



Meeting note

Project name	Morecambe Offshore Windfarm/Morgan Offshore Windfarm
File reference	EN010121/EN010136
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	20 January 2022
Meeting with	Flotation Energy Cobra Bp EnBW
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	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 Applicants explained their considerations for possible collaboration between projects, as both developments were awarded leases in the Crown Estate Round 4 and are in similar geographical locations. Both projects are within the scope of the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) and as such the Applicants are assessing collaboration options. Both Applicants gave the Inspectorate an update on their identified possible transmission connections. Both projects have relatively similar timescales, both intending to submit their Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) in Q1 2023 and the DCO applications in Q1 2024. Whilst Morecambe aims to submit a scoping request in Q1 2022, Morgan is looking to await the outcome of the Holistic Network Design Review (HNDR), before submitting its scoping request, in Q2 2022.

Consenting strategies

The Applicants gave the Inspectorate an overview of the two possible consenting strategies for coordination between the developers.

The first one would include separate Development Consent Orders (DCOs) for both projects. Each Applicant would progress their consents separately, including generation assets and transmission; however they would share coordination to support land access

and surveys.

The second option would entail that both projects continue to consent their generation asset separately and to progress with a joint transmission. The Applicants are conscious that the transmission assets alone may not constitute an NSIP; this may be pursued via a s35 direction request to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Inspectorate queried what consideration the Applicants had given to drafting a single DCO covering the offshore and terrestrial elements for both projects, as was done for the Dogger Bank A&B projects. The Applicants confirmed that it was an option that has been considered. It was highlighted that for Dogger Bank A&B a joint venture vehicle (JVV) was created to submit two projects under the same DCO. However, neither Applicant considers that to be appropriate for these projects. Indeed, the Applicants queried whether it would even be possible under the Crown Estate Round 4 lease agreements; the Dogger Bank A&B lease was awarded to an area, whereas the Round 4 leases have been awarded to developers.

The Applicants also explained its concerns that when a project has separate developers and a single DCO is submitted, the decision stands on the basis of one or the other project. Cumulative impacts could influence one of the projects, eventually impacting both, causing increased level of risk. The Inspectorate queried whether, although option two included more DCOs, it would make the separation of generation and transmission easier to identify. Option one however, rests primarily on relaying on the timescales of the projects moving at the same pace.

The Inspectorate asked what the Applicants strategies were for handling the Cumulative Impact Assessments. The Applicants confirmed that they had not yet finalised their position on this matter but is something which they are acutely aware of and are aware that this could be a challenging matter.

The Applicants explained to the Inspectorate that it may be necessary to provide for a situation where the two projects do not proceed in parallel, such as when funding decisions are secured at different times.

Scoping approach

The Applicants stated that the grid connection will be decided by the output of the OTNR. In terms of the Morgan project, both Penwortham and Kirby substations are being potentially scoped. The Morecambe project will scope Penwortham, Middleton and Stanah as potential substations. The Inspectorate highlighted that the OTNR is a continuous review rather than a fixed decision and asked the Applicants when they were hoping for an update from the HNDR. The Applicants are expecting an update in Q1 2022 that will give an element of certainty on the connection.

The Applicants confirmed that conversations between both projects have commenced regarding what would be expected from a collaborative scoping request. Each of the projects will need to submit separate scoping reports but would potentially need to rely on, or refer to, each other's scoping opinion in the event of a collaborative scheme. Therefore, the Applicants queried whether it was possible to scope the generation asset separate to the transmission asset, as this would be completed once there is more certainty regarding the grid connections. The Inspectorate advise that it could be possible as long as there is consistency with the information from both projects.

The Applicants asked how The Inspectorate would publish the advice given and make

public the collaboration between projects, to fulfill its duty under s51 of the Planning Act 2008. The Inspectorate confirmed that the Applicants Scoping Reports are published to the relevant project webpages and consultee responses are sought on them. The Applicants should be aware that any information contained in the Scoping Reports will be publicly available.

Stakeholder engagement

The Applicants presented their stakeholder engagement strategy for the possible consenting strategies. The first, with separate DCOs for each project, would consist of a shared consultation event for the transmission asset of the DCOs. In this event both project teams will be engaging as two distinctive projects with two separate sets of evidence and information, including Statements of Community Consultation (SoCC), Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) and evidence plan logs. The other option would be for the Morecambe project to hold its own events with the Morgan team attending as a consultee, and vice versa. The Inspectorate advised of the importance of seeking Local Authority views on this matter prior to consultation events taking place. It is crucial that consultees are clear what is being proposed when their views are being sought.

The second strategy involves having a third consent for the joint transmission assets. In this case, the consultation process for the joint assets would progress with no distinctions between projects and a single set of documents. The Applicant explained that there is a valid concern that stakeholders confuse the three applications and raise concerns of being consulted on three separate occasions. The Inspectorate re-iterated that agreeing a consultation strategy with Local Authorities would help ensure that the consultation is clear, proportionate, and effective.

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The Inspectorate sought how the possible collaboration would affect the proposed Mona Offshore Windfarm. The Applicant explained that Mona will proceed as a separate DCO, outside the possible collaboration between Morecambe and Morgan.