



Meeting note

Project name	Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
File reference	EN010115
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	14 December 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.

Project Update

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it is still expecting to submit the Development Consent Order (DCO) application around February or March 2024. Prior to submission, coordination continues with North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd (North Falls) across key topics such as the shared onshore export cable corridor and the co-located substation site. Tripartite meetings have taken place with North Falls and National Grid to discuss co-ordination around the substations. Multiple in-person meetings have been held with landowners throughout November and will continue into December.

In November, the Crown Estate announced plans to unlock up to 4GW of offshore wind capacity by opening additional seabed capacity at the extension sites. This process will extend beyond the expected date of submission and will not impact the application.

An agreement has now been signed followed by a joint press release on 5 December which included North Falls and South East Anglia Link regarding the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme (OCSS).

The Applicant launched a targeted consultation on 5 December which will run until the end of January 2024. Only a small amount of feedback has been received so far which has mostly discussed the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The consultation consists of two primary strands: Ensuring those persons with an interest in land (PILs) (including PILs affected by project changes since the statutory consultation) are given the opportunity to comment on the proposals; and consultation regarding compensatory sites in East Suffolk for lesser black-backed gull (LBBG). The LBBG consultation includes all s42

consultees. Approximately 40 PILs are being consulted. The Project website will provide access to documents and plans for both strands of the consultation.

The Applicant held a HRA discussion with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to seek advice on compensatory measures. Feedback from this meeting is expected in January 2024 which will assist with benthic matters. A date for a joint navigation meeting with Harwich Haven, Sunk VTS and the Port of London Authority is still to be confirmed, expected early in 2024. Meetings on both benthic and ornithological matters were held with Natural England in November with members of the Inspectorate in attendance in an observational capacity. Draft derogation case and compensatory measures documents are now with the Inspectorate for review.

Upcoming Community Engagement

The Applicant will be continuing community engagement into January 2024 to provide an update on changes to Project proposals ahead of the DCO submission. This engagement will explain how the project's design has aligned with North Falls as well as discuss how both parties intend to continue project coordination into the future. The updated plans and a brochure will be available on projects' websites, with online webinars planned for those unable to attend the two main public events.

Early Adopters Programme

The Applicant requested various clarifications in relation to the advice issued by the Inspectorate on its draft Policy Compliance Document (PCD). The PCD would be updated considering the advice and clarifications prior to submission.

PINS Update/ Discussion

The Applicant enquired about when they will receive comments on the remaining submitted documents. Most final responses will be returned by the Inspectorate in January 2024. A date for the next project update meeting was discussed. The Inspectorate advised that it would be useful to hold this following the exchange of final document comments.

The Applicant enquired about timings between acceptance and examination. As a result of other projects at similar stages, a minimum of 4 months will be likely.