



Meeting note

Project name	Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm
File reference	EN010117
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	28 May 2021
Meeting with	Rampion Extension Development Limited
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.

Programme update

The Applicant has consulted the relevant local authorities on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). Consultation will run from 15 July 2021 to 16 September 2021. Due to delays resulting from COVID-19, the Applicant advised the Inspectorate that DCO submission would now more likely to be made in Q1 2022.

Informal consultation

The Applicant explained how informal consultation ran virtually and feedback was invited from 14 January 2021 to 11 February 2021. Meetings were held with interest groups, community groups and environmental groups, as well as briefings for Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and its respective MPs. 6,000 visitors attended the virtual exhibition with 200+ feedback forms received. Key issues identified were construction, birds, cable routes and why the same cable route as the Rampion 1 project was not used. All informal feedback was considered and has fed into the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

The Inspectorate commented that the ease of accessibility is a key benefit of holding virtual exhibitions. The Inspectorate queried whether there was any scope in the SoCC to move to physical exhibitions during the upcoming formal consultation if circumstances allowed. The Applicant noted that it is being considered but are mindful that if commitments are made in the SoCC and Government COVID guidance were to change, this could result in a potential delay.

The Applicant explained how supplementary surgery events are being considered following feedback from consultees that more opportunities to ask questions directly to the project team would be helpful. Evidence Plan Process workshops were held in September and October 2020. In February 2021 a virtual hazard workshop for shipping and navigation was held with further steering group meetings due to take place during March 2021. The Applicant reported positive levels of engagement and agreements to date. Statutory Party stakeholder relations are generally positive, however, there is a need to agree additional seascape and landscape viewpoints.

Design evolution to PEIR

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate on progress since initial scoping, advising that progress thus far will inform final project design and description. Since the last meeting with the Inspectorate in October 2020, the Applicant has continued with the process and carried out a significant number of design refinement activities. The focus has been on onshore substation options and optionality of the onshore cable route. Feedback from the informal consultation has directly influenced some of the decisions made regarding these elements which will be shown in the PEIR.

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate on its offshore design refinements. The boundaries of the order limits to be presented the PEIR have been reduced, in order to mitigate potential effects in traffic and ecology (by allowing more space between the array area and the Owers and Mixon rocks). An update was given on the onshore design refinement, noting significant progress. Feedback from the informal consultation on optionality of the onshore design was positive. The refinements will be presented in the formal Statutory Consultation.

The onshore cabling has been further refined and the PEIR assessment will include options B and C and Warningcamp. There are still further surveys to be done on options B and C which will inform the Applicant's selection of a final route corridors. The Applicant is currently in the process of gathering new baseline data which will also help refine the substation locations, that will be included in the Statutory Consultation. The Applicant confirmed that discussions are still ongoing with the landowners of each potential plot for the substation.

Survey progress update

The Inspectorate questioned how surveying was progressing. The Applicant stated that due to COVID-19 there has been a slight delay in progress but are now in discussion with various landowners. The Applicant confirmed it is still gathering data from Onshore Surveys to include in the PEIR, it is expected that the Applicant will be able to present 15 months of bird data and 20 months of marine mammals data. The Applicant is satisfied that all offshore surveys have been completed in anticipation of the PEIR, all the survey information will be incorporated into the Environmental Statement. Discussions surrounding viewpoints with Statutory Parties are ongoing but have been positive. Where there had been limited access to

land, the Applicant seeking to gain access under section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 in order to gather baseline data to inform the ES.

The Inspectorate queried if there had been a socioeconomic impact on tourism due to COVID-19. The Applicant confirmed surveys were conducted during a period when the restrictions had been eased therefore there had been strong engagement; the Stakeholders were also satisfied that the survey was suitably representative.

Statutory consultation

The Applicant confirmed that for Statutory Consultation it had considered that resourcing may be an issue over the summer period and therefore has extended consultation to 9 weeks. The consultation will include the PEIR as well as other key documents.

The Consultation will mainly be virtual through the Applicant's website. Advertising methods such as social media and adverts on buses have been used to reach a wider area. The Applicant is looking to hold face-to-face events where possible, subject to restrictions at the time. Virtual public meetings will also take place which will allow attendees to ask question through written means.

AOB

The Applicant queried the Consultation Report format, noting that there was an update to Advice Note 14 in February 2021, and if there were any examples that have since been submitted to the Inspectorate that prove best practice. The Inspectorate confirmed that there had been no new reports to date as it was a recent update. The key update surrounding Advice Note 14 was the focus on GDPR, for example, that Applicants are to consider a person's privacy such as capturing personal data, such as images, addresses etc. The Inspectorate also suggested using clear cross-referencing throughout the Consultation Report, and to use a chronological format when documenting multiple consultation events to ensure it is clear. This should also be reflected in the Appendices. Advice Note 14 explains this in more detail.

The Applicant also noted the overlap in order limits for Rampion 1 and what is proposed for Rampion 2 (subject to final design), and the partial disapplication of parts of the Rampion 1 Development Consent Order (DCO). The Applicant questioned whether there were any other projects that have disapplied previous DCOs? The Inspectorate confirmed that Rookery South gained permission for access to some roads on another DCO application.

The Applicant asked if it should be considering file size when submitting electronically. The Inspectorate advised that there is no set file size that is requested, it is asked to keep file sizes at a practical level for large documents, such as plans, to ensure it can be successfully downloaded by members of the

public if published. The Inspectorate also advised that low-resolution documents are also helpful for Hearings during Examination. The Inspectorate mentioned the draft Document review service and that the Applicant may benefit using the service prior to submission.

The Applicant confirmed it will send newsletters and the Statement of Community Consultation to the Inspectorate to ensure that the Inspectorate are kept informed. South Downs National Park have asked the Applicant to carry out a Major Development Test (as set out in the NPPF) in relation to cable routes, the Applicant is considering addressing these issues through the Planning Statement. The Inspectorate agreed that the Planning Statement would be the most appropriate place to provide information and explanation in relation to the exceptional circumstances test. The Applicant should be focused on what an Examining Authority would find useful in the context of NPS policy and keeping applications as concise as possible in terms of the range of documentation provided.

The Inspectorate queried the Structures Exclusion Zone and why it was necessary within the redline boundary. The Applicant confirmed that a Structure Exclusion Zone was agreed as a mitigatory measure during the examination of the Rampion 1 project and secured through its DCO. The Rampion 2 PEIR boundary currently overlaps part of the Structures Exclusion Zone as the Applicant is seeking consultees' feedback on the possibility of constructing part of the Rampion 2 project within that area.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate to send an audio/visual SLA to the Applicant.
- Next meeting to be scheduled after Statutory Consultation period.