



Meeting note

Project name	Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm
File reference	EN010117
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	17 May 2022
Meeting with	Rampion Extension Development Limited
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Introductions and The Planning Inspectorate's openness policy

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 and timeline

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate about the Statutory Consultation undertaken in July-September 2021, which was re-opened February-April 2022, due to some coastal addresses not having been notified previously as intended. The Applicant confirmed that all responses will be taken into account. There had been a lot of work undertaken, as a result of feedback, and as to whether design changes should be considered. The Applicant confirmed that it was working towards further, targeted consultation around the onshore aspects of the scheme, which will commence in June 2022.

The Applicant stated that its intended submission time of the application was early autumn, provided that nothing substantial arises out of the summer consultation.

The Applicant enquired regarding the recently published [British Energy Security Strategy](#) policy paper (2022) and whether it would have an effect on the NSIP process (costs, timescales, etc) in the near future. The Inspectorate responded that presently it was all under review, however, the key message is that elements of the 'fast-track' process were already achievable in the current regime, within the existing legislation. For instance, resolving issues before the submission of the application will help make the examination and decision periods more efficient. The Applicant stated its intention to present itself as a 'fast-track' type project including through settling design matters, e.g. extent of wind turbine areas, such that all parties could move earlier towards discussing common ground.

The Inspectorate highlighted that, on occasions, the Secretary of State needed further consultations following receipt of Examining Authority Recommendation Report, and consequently, extended the Decision period. The Applicant emphasised their view that,

unlike other recent offshore wind projects, off the east coast of England, substantive and complex Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) issues were not expected during the examination of the Rampion 2 scheme. It aims to resolve any issues by agreement and, if disagreements occur, the Applicant will make its final position clear as part of the application documents. The Inspectorate commented that having clear positions on agreement and disagreement with evidence to support those positions will certainly assist the Examining Authority with its Examination and Recommendation.

Ongoing engagement update

The Applicant provided a high-level offshore engagement update. Positive feedback was received from several stakeholders, and further discussions are still ongoing e.g. with local ports and Shoreham airport. Some other constructive talks took place with Natural England, South Down National Park, etc. on SLVIA, and the Applicant is awaiting feedback from the French Authorities and the Channel Islands.

In terms of onshore engagement, last year's consultation was successful, many requests were received from stakeholders, which also led to the targeted consultation that was about to open in June. Some briefing sessions were held with s42 consultees (April-May). Since last November, some topic-specific meetings took place with, amongst others, West Sussex County Council, the Environment Agency, National Highways and the Forestry Commission.

Forthcoming targeted onshore consultation

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate of the ongoing engineering and environmental reviews since the Statutory Consultation, which resulted in certain changes. The Applicant is in the process of exploring an alternative cable route, construction areas, drilling locations and access options. The Statement of Community Consultation had been updated, posters, leaflets and newspaper notification were being prepared ready to go out in the affected areas. The Inspectorate advised that the Consultation Report should explain why a targeted consultation was appropriate as opposed to a full round of consultation. The Applicant confirmed that the consultation was going to be similar to last year's, including four face-to-face sessions, as well as engaging with landowners in new areas of land; it was essentially a full statutory consultation focussing on terrestrial matters. A Preliminary Environmental Information Report - Supplementary Information Report and some public-facing factsheets for guidance had been prepared.

Potential for re-scoping

The Applicant explained that after months of developing environmental and engineering studies, it identified potential changes to consult on. It has not decided yet, however, whether the targeted consultation will include a further alternative cable route (informed by the outcomes of ongoing engineering studies and landowner engagement). The Applicant is considering whether re-scoping under the EIA regulations may or may not be necessary to cover additional land / works outside the original EIA scoping boundary - the Applicant's technical environmental team are still considering their position in this respect.

The Inspectorate raised the issue of precautionary re-scoping and whether the Secretary of State's opinion was actually required in this instance, depending on the extent of deviation, or alternatively, the changes could be possibly explained in the Environmental Statement and the consultation documents. The Applicant agreed and confirmed that it will be discussing the

potential impact of the changes with key statutory consultees and will be considering its options.

Draft document submission to the Inspectorate

The Applicant enquired as to what draft documents were expected to be submitted and about the timescales. The Inspectorate advised that it may take 6-8 weeks to review and respond. As for documents, for instance, submitting an advanced draft Consultation Report could be very helpful, and anything the Applicant wanted specific advice on, including any novel approaches, but in any case, the documents should be as complete as possible when submitted for review.

Update from the Inspectorate

Looking ahead, the Inspectorate referred to a series of recent blended events (Net Zero Teesside project) as an example of how public hearings are run currently. The Applicant noted and will also consider the experience from the previous [Rampion project](#).

The Applicant queried the expectation about blended events in terms of their attendance. The Inspectorate explained that some projects proceed on a virtual basis (e.g. Hornsea Four Offshore Wind Farm) and some by blended events (Net Zero Teesside, [recordings are available on the website](#)). There is a flexibility with regard to who from the Applicant's team should attend physically or virtually (note: a suitable AV company will have to be hired). The Inspectorate welcomed any feedback in the future as the events take place.

The Inspectorate enquired about consultations (regarding HRA and transboundary issues) with EEA states. The Applicant responded that those discussions were ongoing.

Finally, the Applicant confirmed that it was aware of recent correspondence and s51 advice published on [the National Infrastructure portal](#) project page with regard to consultation feedback.