

Preliminary Meeting Note

Application:	Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Generation Assets
Reference:	EN010121
Time and date:	14:00 Wednesday 23 October 2024
Venue:	Pullman Hotel Liverpool, King's Dock, Port of Liverpool, Liverpool L3 4FP and virtually via Microsoft Teams

This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Mr Robert Jackson welcomed those present and introduced himself as the lead member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors, the Examining Authority (ExA), and members Mr Guy Rigby and Mr Marc Willis to examine the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm application.

Mr Jackson explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 23 July 2024.

Mr Jackson explained that the ExA would be examining the application made by Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd ('the Applicant') before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

Mr Jackson explained the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and noted that the Examination will commence after the PM closes.

The ExA confirmed that all documents and submissions received and accepted during the Examination will be published on the project-specific page of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

2. Audio recording

The video recording of this Preliminary Meeting is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed [here](#).

3. General Data Protection Regulation

The ExA explained the Planning Inspectorate's duties under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Further info relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Privacy Note](#).

4. Examination Process

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), further information can be found at:

[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: What to expect at a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-what-to-expect-at-a-nationally-significant-infrastructure-project-event)

[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Registering to speak at, or attend, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project event - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-registering-to-speak-at-or-attend-a-nationally-significant-infrastructure-project-event)

5. Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

The ExA explained the purpose of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAP) (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in [Appendix C of the Rule 6 letter](#) of 23 September 2024 and asked for any observations on them.

Mr Alan Cassidy of Blackpool Airport Ltd, requested an Issue Specific Hearing on Aviation and Radar to be incorporated into the Examination Timetable, perhaps towards the end of the Examination Period, Mr Cassidy stressed that without one there is a risk that certain critical factors may not be given appropriate examination.

The point made by Mr Cassidy of Blackpool Airport Ltd was supported by Mr Graham Trehella who is representing BAE Systems.

Mr James Gibson of Spirit Energy raised concerns they had with Aviation related issues which they were currently working on with the Applicant, and further stressed the need for an Issue Specific Hearing on Aviation and Radar.

The Applicant acknowledged all points made and hopes the ongoing engagements made within the Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with Interested Parties will lead to resolving issues within the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAP) of Aviation and Radar.

6. Examination Timetable

The ExA noted requests, already received in writing, to amend the draft Examination Timetable contained in [Appendix E of the Rule 6 letter](#) and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance.

All comments received were noted by the ExA and considerations will be reflected in the Rule 8 Letter.

The Examination Timetable can be found in the [Rule 8 Letter](#) published on 30 October 2024.

7. Procedural decisions

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made under section 89(3) of the PA2008 and asked for any observations.

Procedural decisions can be found in [Appendix G of the Rule 6 Letter](#).

The Applicant informed the ExA that all Statements of Common Ground had been drafted and sent out, Natural England requested for a Principal Areas of Disagreement Statement utilised rather than a SoCG and the Applicant agreed.

The Applicant updated the ExA that Natural Resources Wales have noted that they have not reviewed the application in detail as of yet and suggested Deadline 3 would be the appropriate deadline to settle a SoCG.

The Applicant updated the ExA that both the Applicants for both the Morgan and Mona Offshore Windfarms have agreed there is no need for a SoCG on a mutually agreed basis for both of their respective NSIP applications.

The Applicant updated the ExA on the progress of their response to any Relevant Representations.

Mr Gibson of Spirit Energy stated that there is further technical discussion and exchange of data planned between now and the Written Representation deadline, as such, it reserves its position on when its technical report may be submitted.

The ExA emphasized to all parties that when revising documents both clean and tracked versions should be submitted to allow the ExA to easily locate any changes made.

The Applicant agreed to assist on this.

The Applicant confirmed that the Report on interrelationship with other projects will be submitted at Deadline 1.

The Applicant confirmed that it will be submitting a statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence.

The ExA proposed changing 'Closing Statement' to 'Summary and Signposting document' to better reflect its purpose.

Mr Cassidy asked the ExA if the Summary and Signposting document would overwrite the traffic light system currently used within the SoCG.

The ExA asked the Applicant if the updated Bird Collision Risk Modelling will be included its recommendation into EIA and HRA. The Applicant agreed to update this this Deadline 1.

8. Any other Matters

The ExA discussed the possibility of future Hearings being solely Virtual.

Mr Pendleton-Brown of BAE Systems stated as an organisation it could not use Microsoft Teams, and thus would have to attend Hearings physically.

Mr Cassidy of Blackpool Airport Ltd confirmed his preference is to attend any future Hearings in person to.

Mr Gibson of Spirit Energies preference is to keep the Hearings blended.

The ExA raised in light of the Application site being part of a former naval training site, whether the Applicant had any comments or updates on Unexploded Ordnance Survey Information.

The Applicant would be content to expand on the decision-making rationale on this subject within the proposed project timetable.

The ExA asked for an update on any possible Compensation measures if required.

The Applicant responded that discussions with landowners are ongoing, and all options are being explored.