acquisition

The Applicant confirmed a good return rate of land information questionnaires to feed into their statutory consultation and future Book of Reference in addition to good survey access being achieved through voluntary licenses

AOB

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate will organize an update meeting following the consultation.