



Meeting note

Project name	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
File reference	EN010115
Status	Draft
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	11 July 2023
Meeting with	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Ltd
Venue	Microsoft Teams
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.

Early Adopters Programme (EAP)

The Applicant had registered to participate in the EAP, the aims of which are to assist with the development of a new enhanced pre-application service. The Inspectorate gave an overview of the EAP and elaborated on the components engaged by the Applicant.

Programme Planning

This is a mandatory component of the EAP. The Applicant must prepare a Programme Plan for publication on its website in order that stakeholders may understand, and where relevant contribute towards, key milestones in the build up to the submission of the application. The Applicant is expected to update the plan if/ when changes to the programme occur.

The Applicant must also proactively share with the Inspectorate and principal consultees (eg statutory consultees) a detailed Programme Plan which establishes when service interactions will be requested to occur eg meetings, review and feedback. All requested interactions associated with the EAP components engaged must be agreed in the detailed Programme Plan.

The Inspectorate requested for the public Programme Plan to be published on the Applicant's website within two weeks.

Policy Compliance Component

The Inspectorate explained the scope and purpose of the Policy Compliance Document. It is for the Applicant to respond to the brief in terms of how to develop this product, with input from relevant consultees as appropriate. The Inspectorate confirmed that it would be able to review and feedback on draft iterations of this document as they become available within the remainder of the pre-application stage.

Multipartite meetings

The Inspectorate summarised its offer under this component and requested for the Applicant to confirm (i) any multiparty meetings that it would wish to engage as soon as possible following the meeting and (ii) the requested role of the Inspectorate in any meetings.

Project update including consultation

The Applicant shared the emerging themes from its statutory consultation exercise which recently ran between 14 March 2023 and 12 May 2023.

Responses were received from some 84 organisations, 55 landowners, 467 campaign responses and 118 unique responses. Targeted consultation on localised refinements is being planned for later in 2023.

The Applicant said that consultation responses mainly comprised concerns over the visual impact of substations (including cumulatively with other projects), the desire for offshore connection options, noise, traffic, impacts to tourism, and offshore ecology.

The Applicant gave updates on the offshore and onshore parts of the scheme, which included a reduction in the maximum number of electrical circuits and clarification on the onshore substation location. As a result of consultation responses, the Applicant will be removing the southern landfall location as the northern location was identified as a preferred option during the consultation. The Applicant will also shortly provide an announcement on the selection of a preferred substation search area.

The Applicant explained that it had also consulted on a draft Report to Inform an Appropriate Assessment (RIAA), separately to the s.42 consultation, with a closing date of 15 June.

The Applicant noted that the RIAA concludes that no significant effects are expected on the Margate and Longsands Special Area of Conservation.

Engagement has begun with DEFRA, and the Applicant are now having monthly meetings with them on HRA.

The Applicant said that it is currently co-ordinating project proposals with the North Falls OWF and National Grid, with regular meetings taking place.

